

# 21 Common Sense Rules for Medical Offices



Image by George Eastman House via Flickr

There seem to be a lot of people searching for rules for medical offices. I've never heard of such rules, but since people are looking for them, I thought I'd write some.

1. Medical offices are professional workplaces and staff need to dress, speak, and purport themselves professionally.
2. Patients are customers and customer service should be paramount. Give all patients the utmost respect and practice compassion, compassion, compassion.
3. If it didn't get documented (on paper or electronically), it wasn't done. If it didn't get documented, you can't charge for it.
4. HIPAA. First of all, please spell it correctly. One P, two As. Secondly, know what it means and make it so!
5. Never enter an exam room without knocking.
6. Confirm patient identity (name, date of birth, etc.) before giving injections, taking specimens or performing a procedure.



Image via Wikipedia

7. Remove very sick or very angry patients from the front

desk immediately. Take the sick ones to exam rooms and take the angry ones to the manager's office.

8. Do not use medical jargon with patients. If they don't know what you're talking about, they might be too intimidated to ask.
9. Wash your hands. Often. No matter what you do in the practice.
10. The office should be CLEAN, fresh and up-to-date. No dying plants, no magazines more than 9 months old, no dust bunnies behind the doors, no stained seating or carpets.
11. Train staff to apologize, and to apologize sincerely.
12. Complaints from patients and staff need to be addressed in 2 weeks or less.
13. Medical equipment is to be maintained and tested annually for safety and performance.
14. Once a medical record is finalized, the only changes to a paper record are single line strike-throughs with corrected information and initials, or addendums. There are no changes to electronic records, only addendums.
15. Patients don't understand insurance. Be the expert.
16. Shred confidential practice paperwork and patient-identified information on-site.
17. Keep medications (including sample medications) in locked cabinets and use a good inventory system to log the use and replacement of stock.
18. Strive to meet patients at their communication level. Use graphics, translated materials and interpretive services when needed.
19. Don't expect patients to be on time for their appointments when the provider isn't.
20. Don't make copies from copies.
21. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt. There's always more to the story. Okay, this is really a rule for life in general, but it works in medical offices too.

Leave a comment and tell me what rule you would add.

For more medical office rules, read [\*\*“Ten Golden Rules for Your Medical Office Staff.”\*\*](#)

