

EHR Downtime Plan Template and Printable Downtime Forms

A fill-in-the-blank downtime plan for medical and dental practices, plus printable paper encounter forms and a downtime event log. Print this packet, complete the blanks, and keep a copy in your downtime kit at every location.

1. Purpose and scope

This plan describes how the practice continues to deliver and document patient care when the electronic health record or supporting systems are unavailable, whether the outage is planned or unplanned.

Practice name	
EHR / EMR system	
Practice management system	
Locations covered	
Plan owner	
Version / date	
Next review date	

Systems in scope (check all that apply)

☐	EHR / EMR
☐	Practice management and scheduling
☐	E-prescribing
☐	Lab interface
☐	Imaging / PACS
☐	Clearinghouse and billing
☐	Phones
☐	Internet / network
☐	Other:
☐	

2. Roles and contacts

Name a person and a backup for every role. Write in mobile numbers, not extensions.

Role	Name	Mobile	Backup name / mobile
Downtime coordinator			
Clinical lead			
Front desk lead			
Billing lead			
IT support contact			
EHR vendor support			
Practice administrator			

After-hours escalation

IT after-hours line

EHR vendor after-hours

Cyber insurance carrier / policy

Legal counsel

Escalate after (minutes)

3. Activation criteria and communication tree

Decide the threshold now so nobody has to decide under pressure.

Downtime is declared after

Who may declare downtime

Who declares recovery

Notification order (who calls whom)

Step	Who notifies	Who is notified	Method	Done
1				

Step	Who notifies	Who is notified	Method	Done
2				
3				
4				
5				

Patient-facing script (waiting room and phones)

4. Downtime kit contents checklist

Store the kit in a known, unlocked location at each site. Check the contents monthly and after every real downtime event.

☐	Printed schedules for the next 48 hours (refreshed daily)
☐	Paper encounter forms / superbills for each specialty and provider
☐	Patient registration and demographics forms
☐	Current medication lists and allergy sheets
☐	Lab requisition forms
☐	Imaging requisition forms
☐	Downtime event log (see section 7)
☐	Printed staff, vendor, and referral phone list
☐	Prescription pads, if applicable, stored per policy
☐	Consent and HIPAA acknowledgment forms
☐	Blank progress notes and vital sign sheets
☐	Pens, clipboards, stapler, folders for completed forms
☐	Battery-powered radio or charged mobile hotspot
☐	Copy of this downtime plan
☐	
☐	

Kit location _____

Kit checked by / date _____

5. Department procedures

Write the downtime process next to the normal process so staff can see the swap at a glance.

Function	Normal process	Downtime process	Who
Registration and check-in			
Scheduling			
Clinical documentation			
Orders			
Medications and e-prescribing			
Labs and specimens			
Imaging			
Checkout, payment, and billing			

6. Paper downtime encounter form

Print one per patient encounter. This form becomes part of the legal medical record.

Patient name	Date of birth	MRN (if known)

Date	Time in	Provider	Location

Reason for visit

Vitals

BP	HR	Temp	Resp	SpO2	Weight	Height

Allergies and current medications

Assessment

Plan

Orders (labs, imaging, referrals, medications)

Provider signature	Date / time	Back-entered by / date

7. Downtime event log

One row per event. Keep completed logs with your compliance records.

Start time	End time	Systems affected	Cause (if known)	Staff notified	Forms used

Log completed by

Date

8. Recovery and re-entry

Downtime is not over when the system comes back. It is over when the record is complete.

Task	Owner	Deadline	Verified by
Back-enter paper documentation into the EHR		Within 24 hours of restoration	
Enter orders, results, and prescriptions issued on paper		Within 24 hours	

Task	Owner	Deadline	Verified by
Reconcile paper forms against EHR entries		Within 48 hours	
Post charges and release claims held during downtime			
File original paper forms per retention policy			
Note in each record that care was documented during downtime			

Every paper form used during downtime is part of the legal medical record. Record the downtime period itself, back-enter the information once systems are restored with a note indicating it was documented during downtime, retain the originals per your record retention policy, and reconcile them against the EHR so nothing is lost.

9. Post-event review

Hold the review within one week, while people still remember the details.

Event date

Total duration

Review date

Attendees

Review question	Findings	Action / owner / due
What failed, and why?		
How long was the outage, start to full recovery?		
Where were the data gaps?		
Which steps in the plan were unclear or wrong?		
What was missing from the downtime kit?		
What changes to the plan are required?		
Date plan updated and redistributed		

This template is provided for planning purposes and is not legal advice. Review your completed plan with your compliance officer or counsel.