



From Confusion to Compliance:  
**How to Ensure Healthcare Employees  
Follow Policies & Procedures**

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Many healthcare organizations invest time, energy, and money into developing robust compliance policies and procedures. But research suggests the problem is often not policy availability—it's policy adherence. Compliance leaders rank training employees on policies as their top policy management challenge,<sup>1</sup> with workers often confused or unclear about what is required from them.

**This whitepaper explores how compliance leaders can fix that problem.** It combines industry research and 30+ years of experience to explore how inefficient policy development leads to poor policy adoption—and reveal proven steps to increase adherence and build a “culture of compliance.”

## The Hidden Cost of Inefficient Policy Development

The average U.S. healthcare company is subject to 629 regulatory requirements across nine distinct domains,<sup>2</sup> with many organizations struggling to develop enough policies and procedures to meet compliance requirements sufficiently. For example, roughly 50% of organizations have 16 or fewer HIPAA-related policies, which most experts deem inadequate to cover the complex demands of all three HIPAA Rules.<sup>3</sup>

**Most compliance teams must therefore invest heavily in developing policies.** The problem is that most organizations develop policies manually; this process is time-consuming and difficult. Their teams must identify compliance gaps, draft and revise policies, and get approvals from multiple stakeholders—all despite the average healthcare compliance teams being under-resourced.

As a result, the policy development process is:

💰 **Expensive:** A single policy can cost up to \$5,000—and that figure doesn't account for labor required to conduct legal reviews and obtain stakeholder approvals.<sup>4</sup> The resources allocated to compliance policy management are therefore funneled towards development rather than internal distribution and promotion.

🕒 **Slow and Unresponsive:** Policies might take several months from inception to implementation, but this simply isn't fast enough to keep up with changing compliance requirements. Regulations are often revised or adapted based on evolving challenges or government policy; a manual policy drafting process makes it very difficult to ensure all written policies are up-to-date.

**The problem is that policy development is just the first hurdle;** policy education and monitoring are essential to ensure your organization follows requirements. Excessive focus on development has left many organizations with:

• Siloed, inaccessible policies

• Insufficient policy training

• Poor visibility of policy effectiveness

All of this erodes the culture of compliance and means all that hard work creating policies can feel wasted.

## Healthcare Compliance Policy Training Problems: What The Data Says

# 21%

Of organizations with 10k+ employees do not successfully communicate compliance policies to workers.<sup>5</sup>

# 29%

Of organizations face linguistic or other accessibility barriers to communicate compliance policies internally.<sup>6</sup>

# #1

Compliance leaders rate training employees on policies as their top policy management challenge.<sup>7</sup>

# 5 Steps to Drive Compliance Policy Adherence

## 1 Improve Policy Accessibility

Even the most well-written policy is ineffective if employees can't find it, understand it, or see how it applies to their work. Roughly 40% of healthcare compliance documents are stored in binders or spreadsheets;<sup>8</sup> policies are scattered across multiple systems or stored in shared drives without clear indexing. This creates confusion, duplication, and frustration among staff who need quick guidance in critical situations.

A 2025 policy management study found that 38% of organizations rated themselves “fair” or “poor” at helping employees find or track policies they’ve read.<sup>9</sup> This lack of accessibility means clinicians and healthcare employees may unknowingly rely on outdated or incomplete information—a compliance risk that can easily be avoided.

### How to Improve Policy Accessibility and Usability

Eliminate Silos	Centralize all policies in a single, searchable digital repository. This ensures every department refers to the same approved versions and eliminates confusion from duplicate or conflicting documents.
Improve Language for Ease of Comprehension	Write policies in plain language and avoid legal or overly technical jargon. Use short paragraphs, bullet points, and examples so that front-line staff can understand expectations quickly and accurately.
Include Actionable Examples	Support each policy with clear, scenario-based examples showing how it applies in practice. This bridges the gap between written rules and daily decisions, helping employees translate policies into action.
Seek Employee Feedback on Readability and Clarity	Encourage staff to share where policies are unclear or difficult to follow. Regular feedback loops help refine policy language and format, ensuring that documents remain relevant and user-friendly over time.



In healthcare, compliance training is often treated as a checkbox activity rather than a cultural investment. Employees may complete a single annual course but fail to internalize the principles needed for daily decision-making. This disconnect increases the risk of violations and inconsistent policy application.

