



The Importance of Healthcare Compliance Training

Many healthcare compliance programs have a serious blind spot: compliance training. While over 50% of compliance breaches are caused by employee errors¹, nearly a fifth of employees have never received cybersecurity training. Without effective training, even the best compliance policies and technologies can fail, leaving organizations vulnerable to costly breaches and reputational damage.

This article explains why such training is so important – and helps you find a suitable training program for your employees.

An Overview of Healthcare Compliance Training

What is Compliance Training?

[Compliance training](#) is designed to ensure healthcare employees understand all regulations relevant to their role and have the skills required to adhere to them. This training helps employees stay informed about industry standards, legal requirements, and organizational policies that ensure safety, security, and ethical behavior.

Compliance training goes beyond simply meeting basic requirements. It encompasses a wide range of critical topics to promote a culture of responsibility and accountability across an organization.

Why is Compliance Training Important?

Compliance regulations in healthcare are highly complex and place heavy constraints on processes such as the collection, storage, access, and disclosure of sensitive information. While some of these constraints are intuitive, individual staff members cannot be expected to have a comprehensive understanding of all regulations without adequate training.

Compliance training helps to establish clear roles and responsibilities, provide best practices for handling patient data, and ultimately avoid the human errors that lead to a high proportion of violations. As a result, effective training ensures your organization can:

- **Protect Patients:** Healthcare regulations exist to protect patients' privacy and safety. Compliance training helps staff understand how their actions impact these factors and ensures they provide optimal service and care.
- **Avoid Penalties:** Employee errors routinely lead to large financial penalties and reputational damage for their organizations. While individuals are, in some cases, held personally responsible, the organization itself usually takes on most of the blame for data breaches and other forms of non-compliance.
- **Build a "Culture of Compliance":** Patients are increasingly aware of their personal data – and want to visit organizations that protect it. Compliance training helps to build a positive culture where privacy and security are properly valued, ultimately helping to build patient trust.

Who Should Undertake Compliance Training?

There is a common misconception that compliance training is only required from individuals who directly interact with patients or handle data in an official capacity. However, in reality, compliance regulations often state that training should be provided to all members of an organization's workforce.

This includes employees, volunteers, trainees, and others whose conduct is under the direct control of the organization, regardless of whether they are paid. The takeaway is simple: All personnel who work within your organization should be given compliance training – ideally on a regular, ongoing basis. This raises the question: what does this training actually involve?

Types of Compliance Training

Healthcare organizations must address various types of compliance training to meet industry regulations and ensure smooth operations. Below are the primary types of training programs commonly provided:

HIPAA Compliance Training

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)² training is designed to educate staff on safeguarding patient data. Topics include:

- HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Notification Rules
- Role-specific responsibilities for protecting electronic and physical records
- Best practices for secure communication and data handling

OSHA Training

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA³) mandates training for healthcare employees to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. Key topics include:

- Infection control protocols
- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Handling hazardous materials safely

Cybersecurity Awareness Training

Given the rise in healthcare cyberattacks, cybersecurity training⁴ is crucial for educating staff on:

- Recognizing phishing and other cyber threats
- Using secure passwords and authentication methods
- Safeguarding organizational IT systems

Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Training

Compliance training should also include education on fostering a respectful workplace environment. Topics include:

- Identifying and preventing workplace harassment
- Understanding anti-discrimination laws
- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (FWA) Training

Mandatory for organizations that participate in Medicare or Medicaid programs, FWA training covers:

- Recognizing and reporting fraudulent activities
- Avoiding waste and abuse of healthcare resources
- Understanding program compliance requirements

How Compliance Training Works

Compliance training varies between different organizations, both in terms of frequency and depth. Some organizations run their own training through the compliance department, while others use third-party services or software platforms to accelerate or enhance the training process.

