

(4) The Secretary may prescribe additional procedures for the filing of complaints, as well as the place and manner of filing, by notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(c) *Investigation.* (1) The Secretary will investigate any complaint filed under this section when a preliminary review of the facts indicates a possible violation due to willful neglect.

(2) The Secretary may investigate any other complaint filed under this section.

(3) An investigation under this section may include a review of the pertinent policies, procedures, or practices of the covered entity or business associate and of the circumstances regarding any alleged violation.

(4) At the time of the initial written communication with the covered entity or business associate about the complaint, the Secretary will describe the acts and/or omissions that are the basis of the complaint.

[71 FR 8424, Feb. 16, 2006, as amended at 78 FR 5690, Jan. 25, 2013]

#### § 160.308 Compliance reviews.

(a) The Secretary will conduct a compliance review to determine whether a covered entity or business associate is complying with the applicable administrative simplification provisions when a preliminary review of the facts indicates a possible violation due to willful neglect.

(b) The Secretary may conduct a compliance review to determine whether a covered entity or business associate is complying with the applicable administrative simplification provisions in any other circumstance.

[78 FR 5690, Jan. 25, 2013]

#### § 160.310 Responsibilities of covered entities and business associates.

(a) *Provide records and compliance reports.* A covered entity or business associate must keep such records and submit such compliance reports, in such time and manner and containing such information, as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to enable the Secretary to ascertain whether the covered entity or business associate has complied or is complying

with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

(b) *Cooperate with complaint investigations and compliance reviews.* A covered entity or business associate must cooperate with the Secretary, if the Secretary undertakes an investigation or compliance review of the policies, procedures, or practices of the covered entity or business associate to determine whether it is complying with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

(c) *Permit access to information.* (1) A covered entity or business associate must permit access by the Secretary during normal business hours to its facilities, books, records, accounts, and other sources of information, including protected health information, that are pertinent to ascertaining compliance with the applicable administrative simplification provisions. If the Secretary determines that exigent circumstances exist, such as when documents may be hidden or destroyed, a covered entity or business associate must permit access by the Secretary at any time and without notice.

(2) If any information required of a covered entity or business associate under this section is in the exclusive possession of any other agency, institution, or person and the other agency, institution, or person fails or refuses to furnish the information, the covered entity or business associate must so certify and set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.

(3) Protected health information obtained by the Secretary in connection with an investigation or compliance review under this subpart will not be disclosed by the Secretary, except if necessary for ascertaining or enforcing compliance with the applicable administrative simplification provisions, if otherwise required by law, or if permitted under 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(7).

[78 FR 5690, Jan. 25, 2013]

#### § 160.312 Secretarial action regarding complaints and compliance reviews.

(a) *Resolution when noncompliance is indicated.* (1) If an investigation of a complaint pursuant to §160.306 or a compliance review pursuant to §160.308