

How to Stay HIPAA-Compliant If You Use Online Fax Services

Medical offices faced a massively complicated shift in the requirements for how they handle patient information with the advent of HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). While most offices were careful to guard their patients' privacy prior to this legislation, now it's not just a matter of best practices, it's the law. Failures in compliance are met with stiff penalties because there is so much at risk when medical records are lost or stolen.

Many offices now use online fax services as part of their medical records handling procedures. Used correctly, internet faxing is a sound way to ensure HIPAA compliance, protecting the office and its patients. At the core of the regulations is the requirement that any communication or records regarding patients has to be created, kept, and transmitted in a way that nobody else can access.

Here are three reasons medical offices prefer online fax services over using a traditional fax machine:

1. Online fax services make it easy to keep and refer back to records because they're cataloged in digital format. In the unlikely event of future legal inquiries, having quick access to these records can make an incident far less costly, stressful, and risky.
2. Preventing unauthorized personnel from accessing medical information is easy with online faxing. It's simple to follow standard privacy protocols for the industry with password protection.
3. Reputable online fax service providers keep their systems up-to-date with security features to protect the privacy of their users and their data.

Under HIPAA's regulations, medical records personnel are tasked with guarding some of the most sensitive information ever stored. Because of all that is at stake, it's important to use a document storage and transmission service that is not only convenient and easy to use – it must also guard against security breaches. Combined with an offsite backup system, sound procedures staff must follow, and encryption technologies, online fax services can help any medical practice stay in compliance.