

Health Information Compliance Alert

READER QUESTIONS: AVOID VOICEMAIL WORRIES WITH THIS ADVICE

Question: Our tech support team is at a crossroads about whether voicemail is considered e-PHI and protected by the privacy or security rules. Should we think of voicemail as another electronic storage medium and protect it, or does voicemail fall under telephone use?

New Hampshire subscriber

Answer: "Voicemail is not electronic PHI," but it is still covered by the privacy rule, Hubbartt asserts. You must implement policies and procedures to protect your employees' voice messages just as you would any other PHI kept in your office.

The Bottom Line: Teach your staff members how to protect their voicemails - including creating strong, frequently changed passwords and never listening to voice messages on speakerphone, Hubbartt says.