



Recommendations for File Naming Conventions

HIPAA regulations, the ASC X12N implementation guides and Minnesota regulations are relatively silent on the subject of naming standards for the generation and transmission of HIPAA-compliant transactions. In the absence of any such purported standard, the Collaborative felt it was valuable to propose a file naming convention that seems logical, intuitive and easy to execute.

File names are commonly generated by the computer application that creates the file. Sometimes the name is mutually agreed to by Trading Partners, or defined by the receiving Trading Partner. If you have the capability of controlling the name assigned to any specific transaction, and there is no required file name with your Trading Partner, then we recommend you consider the following file naming convention. The use of the proposed convention may be dependent on the computer system and/or operating system you use, as some systems have inherent file name length limitations.

The use of a date/time stamp that incorporates the sub-second may be important as a duplicate resolver mechanism. If an organization could create more than one transaction (e.g., 270 or 276) within the same second, one method of duplicate resolution is to name the file with sub-second identifiers. Other mechanisms for duplicate resolution are acceptable as well, such as the use of Process ID's (PIDs), or other system generated duplicate resolvers.

Recommended File Naming Structure

Your Organization's Name or TP ID/Transaction Type and Version/Receiving Organization's Name or TP ID/File Creation Date & Time Stamp and File Extension (which could be either a txt or edi extension, or other file extension as may be required by the transaction recipient). It is important to note that, whatever naming convention is used to identify the sender, receiver and original source organization, all parties agree to the names and or TP ID's which are used to uniquely identify each party.

Example for an 837 Professional Transaction File From an Originating Source:

BoundaryWatersMedicalCenter_004010X098A1_MNPayer_03011513:30:10:03.txt (where the name represents the sender name, transaction #, receiver name, date in (yymmdd format) + time in (hh:mm:ss) format, and extension as may be required by the receiver.

Example for an 837 Professional Transaction File From an Intermediary Source:

XCclearinghouse837P_LkWobegonClinic_004010X098A1_MNPayer_03011621:00:15:00.edi

Other variations of this method should be generally acceptable, such as the use of a Julian date for file creation, mutually recognized Trading Partner ID's instead of organization names, etc. The intent is to use a file naming convention that would easily allow either Trading Partner to quickly discern the file content and date and time when it was generated. This mechanism becomes helpful in particular when a sending Trading Partner transmits multiple files of the same type throughout any given day. In the event of a transmission or transaction failure, and the supporting problem resolution processes around any such event, using this file naming convention makes the search and recovery process easier.