

Health Information Compliance Alert

READER QUESTIONS: GET PERMISSION BEFORE EMAILING IMMUNIZATION REMINDERS

Question: We like to send email reminders to employees who need to update their immunizations for MMR and Hepatitis, among others. Can we do this or do we need an authorization?

Montana Subscriber

Answer: If your employees must be properly immunized as condition of their employment, then sending them an email is okay, experts agree.

However, because "email is inherently insecure...document that the employee was asked if email was a permitted method of communication," counsels attorney **Marc Goldstone** of **Hoagland & Longo** in New Brunswick, NJ.

If your email system is secure, your office is clear to send the reminders, says senior partner **Kathy LePar** of **Beacon Partners** in Norwell, MA. Remember: "Don't put them on your office bulletin board or in the employee lunch room where everyone can see," says **Kirk Nahra**, an attorney in the Washington, DC office of **Wiley Rein & Fielding**.

The bottom line: As always, keep in mind the vulnerabilities attached to any method of communication, but don't shrink away from email. Tip: Get your employees' written consent to communicate with them via email and you're safe, Goldstone assures.