

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
INFORMATION PRIVACY POLICIES & PROCEDURES
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

I. Security of Restricted Information: Faxes

A. POLICY

Rev. 06/01/2005

1. **Facsimile (fax) messages** containing protected health information (PHI) may be sent to locations where the physical security and monitoring practices of the receiving fax machine are known or can reasonably be verified.
2. **Scope:** This policy applies to all facsimile machine usage at the University of Florida where documents containing PHI either originate from, or are received into the University. It applies to all users including, but not limited to, faculty, staff, students, and volunteers.

B. DEFINITIONS

Fax: A means or system for transmitting copies of documents electronically, usually between terminals linked by telecommunications networks.

C. PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS

1. **Protected health information** must be safeguarded against unauthorized use or disclosure.
2. **Use and disclosure of PHI** must be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the task for which it is used or disclosed.

D. PROCEDURES

1. **Pre-program fax numbers** whenever possible. Test the programmed numbers periodically (at least every three months) for accuracy, i.e., send a cover sheet and verify by phone or in person that it was received.
2. **Cover Sheet:** Always use an approved cover sheet form that includes the University of Florida's confidentiality statement and disclaimer for facsimile messages that contain PHI (see Forms).
3. **Verification:** Faxes sent to unknown or unfamiliar locations should be phone-verified before any PHI is transmitted. That is, send the cover sheet alone and call to verify that the intended and authorized person received it and is standing by to receive the PHI documents that will follow.

E. REFERENCES

HIPAA: 45 CFR §164.522 (Right to Request Privacy Protections)

F. EXHIBITS: None