

## Health Information Compliance Alert

### Reader Question: When Will Windows XP Become No Longer HIPAA-Compliant?

**Question:** We've heard that computers still using Windows XP will soon be no longer HIPAA-compliant. Is this true? If so, when will this change occur?

**Answer:** Yes, this is correct. Effective April 9, 2014, **Microsoft** will stop providing technical support and security updates for the Windows XP operating system, stated **Elizabeth F. Hodge**, healthcare attorney with Akerman LLP in Tampa, FL, in a March 3 Health Law Rx Blog posting.

This means that covered entities (CEs) and business associates (BAs) that continue to use Windows XP after April 8 will likely be in violation of the HIPAA Security Rule, Hodge warned. Although the Security Rule does not mandate minimum operating system requirements for computer systems, you should nevertheless consider any known security vulnerabilities of an operating system in your risk analysis.

**Bottom line:** CEs and BAs that do not switch to another operating system "operate at their own peril," Hodge cautioned. So you must determine whether any of your computers are currently using Windows XP, and you must update from Windows XP to a newer operating system that is supported by the manufacturer before April 9.