Approved by Chris Urbina, Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer, February 2013

SUMMARY

Colorado and federal statutes and regulations require privacy protection for all citizens. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment staff will follow this policy to ensure sensitive information is faxed to the intended recipient and to minimize the likelihood of a fax being intercepted by an unauthorized person.

POLICY

Faxing can be a secure method for transmitting sensitive information. Faxes, however, can be misdirected or may be faxed to an insecure open location. Employees should take steps to reduce the likelihood that faxed sensitive information will be viewed by unauthorized personnel, either internally or externally.

PROCEDURE

1. Fax machines that are used to routinely fax sensitive information should be programmed with frequently used numbers, and it is the responsibility of the employee to use preprogrammed numbers as appropriate.
2. Any sensitive information should not be faxed to a location without first verifying with the recipient and the security of the receiving site. If the site is open to many people, as are fax machines in the department's common rooms, the fax should not be sent unless arrangement is made for the recipient to pick up the fax as it is sent. Similarly, faxes with sensitive information should not be faxed to a department common room or to an open area without a specific arrangement for picking up the fax as it is transmitted.
3. If sensitive information is being faxed out of a shared area, such as a department common room, the fax material should not be left on the fax machine. The person sending the fax should remain with the material until it is sent.
4. Employees of programs that routinely receive and transmit sensitive information are encouraged to locate fax machines in areas that minimize the likelihood of unauthorized people accessing sensitive information.
5. A full sheet fax cover sheet should be used when faxing sensitive information. Use the department Fax Cover Sheet.

6. Any employee not complying with this policy and these procedures may be subject to progressive discipline, up to and including termination. Non-employees who do not comply with this policy and these procedures will be dealt with appropriately.
7. Compliance will be measured by spot checks of fax machines and related distribution boxes.

TOOLS/GUIDANCE/STANDARDS

Key Terms and Definitions

REFERENCE

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule §164.530 (c) (1), Standard: safeguards.