

Health Information Compliance Alert

Reader Questions: What's The Difference Between Remote Disabling & Remote Wiping?

Question: Clinicians in our practice often use mobile devices, including tablets and laptops. Some even use their own smartphones for work purposes. We are interested in making these mobile devices as secure as possible and are exploring all options. What's the difference between "remote disabling" and "remote wiping?"

Answer: Remote wiping allows you to remotely erase the data on a mobile device if the device is lost or stolen, according to the **Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology** (ONC) (www.healthit.gov). Many mobile devices have a remote wipe feature, and when you enable this feature on the device, you can permanently delete data stored on your lost or stolen mobile device.

Remote disabling, on the other hand, allows you to remotely lock or completely erase data stored on a mobile device if it's lost or stolen, ONC explains. If you recover the mobile device, you can unlock it. But make sure the lock feature doesn't have a bypass feature.