

VERVE SYSTEMS |



## Whitepaper: How to be HIPAA Compliant?

## OVERVIEW

Healthcare is in the midst of one of the greatest revolutions in history thanks to healthcare reform and a broader movement towards electronic data. Recent updates to HIPAA and HITECH regulations are holding companies more liable than ever for protecting personal health information (PHI). The increased portability that data now requires carries its own significant risk for companies. Chief among these risks are privacy, security, accessibility and continuity in the face of disaster.

This paper focuses on how to ensure vital data and systems persist indefinitely and can be rapidly recovered and brought back to a production state, even in the face of a disaster. HIPAA-covered entities must comply with all categories listed within the HIPAA regulations.

## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

The healthcare industry has undergone a radical digital shift in the past decade. In 2006, fewer than 10% of hospitals had a fully integrated electronic health record (EHR) system, and as of 2014, more than 80% of hospitals in the US have adopted some type of EHR system.

Through massive efforts at both the public and independent practice levels, as well as through incentives to migrate to EHR systems, an industry that used to be dominated by thousands of tons of paper is finally shifting to a paperless way of life. The amount data is expected to only grow as technological innovations and interaction points with data proliferate.

### KNOW THE TERMS

**Recovery Point Objective (RPO)** - Refers to the point in time in the past from which you will recover. For example, if your application was hacked at 5:10 PM, you would choose to recover from 5:09 PM or earlier. The longer the RPO, the more data you risk losing.

**Recovery Time Objective (RTO)** - Refers to the point in time in the future at which you will be up and running again. For example, if disaster strikes at 5:10 PM, and your RTO promise from your DRaaS provider is 4 hours, your systems will be up and running by 9:10 PM or sooner.

## **DISASTER RECOVERY-AS-A-SERVICE: BUSINESS UNINTERRUPTED**

Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS) allows customers to replicate whole applications as a single unit by encapsulating network, security, server images and data to a secure cloud environment. This holistic, rather than piece-meal, process enables fast and reliable failover of production so the business can continue without interruption as quickly as possible. Providers can offer layers of security to address even the most complex requirements such as the handling of PHI.

DRaaS solutions are unique compared to other disaster recovery DR solutions because they not only address disaster recovery event needs, but they also provide tools for post-event management. Anyone who has faced a disaster knows the initial recovery is only part of the battle. Running in a recovery state, getting back to a normal state and cleaning up the resulting mess is a much longer, more complicated problem.

## HIPAA Requires Contingency Plans, DRaaS Provides the Solution

For technology companies that serve the healthcare industry, HIPAA requirements are a constant and critical consideration. HIPAA has five key contingency plan requirements that address the policies and procedures companies put in place to anticipate and respond to abnormal events such as disasters.

### HIPAA CONTINGENCY PLAN REGULATION

1. **Data Backup Plan** Establish and implement procedures to create and maintain retrievable exact copies of electronic protected health information.”  
Covered entities must establish and implement procedures to create and maintain retrievable exact copies of electronic health records and information. Specifically, the data backup must be frequent, offsite, the data must be recoverable, and data-at-rest must be encrypted. Your plan should also be documented and tested.
2. **Disaster recovery plan** Establish (and implement as needed) procedures to restore any loss of data.” Companies must have a central document that specifies the resources, technology, processes, personnel and data required to protect and recover healthcare information in the event of a disaster.
3. **Emergency mode operation plan** Establish (and implement as needed) procedures to enable continuation of critical business processes for protection of the security of electronic protected health information while operating in emergency mode.” Companies must have a detailed plan for how they will continue business operations and continue protection during an emergency. This could include accessing protected systems and workstations even in extreme circumstances.
4. **Testing and revision procedures (Addressable)** Implement procedures for periodic testing and revision of contingency plans.” Companies must document and implement procedures for periodic testing and revision of contingency plans. This periodic testing is intended to discover weaknesses and revise documentation and processes as needed to address those weaknesses.
5. **Applications and Data Criticality Analysis** Assess the relative criticality of specific applications and data in support of other contingency plan components.” Companies should understand the relative importance of each application and data in order to inform the contingency plan order of operations and processes, as well as special considerations.

## **CONCLUSION**

You already know that complying with the latest HIPAA and HITECH regulations is no easy task. Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service serves your business in two ways. It provides a simple, affordable and reliable recovery solution that eliminates business risk, and it also helps you work faster and smarter toward achieving compliance with HIPAA contingency plan requirements. A holistic DRaaS solution ensures the continuity of your business through any disaster, be it human error or tornado, by providing secure, offsite data and application recovery that protects your business from the loss of revenue and reputation.

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## Thank You!

### About Verve Systems

Verve Systems strives to consistently transform the operational landscape of your business with innovative IT solutions that would provide you the unassailable edge in your niche – healthcare, retail, travel and more. We have a prestigious presence in the mainstream IT solutions provider group. Our motto is to develop cutting edge solutions that would complement your business needs optimally. This motivates us to understand your business better by analyzing comprehensively the inter-related processes governing the entire spectrum of your operation. Accordingly, we come up with IT solutions that would drive your mission and vision forward in a convincing manner at minimal costs while ensuring maximum output.

### Contact Us

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