

COMPLIANCE REFERENCE

HIPAA safeguards checklist for a small practice

An educational checklist of common HIPAA Security and Privacy Rule safeguards for a small or solo mental health practice. Not legal advice or a compliance program; confirm current HHS rules and get counsel.

Educational example only. This is not legal, medical, or compliance advice, and it is not a ready-to-use legal document. Requirements vary by state, payer, and setting. Adapt anything like this to your own situation and have it reviewed by qualified legal and compliance counsel licensed in your jurisdiction before using it in a practice. You are responsible for compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, including HIPAA. shrinkiatry publishes professional commentary and education, not legal or medical advice.

Current as of July 7, 2026. Laws, payer rules, and billing codes change. Confirm the current requirements for your jurisdiction and setting before you rely on anything here.

Administrative safeguards

- A documented security risk analysis, revisited regularly
- Written policies, workforce training, and a sanction policy
- Signed business associate agreements with every vendor that touches protected health information
- A breach response and notification plan

Physical safeguards

- Control physical access to devices and any paper records
- Lock screens, secure workstations, and a clear policy for devices taken off site

Technical safeguards

- Unique user accounts and access limited to the minimum necessary
- Encryption of data at rest and in transit where reasonable and appropriate
- Audit logging, automatic logoff, and secure backups
- Secure messaging and a HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform

Privacy Rule basics

- A current Notice of Privacy Practices
- Honor patient rights, including access to their records
- Special handling for psychotherapy notes and other sensitive records

Note

This is a starting checklist, not a compliance program. Confirm current HHS Office for Civil Rights guidance and have your safeguards reviewed by qualified counsel.

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