

Logbooks

A physical logbook is any written (i.e., not electronic) record of activities or events comprised of data which may uniquely identify an individual or contain sensitive personal information that is maintained over a period of time for the purpose of monitoring an activity, tracking information, or creating a historical record. The following are examples of physical logbooks:

- Laboratory Logbooks
- Patient Screening Lists
- Master Subject Logs in regulatory binders
- Printouts of Excel spreadsheets
- Access database printouts

Log books are helpful in conducting VA business; however, they must be used safely. Keep logbooks with VA Sensitive Information (VASI) in electronic files on authorized VA systems. [Note: VA Sensitive Information (VASI) is defined as information containing personal health information (PHI) or personal identity information (PII).]

If your job requires you to maintain a logbook, use an electronic log book if at all possible. Physical logbooks create a high risk of violating privacy because they can be lost or stolen. VA does not allow the use of physical logbooks for personal use. This includes the use of paper logbooks in clinics and medical centers.

If there is a business need or legal requirement for the use of a physical (paper) logbook, you must get approval from the Facility Director as required by local policy and approval processes. Supervisors, Service Chiefs, or other responsible parties must confirm the business requirement, location, and content.

Log books have the potential to be federal records and must be retained in accordance with the Federal Record Act (See Record Retention).

References:

1. VA Privacy and Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior (FY14)