

Health Information Compliance Alert

Reader Question: What Format Must You Use For Breach Documentation?

Question: For documentation regarding a breach, do we need to have hard copies (paper) or can all of our documentation be in electronic files?

Answer: Although the HIPAA requirements call for incidents to be properly documented, there is no requirement that the documentation be on paper, according to **Jim Sheldon-Dean**, founder and director of compliance services for **Lewis Creek Systems LLC** in Charlotte, VT. "Electronic documentation is just fine."

In fact, electronic documentation "is preferable because it's easier for a lot of people to read when it comes to being able to understand what you've done for compliance and what various things are going on," Sheldon-Dean explains. Having your breach documentation in an electronic format is actually handy, so it's not a problem at all.