

Delaware County Emergency Medical Service Standard Operating Guidelines

Subject	Effective	Supersedes	This Sheet	Total
HIPAA Privacy Regulations	August 1, 2007	All	1	2

Given the nature of our work, it is imperative that we maintain the confidence of patient information that we receive in the course of our work. Delaware County EMS prohibits the release of any patient information to anyone outside the organization unless required for purposes of treatment or health care operations. Discussions of Protected Health Information (PHI) within the organization should be limited. Acceptable uses of PHI include, but are not limited to, exchange of patient information needed for the treatment of the patient, peer review, internal audits, and quality assurance activities.

All current staff will be required to undergo privacy training in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule. All new staff members will be required to undergo privacy training in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule within three months of initial employment, as scheduled by the Privacy Officer.

All staff members will be required to undergo privacy training in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule within a reasonable time after there is a material change to any of Delaware County's policies and procedures on privacy practices

Delaware County maintains strict requirements on the security and access of all Patient Care Reports as well as the initial documentation created by the field providers. All preliminary documentation used by a crewmember to assist in the creation or modification of a PCR is the sole property of Delaware County EMS.

Each crewmember will be given a password to use Delaware County's computer systems. No crewmember may disclose his/her password to any other crewmember. Inappropriate access or retention of PHI may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

You are not required to limit your disclosure to the minimum amount of information necessary when disclosing Protected Health Information to other health care providers for treatment of the patient. This includes doctors, nurses, etc. at the receiving hospital, any mutual aid provider, your fellow crewmembers involved in the call, and any other person involved in the treatment of the patient who has a need to know that patient's PHI.

Delaware County understands that there will be times when there are incidental disclosures about PHI in the context of caring for a patient. The privacy laws were not intended to impede common health care practices that are essential in providing health care to the individual. Incidental disclosures are inevitable, but these will typically occur in radio or face-to-face conversation between health care providers.

The principle is that all staff needs to be sensitive about the importance of maintaining the confidence and security of all material we create or use that contains patient care information. All personnel must be sensitive to avoiding incidental disclosures to other health care providers and others who do not have a need to know the information. Pay attention to who is within earshot when you make verbal statements about a patient's health information, and follow procedures (voice lowering, moving away, etc) for avoiding accidental disclosures.

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PRIVACY OFFICER:

Delaware County EMS has appointed a Privacy Officer to oversee our policies and procedures on patient privacy and to monitor compliance. The Privacy Officer is also available to you for consultation on any issues or concerns you have about how our EMS Department deals with protected health information. You should feel free to contact the Privacy Officer at any time with your questions or concerns.

Delaware County EMS will not retaliate against any staff member who expresses a good concern or complaint about any policy or practice related to the safeguarding of patient information and the EMS Departments legal obligations to protect patient privacy.

The Privacy Officer will be a member of administration who is accessible during normal business hours in order to provide easy access to the general public.

The Privacy Officer must be someone who is knowledgeable in medical terminology and have a general understanding of the services provided by Delaware County Emergency Medical Services.

The Privacy Officer will be responsible for the keeping of the Patient Care Reports, ensuring their confidentiality, proper storage and maintenance. The Privacy Officer will keep personnel informed as to any changes or procedures in the HIPAA ruling and will ensure that employees comply with all confidentiality policies and procedures set in place by Delaware County EMS. Any breach in patient confidentiality policies and procedures may result in suspension or termination of employment or association with Delaware County EMS.

In order for a patient or his or her authorized representative to obtain a copy of the patient care report from the Privacy Officer there are certain steps that must be adhered to.

- Requests for patient information should be forwarded to the Privacy Officer.
- The Privacy Officer (designee) will act upon the request within 3-5 days, unless the designated record set is not maintained on site, in which case the response period may be extended to 10 days.

Issuing Authority:



DCEMS Chief Rob Farmer

08/01/2007

Date