








Secure Email Communication: Protecting Confidential and PHI Data

To protect confidential information and ensure compliance with HIPAA privacy and security requirements, all staff must follow our secure encryption process when sending sensitive data outside of our network.

When to Encrypt Your Email

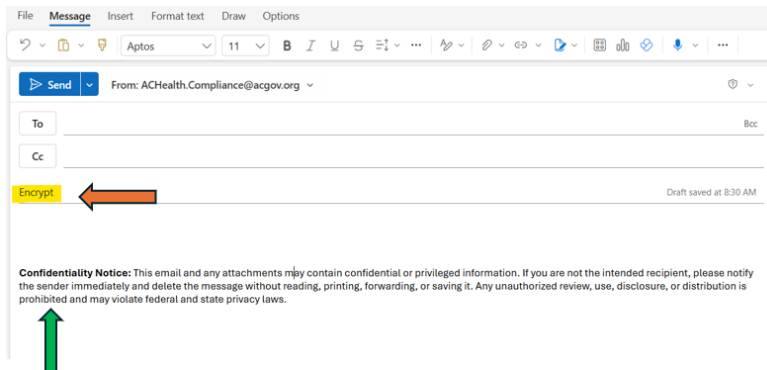
Use email encryption when sending any information to recipients outside of AC Health (i.e., **outside of acgov.org**) that includes or relates to:

-  Protected Health Information (PHI)
-  Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
-  Financial Records
-  Confidential patient or client data
-  Any sensitive, internal, or otherwise restricted information



When in doubt, choose the more cautious approach. Treat it as confidential and encrypt the email.








How to Encrypt an Email



To encrypt your email:

- Type “**Encrypt**” anywhere in the subject line of your email (e.g., Encrypt – Referral)
- Ensure your email signature includes a confidentiality notice
- Send the email as you normally would

Privacy/Security Best Practices: **Pause. Check. PROTECT**

-  Encryption is **required** for all external emails containing sensitive data (e.g., PHI, PII)
-  Always double-check recipient email addresses before sending
-  Before using “Reply All,” confirm it is necessary and that all recipients truly need the information
-  Do not include client’s name or any PHI or PII in the subject line
-  Password-protect any attachments containing PHI or PII and send the password in a separate email
-  Do not use or send email to personal email accounts (Gmail, Yahoo) or unapproved messaging tools for work communications
-  If a client requests unsecured email, follow our HIPAA Policy #OCS.P.002 and have the client complete the **Request for Unencrypted Email Communication Form** before sending any information.

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Pause. Check. **PROTECT**

This is for INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES only and is not intended as a comprehensive discussion or legal advice. If you have questions, please contact the AC Health Office of Compliance Services (OCS).

