



PRACTICE ADVICE

MAINTAINING YOUR SAFETY WHILE PROVIDING SERVICES

EFFECTIVE: FEBRUARY 2019

THE USE OF CELL PHONES IN YOUR WORK AND YOUR SAFETY

The use of cell phones helps health professionals communicate and organize their professional and private lives effectively.

Increasingly, patients and families want contact information, including phone numbers, to text communications such as a cancellation, illness or if they are running late for an appointment.

Although such requests seem innocent, there are personal safety implications for audiologists and SLPs in providing personal cell phone information. Patients or families can start to communicate outside of work times and/or inappropriately. Finally, there is software that allows people to track where you are through your phone.

We have provided some recommendations to increase safety when communicating with patients and families.

- Avoid giving personal phone information to patients and families.
- Give patients and families a work phone number and ask them to leave voice mail messages if you are not available. Call into your work messaging system regularly to retrieve messages.
- Give patients and families a work email address and ask them to communicate with you via email assuring them that you check it regularly in business hours. You can easily pick up email messages on your phone.
- If your work necessitates using a cell phone, consider having a work cell phone and a personal cell phone for your private, non-work life. This is an added expense, but it is the best method to keep you safe. Also, it is a business expense that you can deduct against your professional income when submitting your tax return.
- If you have a work cell phone, turn it off outside your work hours.
- Remove your Caller ID in your cell phone settings ('phone' settings). When patients or families receive a call from a health professional, the phone will show 'No Caller ID'.
- Add *67 or #31# in front of the patient's or family's phone number, again it will show 'No Caller ID'
- Do not add personal cell phone numbers to business cards which you hand out to patients/families/vendors etc.

Finally, we are including an [Information and Privacy article](#) to help you safeguard your patient's personal health information on your mobile device.