
Section: 1.15 HIPAA Cover

Effective Date: 10-01-07

Revision Date: 10-06-09

Approved by: J. Ehret, Fire Chief

Scope:

In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the South Metro Fire Department has adopted HIPAA policies to protect patient confidentiality for Federal compliance.

Policy Cover:

Under our compliance policy, we are required to establish a "Privacy Officer". For the purposes of the policy, the formal privacy officer is the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief has designated the South Metro Fire Department's Secretary to carry out "routine" activities covered by the HIPAA policy. All patient records released will be allowed only through the Fire Chief or designee.

The South Metro Fire Department is designated as the accounting and billing department that oversees the medical billing vendor. The South Metro Fire Department will perform functions in accordance with the South Metro Fire Department's HIPAA plan. A business associate agreement is signed with the South Metro Fire Department medical billing vendor.

Formal training will be delivered to all Fire Department personnel routinely and will be given to all new members shortly after placement.

Report Processing Procedure:

Upon return to the station, Protected Health Information (PHI) needs to be protected from persons without rights to the information. Measures shall be taken to prevent all unauthorized access to the PHI. Upon completion of PHI, all alarm cards & PHI will be deposited to a secure area waiting processing from clerical staff. All records being processed at the front desk shall be protected from the public. When clerical staff is not at the front desk working on records, they must be secured since the public has access.

All PHI will be secured in locked cabinets upon completion. PHI reports waiting pick-up will be stored in a secure area.

PHI records sets stored in the records room will be secured with lock and key; keys held by the Chief and clerical staff.

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Notice to Patients:

Patients being transported by South Metro Fire Department will be given a summary copy of the HIPAA policy "Notice to Patients". If the patient is not competent or is a minor, please leave the document with a family member or staff at the nursing facility caring for the patient. If, for some reason, you are not able to give a copy of the policy, document your reason on the MNSTAR report in the "Acknowledgment of Receipt of Notice of Privacy Practices". It is not necessary to gain a signature since we are an emergency ambulance. Our billing agency will then be instructed to mail a copy with the patient's bill.

Policies included:

Patient Accounting Form: This form is used by the patient to access Protected Health Information (PHI) beyond billing

Consent to release form: Normal releases of information

Accounting Log Form: This form is used as a master log of all PHI.

Policy on Confidentiality and Dissemination of Information: Outlines staff requirements.

Confidentiality Language for Vendors Who Are Not Business Associates: Self-explanatory.

Confidentiality Language for Vendors Who Are Business Associates: Self-explanatory.

Authorization to Use and Disclose Form: Release of information to be used for reasons beyond billing.

Policy on Security Levels of Access: Self-explanatory.

Policy on Designated Record Sets:

Policy on Patient Access, Amendments and Restriction of PHI:

Notice to the Patient: Covers a briefing of the policy for the patient upon request.