



Texting on Smart Phones in the Workplace Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ

Decisions to communicate via text must adhere to the policies following policies:

ORG.1411.PL.507 Texting Clients, Natural Supports and other Staff

ORG.1411.PL.201 Confidentiality of Personal Health Information

ORG.1411.PL.503 Audio, Video and Photographic Recording including Surveillance

ORG.1610.PL.002 Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology Security and Storage of PHI

Can I have my personal smart phone on me during work hours?

Smart phone use (and accessing the internet on work computers) for personal use or social media should only be accessed at break time and not in the patient care areas.

Can I use Short Messaging Service (SMS) text to obtain health care professional orders?

No, you cannot receive actual orders using SMS text. Most personal and Southern Health-Santé Sud issued smart phones do not have secure platforms. The text message is not linked to a patient record which can lead to misidentification, typing and transcription errors

Am I obligated to use my personal cell phone to text a health care professional?

No. Southern Health-Santé Sud has allocated unsecured smart phones for use only in situations described in ORG.1411.PL.507 Texting with Clients, Natural Supports and other Staff.

Can I send pictures to a health care professional via text?

MyMBT Messaging (Cortext) should be used when available to share images with a health care professional. SMS texting images is not recommended; however, if required in urgent situations and where MyMBT messaging (Cortext) is not available, strict adherence to Southern Health-Santé Sud policy ORG.1411.PL.507 Texting with Clients, Natural Supports and other Staff and ORG.1411.PL.503 Audio, Video and Photographic Recording including Surveillance must be followed.

What do I do if I receive client personal health information or identifiers via text?

- Do not respond to the message and delete it as soon as possible.
- In a separate text, message the individual back letting them know that this is not an acceptable means of communication and provide them options. If there is a particular individual that continues to send PHI via text messages, bring this to your program lead or manager's attention. A safety event report is to be completed.

Can I text a client or natural support?

Staff working in the Acute Care program are prohibited from texting clients and/or their natural supports; however, texting may be the only way to communicate with a client or their natural support in other programs (i.e. Community Mental Health or Home Care).

When authorized, SMS text may be used to communicate with clients or natural supports in situations where it is the only effective method of communication. Avoid client identifiers and ensure the client understands the risks associated with texting.

What do I document on the client record?

All communication sent and received via text **must** be transcribed on the appropriate approved form in the client's health record.

What are some examples of inappropriate use of text messaging?

- Using a personal smart phone to text message a client;
- Texting confidential or personal health information to a client;
- Texting a client without first informing them of the inherent risks;
- Texting work-related confidential information to another health care professional; or
- To provide payment information such as a credit card.

I notice some physicians sending personal health information to colleagues, is this OK?

- Many physicians have a secure, Shared Health approved platform such as MyMBT Messaging (Cortex) which allows for secure text messaging and image sharing between health care professionals from the user's desk top or mobile devices.
- Physicians are bound by the same rules related to the security of PHI and regional policies.

Why can't all nurses have access to MyMBT Messaging (Cortex)?

At this time, it is not possible to issue each nurse a yearly license and an individual secure password.