

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Release of Information and Record Request Processing

## 1. Purpose

This SOP details the **release of information and record request processing**, covering procedures for managing and responding to requests for records, ensuring compliance with privacy laws and organizational policies, verifying requester authorization, securely handling sensitive data, timely and accurate documentation of requests and disclosures, maintaining confidentiality, and addressing appeals or disputes related to information release. The aim is to provide a consistent framework that protects client information while facilitating appropriate information sharing.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in processing, managing, or responding to record requests within the organization, including both electronic and paper records.

## 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Record	Any document or data relating to a client or organizational operation.
Requester	The individual or entity requesting access to records.
Release of Information (ROI)	The authorized disclosure of records or information to a requester.
PHI	Protected Health Information, as defined under HIPAA.

## 4. Responsibilities

- **Compliance Officer:** Ensures legal and policy adherence.
- **Records Custodian:** Manages records and processes requests.
- **All Staff:** Supports record protection and confidentiality.

## 5. Procedure

- 1. Receipt of Request**
  - Requests must be submitted in writing via approved channels (email, portal, postal mail).
  - Log all requests upon receipt, noting time, date, requester information, and nature of request.
- 2. Verification of Authorization**
  - Confirm identity and authority of the requester (e.g., legal documentation, signed authorizations, power of attorney).
  - If the request is incomplete or authorization is insufficient, contact requester for clarification.
- 3. Review of Request**
  - Assess requested information for validity, relevance, and compliance with privacy laws (e.g., HIPAA, GDPR).
  - Involve legal/compliance team as necessary.
- 4. Information Retrieval and Redaction**
  - Locate requested records securely.
  - Redact information not authorized for release or protected by law.
- 5. Release of Information**
  - Transmit records through secure, approved methods (encrypted email, secure portal, certified mail).
  - Document specifics of the disclosure, including date, recipient, and format.
- 6. Documentation**
  - Maintain a record of all requests, authorizations, released data, and related communications in a designated tracking system.
  - Retain documentation per record retention policy.
- 7. Appeals/Disputes**

- Address appeals or disputes regarding the release promptly and in accordance with policy.
- Escalate unresolved issues to compliance/legal team.

## 6. Confidentiality & Security

- All information must be handled in compliance with organizational privacy and security policies.
- Unauthorized sharing, copying, or distribution of records is prohibited.
- All releases must be securely transmitted and documented.

## 7. References

- HIPAA Privacy Rule
- GDPR (if applicable)
- Organizational Privacy and Security Policies

## 8. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	2024-06-14	Initial SOP creation	[Your Name]