The Basic Requirements of Compliance Training

A standard compliance course will offer trainees:

- **Compliance Overview:** Employees learn the purpose of different regulations and their importance in safeguarding sensitive information. While this may not be “new” information, it is important to reiterate and reinforce the importance of the rules.
- **Explanation of the Key Regulations:** Employees are given a comprehensive explanation of relevant rules and guidelines, including how they impact processes such as privacy protection, data security, and breach notifications. Sessions may include practical insights into applying these rules in daily workflows.
- **Role-Specific Responsibilities:** Clear explanations of how each role within an organization is responsible for compliance. For example, it is important for all personnel who access computers to understand the authorization process – and ensure they follow it.
- **Best Practices:** Provide practical guidance on secure communication, data protection, and avoiding common compliance pitfalls. This should be tailored to each role within an organization, ensuring individual trainees know exactly how compliance affects their daily workload.
- **Scenario-Based Learning:** Interactive exercises and real-world examples to help employees apply compliance principles in their daily work. This will also often include tests to reinforce the lessons and ensure employees are ready to apply the principles to real-world scenarios.

How Long Does Compliance Training Last?

The duration of compliance training depends on the organization and the depth of the content being covered. However, a typical organization will break training into three broad categories:

- **Initial Training:** Comprehensive training for new hires can last 1–2 hours, depending on their roles and responsibilities.
- **Refresher Training:** Annual training sessions are usually shorter, ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour, focusing on updates or reinforcing critical concepts.
- **Advanced Training:** Specialized roles, such as IT administrators or compliance officers, may require more in-depth sessions that could extend to several hours or span multiple days.

How Frequent Should Compliance Training Be?

Compliance training is never “one and done”: healthcare regulations are updated regularly, with new standards and requirements routinely introduced. As a result, most healthcare organizations benefit from:

- **Onboarding:** Include compliance training in the standard onboarding process, ensuring all new employees receive it as part of their orientation.

- Annual Training: Refresher courses should be conducted yearly to reinforce compliance and address any updates to regulations or policies.
- Ad-Hoc: Additional training should occur whenever there are **significant changes in laws or organizational policies or after a breach or compliance audit.**

How Effective Compliance Training Makes Life Easier for Employees

Compliance training provides many benefits on an organizational level, -but it's important to note that employees also benefit greatly from effective education. This breaks down into multiple factors, including:

- Increased Confidence: Many healthcare employees have strong feelings about the protection of patient data - and believe their organization is responsible for proactively protecting it. Compliance training, therefore, signals that your organization takes this responsibility seriously and helps to build trust.
- Reduced Anxiety: Most employees are aware of general compliance principles but may not have total clarity on their specific responsibilities. Training ensures they know exactly how to maintain compliance and that they are less fearful of an “unwitting” breach, especially if they are able to undergo scenario training.

Effective compliance training helps employers, employees, *and* patients. But how do you ensure your organization runs optimal training?

How to Select the Right Compliance Training Program

Most healthcare entities lack the internal resources to run effective training: it simply requires too much time, effort, and expertise for overworked and often understaffed organizations. As a result, many choose to work with an external partner to plan and administer routine [compliance training](#).

However, training is highly sensitive and has a widespread impact on your organization – so selecting the right partner is vital. The following factors will help you assess each vendor and find the best candidate:

- Tailored Services: Every organization has different compliance challenges based on its specific operations, IT systems, and internal culture. The ideal vendor should tailor their services to your needs and ensure your employees only spend time on the areas that actually matter to their daily workflows.
- Flexibility: Many vendors offer either in-person or remote training, but some organizations may need both – especially if your workforce is partially remote. Look for a vendor that is flexible and can administer on-demand training that fits into your employees' workflows.

- Interactive: Training is far more effective when it involves real-world scenarios and helps employees apply best practices to their actual work. The best vendor will include interactive elements in their program and make training tangible for your employees.

Make Compliance Training Seamless with Compliance Resource Center

Compliance Resource Center (CRC) has helped countless healthcare organizations enhance their compliance programs and offer more comprehensive, flexible, and effective compliance training programs.

Want to explore how our services could help your entire team stay compliant?

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