



City and County of San Francisco  
London Breed, Mayor

## San Francisco Department of Public Health

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Director of Health

### San Francisco Department of Public Health

#### *Policy & Procedure Detail\**

<b>Policy &amp; Procedure Title:</b> D.1.0 Secure Delivery of Protected Health Information Policy	
<b>Category:</b> Privacy	
<b>Effective Date:</b> 5/13/2010	<b>Last Reissue/Revision Date:</b> 1/11/2021
<b>DPH Unit of Origin:</b> Office of Compliance & Privacy Affairs	
<b>Policy Contact - Employee Name and Title; and/or DPH Division:</b> Office of Compliance & Privacy Affairs (OCPA)	
<b>Contact Phone Number(s):</b> (855) 729-6040	
<b>Distribution:</b> DPH-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>If not DPH-wide, other distribution:</b>

*\*All sections in table required. Updated 3/2014*

#### 1. Purpose of Policy

Any document that contains protected health information (PHI) is confidential and must be protected with appropriate measures. When documents containing PHI are sent from one location to another, there is a risk that they may be lost, misplaced, or mis-delivered. This policy provides guidance to staff and providers, who in the course of their responsibilities, must send confidential PHI through interoffice mail, US mail, other mail, and by fax transmission. Please note that this policy does not cover delivery of PHI through electronic means, including through email or an electronic health record system.

This policy applies to all DPH workforce members, including employees, affiliated staff and residents, contracted staff, students, volunteers, medical staff, and individuals representing or working at DPH.

#### 2. Policy

It is the policy of the San Francisco Department of Public Health to safeguard the client's protected health information at all times. Each individual is responsible for securing the delivery of PHI through interoffice mail, US mail, other mail or delivery service, and by fax transmission. Any unauthorized disclosure, copying, use, or distribution of PHI may be subject to civil or criminal penalties under state and federal privacy laws.

Substance abuse federal regulations [42 C.F.R. Part 2] require that substance abuse treatment programs sending documents containing PHI to a third party must attach a statement that the documents may not be re-disclosed without authorization from the client.

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**The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.**

We shall - Assess and research the health of the community - Develop and enforce health policy - Prevent disease and injury -  
- Educate the public and train health care providers - Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services - Ensure equal access to all -

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### 3. Procedures

#### 1. Delivery of PHI through Interoffice Mail, US Mail, and Other Mail

- A. Mailed PHI should be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose.
- B. Employee must complete and attach a cover sheet on documents that contain PHI.
- C. Packet must be contained in a sealed envelope.

#### 2. Transmission of PHI through Facsimile (fax)

- A. Faxed PHI should be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose
- B. At a minimum, employee must:
  - i. Confirm fax number is correct and inform the recipient regarding the fax prior to sending.
  - ii. Complete and attach cover sheet on documents that contain PHI.
  - iii. Confirm total number of pages to be included and the fax number and recipient again before sending.
  - iv. Stand next to the fax machine until the entire document has been transmitted and remove all pages once finished.

### 4. References/Attachments

- PHI Cover Sheet Required for Fax Transmissions, Interoffice Mail, US Mail and Other Mail/Delivery