Take password protocols: almost all healthcare organizations should have official policies to safeguard passwords and help avoid unauthorized access to PHI. But 24% of healthcare employees say they have never received such training<sup>10</sup> —and only 16% have received proper training to understand procedures related to phishing and business email compromise (BEC) tactics.<sup>11</sup>

### How to Strengthen Policy Training

<b>Increase Training Cadence</b>	Too many healthcare organizations rely on either annual or ad-hoc compliance training. Policy adherence requires regular “refreshers” to ensure employees keep compliance top-of-mind and understand that the organization prioritizes it.
<b>Leverage Online Training</b>	Digital platforms allow healthcare staff to complete mandatory training anytime, anywhere. Healthcare workforces are often spread across remote and on-site roles—but all employees are subject to regulatory requirements and require regular training. Digital compliance training helps ensure the entire workforce receives robust training and understands policies and procedures. It is also easier to deliver targeted training to employees for whom specific procedures are more relevant.
<b>Enable Self-Directed Learning</b>	Offer employees an online knowledge hub with short videos, policy summaries, and quizzes. Allowing staff to revisit content on demand empowers them to seek clarification independently, fostering accountability and continuous improvement.



### 3 Increase Policy Awareness

Even when policies exist, many employees don't know where to find them or that updates have been made. Limited visibility results in outdated practices, duplication, and inconsistent compliance across departments.

Recent industry changes have exacerbated these problems, with many organizations struggling to develop effective AI frameworks or compliance policies.<sup>12</sup> Employees may receive infrequent updates on the organization's official policy—if they receive any official update at all. This leads to confusion, uncertainty, and a loss of internal trust and cohesion around compliance.

#### How to Improve Policy Awareness

<b>Promote Compliance Policies Internally</b>	Use newsletters, Slack posts, or digital signage to regularly feature critical policies and updates. Highlight key takeaways rather than entire documents, linking directly to the full policy. Consistent visibility builds familiarity and reinforces organizational expectations.
<b>Centralize Policies</b>	Eliminating compliance document silos helps to increase overall awareness. All internal promotion of policies can point to the same place—and employees know they can check your central policy documents to clarify any compliance questions or concerns.

### 4 Assess Policy Effectiveness

Having policies in place doesn't guarantee compliance. Many healthcare organizations lack the data to evaluate whether staff understand, remember, or follow existing procedures. Without this feedback, even well-intentioned policies stagnate.

One study found that nearly one-quarter of compliance leaders don't measure policy effectiveness at all.<sup>13</sup> As a result, many make compliance policy decisions without a clear view of how these policies are perceived internally—or whether they actually prompt compliant behaviors.

#### How to Assess and Improve Policy Effectiveness

<b>Build Internal Feedback Processes</b>	Use anonymous surveys or short pulse checks after major policy updates. Ask employees if the policy was clear, relevant, and easy to follow. Aggregating this data identifies where communication or structure needs improvement.
<b>Audit Compliance Program Effectiveness</b>	Schedule quarterly or semiannual audits to review policy adherence. Compare training completion rates, incident reports, and policy acknowledgment data.
<b>Monitor Policy Awareness at Regular Intervals</b>	Track completion of policy attestations and comprehension quizzes. Use dashboards to visualize engagement across departments. Trend analysis over time can reveal which areas require targeted intervention or refresher training.

## 5 Outsource Policy Development

Creating and maintaining healthcare policies internally is labor-intensive and diverts resources from high-impact activities like training and monitoring. For smaller organizations, the administrative burden can stall compliance program growth altogether.

The former HHS Inspector General reported that many smaller healthcare providers delayed compliance program development due to a lack of staff and expertise.<sup>14</sup> Outsourcing policy creation to experienced providers accelerates readiness and reduces risk.

### How to Streamline Policy Development

#### Leverage Pre-Existing Policy Templates

Partner with vendors who offer pre-validated, regulation-aligned policy templates. These templates ensure consistency with CMS, HIPAA, and The Joint Commission standards, while reducing manual effort—and allowing compliance leaders to reallocate time and resources to adherence and monitoring efforts.



Partners like Compliance Resource Center optimize their policy templates to improve adherence. But you can also quickly and easily revise them to meet your specific requirements, helping to introduce new policies faster; consolidate outdated or conflicting policies; and search policies via our digital platform to empower employees—ultimately increasing awareness and adherence.

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