



COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Setting Messages on a Physician Office Answering Machine



All physicians must have an office telephone that is answered and/or a voicemail message that is operational 24 hours per day, pursuant to the College Policy 'Medical Practice Coverage'

1

IDENTIFICATION AND 911 INSTRUCTION

- Identify the office (“you have reached the offices of...”);
- Instruct the caller that if this is a medical emergency, they should hang up and dial 911 or proceed to the nearest ER.



2

AFTER HOURS OR AWAY FROM PHONE



- State that the office is now closed (after-hours), or that the receptionist is occupied or away from the phone (in-hours); and
- State the regular office hours of operation, or when they can call again.

3

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT ON CALL SERVICE

- Instruct the caller that if they have an immediate concern that needs to be addressed after hours, they may contact the on-call physician or the office/clinic/ER with which the physician(s) have an arrangement to manage after hours concerns, and provide the contact details of the above.



4

MESSAGES



- For offices that take voice messages, state that the caller can leave a voice message, ask for the contact name and telephone number, and give an indication of the timeframe in which the office will respond;
- For offices that do not take voicemail messages, state this clearly and ask the patient to call back, with the time that the office will be open again.



QUICK TIPS

Speak slowly and clearly. Rehearse your message a few times before attempting to record it. When you are ready to record, remove all background noise and speak in a professional tone. Confirm that the message was recorded correctly. Update the message regularly, including changes for holidays and absences from practice.