



# Terrebonne General Medical Center Policy and Procedure

<b>Title: EMAIL Policy</b>	<b>Control No.: 8230</b>	<b>Version: 6</b>
<b>Replaces: v.5 EMAIL Policy</b>		
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**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to prevent the misuse of TGMC electronic mail systems (Email). This policy educates users on the controls and guidelines of acceptable and non-acceptable uses of electronic mail systems when accessing electronic mail functions from TGMC workstations. It will also create one standardized electronic mail signature that reflects the brand and image of TGMC. It establishes standards and procedures mandated by law to preserve the privacy of PHI data. The policy applies to all TGMC employees, contractors and providers who are granted access to use electronic mail systems.

**Policy:** Terrebonne General Medical Center provides internal and Internet email access to those employees who require these services to complete assigned work activities.

### Acceptable use of Email:

1. Email is provided for official and authorized business activities that support patient care and business operations. Its use must adhere to TGMC business and ethics policies in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
2. The email system is to assist in conducting business and is not intended to be used for personal activities.
3. Email users will be held responsible for all email activity associated with their account.
4. Email users should never represent themselves as someone else and should always use the standardized signature established for them to conduct business.
5. Email may not be used to solicit for commercial venture, religious, or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-job related solicitations.
6. The email system is not to be used to create offensive or disruptive messages, such as those that contain sexual implications, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comment that offensively addresses someone's age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability.
7. The email system is not to be used to send or receive copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information or similar materials without prior authorization.

8. Notwithstanding TGMC's right to retrieve and read any email message, such messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any email messages that are not sent to them. Exceptions require Information Technology approval.
9. Employees should not use a code, access a file, or retrieve stored information from another employee's email.
10. The email system is not to be used to send or reply to "chain letters" or other material inappropriate for work activities.
11. Employee must not alter the electronic messaging security settings applied by IT without prior approval.

### **Privacy Requirements:**

1. All emails containing any PHI being sent to any outside source should be sent using encrypted email. To encrypt an Email message, type the word SECURE in the message subject line. The body of the mail and/or attachment will be secured and will require the reader of the email to retrieve a sign-on and password in order to obtain the email message and/or attachment.
2. The confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased, it may still be possible to retrieve and read it. Further, the use of passwords for email security does not guarantee confidentiality.
3. No PHI should be sent using email that is not protected by the TGMC email encryption process. Do not use other messaging services (i.e. Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.) to send messages regarding patient care or other confidential information.

### **Monitoring and Ownership:**

1. All messages composed, sent, or received by TGMC email users are the property of TGMC, not the private property of any employee.
2. TGMC reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received, or sent via email for any purpose. The contents of email, properly obtained for legitimate business purposes, may be disclosed within TGMC without permission of the employee

### **Retention and Archival:**

1. Mail and calendar items older than five (5) days are archived in the Enterprise Vault and may be stored indefinitely.

Violation or improper use of the TGMC email system be considered as failure to follow hospital policy and will provide grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. TGMC intends to honor the policies set forth here but reserves the right to change them as required under certain circumstances.

## INTERNET ACCESS/INTERNET EMAIL REQUEST FORM

### **Procedure:**

1. Individuals requesting to receive internal or Internet email, must complete a Request for Service form and indicate email and internet access and submit for approval by the Department Manager and/or Vice-President. Forms are available on the TGMC Intranet site. Forms may also be obtained from Managers, Directors, the Information Technology or Human Resource Departments.
2. Approved forms will be routed to the Information Technology Department. The appropriate I.T. staff will be notified to make required system changes that will create the email account(s). Once the account(s) have been established, the end user will be notified and trained on accessing the mail system.
3. All employees with electronic mail access are required to implement a standardized signature on outgoing emails. The signature must follow the template provided and cannot be altered with any deletion of information. The font type and font colors must follow the template. The signature will be scripted into your instance of Outlook at login. If this automated script fails to produce the signature for you, you will be required to add to Outlook manually using the attached instructions.

### **Definitions:**

TGMC – Terrebonne General Medical Center

PHI – (Protected Health Information) - under US law is any information about health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care that is created or collected by a "Covered Entity" (or a Business Associate of a Covered Entity), and can be linked to a specific individual.

IT – Information Technology Department of Terrebonne General Medical Center

### **References:**

HIPAA Security Rule 164.312 (a)(2)(iv) – technical safeguards – encryption

HIPAA Security Rule 164.312 (e)(2)(ii) – technical safeguards - encryption