18 HIPAA Identifiers

The eighteen identifiers that must be removed to de-identify data are:

1. Names

2. Geographic subdivisions, addresses, and Zip codes:
   All geographical subdivisions smaller than a state, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and their equivalent geo codes. However, the initial three digits of a zip code may remain on the information if, according to current publicly-available data from the Bureau of the Census, the geographic unit formed by combining all zip codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people, and the initial three digits for all such geographic unit containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to 000.

3. All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including:
   Birth date, dates of admission and discharge from a medical facility, and date of death; for persons age 90 and older, all elements of dates (including year) that would indicate such age must be removed, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of “age 90 or older.”

4. Telephone numbers

5. Fax numbers

6. Electronic mail addresses

7. Social security numbers

8. Medical record numbers and prescription numbers

9. Health plan beneficiary numbers

10. Account numbers

11. Certificate/license numbers

12. Vehicle identifiers, serial numbers, and license plate numbers

13. Device identifiers and serial numbers

14. Universal Resource Locators (URL) for Web Sites

15. Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers

16. Biometric identifiers, including fingerprints and voice prints

17. Full face or comparable photographic images

18. Any other unique number, characteristic, or code that could be used to identify the individual