

# 5 Reasons To Ditch Pagers



## Pagers are problematic



Most doctors are unaware that pagers don't provide adequate encrypted communications.

Without these encrypted exchanges, HIPAA-compliant messaging is not ensured.

Pager communication must be limited and non-descriptive if doctors are to use them without violating HIPAA regulations.



## DID YOU KNOW?



To meet strict HIPAA regulations, all doctor-to-hospital digital communications require:

- a sign-in process
- an encrypted messaging process
- remote wipe capabilities

PAGERS MEET NONE OF THOSE  
REQUIRMENTS



# 1. Pagers can be hacked



## Pagers can be hacked

Providence Health & Services was the target of a prominent hack of its paging system in 2016 ([source](#)); The organization's privacy officer and compliance manager wrote to patients:

"An unauthorized individual accessed the paging system used by Providence and several other health care organizations, public safety departments and businesses... Information related to you was intercepted and displayed.

The information displayed about you included your **demographic information** (which could include your name, date of birth, and room number), and may have limited **clinical information** (which could include medication, symptoms, medical record numbers, procedures, or diagnosis.) Your **Social Security number, insurance and financial information** were not included in the information."

As a result of this attack, the hospital had to register the violation with the Department of Health and Human Services.

The consequences of the breach didn't stop there. The hospital had to invest in new technology to ensure that its patient information process reached an adequate level of HIPAA compliance.



## 2. Can't prioritize messages with pagers





# Can't prioritize messages with pagers

In a world where doctors get inundated with alerts and notifications for anything under the sun, it is important to differentiate which alerts are important and which alerts can be dealt with later.

For this very reason, modern paging solutions need to enable the user to send messages in two different formats:

- **High Priority**
- **Low Priority**

Solutions need to differentiate these two priority modes with unique ringtones and the option for persistent alerting when the page is of greater severity.

**High-priority messaging** requires an intrusive, distinctive ringtone that gets attention. The alert needs to mimic the urgency of a pager while providing the messaging convenience of rich, full text messages with voice or picture attachments.

**Low-priority messaging** can be regarded as continuous messaging, with replies that go back and forth. Unlike other casual messaging apps, however, healthcare providers require the ability to track the messages that are being sent; something that pagers fail to do.



**3. Pagers have limited range which means lost pages cannot be tracked**



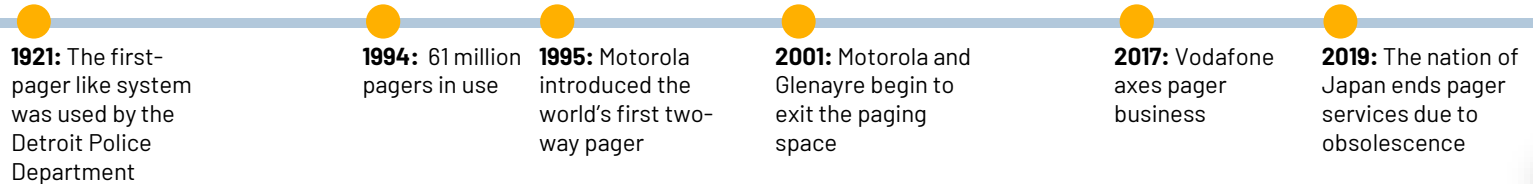


# Pagers have limited range which means lost pages cannot be tracked

Outside of the few square blocks neighboring a hospital, a pager often won't receive its intended page. So, if a doctor or nurse is at home or taking care of business away from the hospital, they may not receive the page and have any way of tracking the page. This means that the page is lost forever.

Legacy paging technology relies on paging towers to deliver messages. Yet, as pager use decreases, the maintenance of paging towers is also decreasing. Meanwhile, with hospitals increasingly supporting Wi-Fi networks, support of smartphone usage continues to improve.

## Pagers are on their way out

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- 1921:** The first-pager like system was used by the Detroit Police Department
  - 1994:** 61 million pagers in use
  - 1995:** Motorola introduced the world's first two-way pager
  - 2001:** Motorola and Glenayre begin to exit the paging space
  - 2017:** Vodafone axes pager business
  - 2019:** The nation of Japan ends pager services due to obsolescence



## **4. Pagers lack contextual communication**



## Pagers lack contextual communication

Successful healthcare diagnoses and effective treatments often require test results and imaging. Unfortunately, traditional pagers are incapable of transmitting this necessary level of information. Instead, healthcare providers are left with what they see on the pager screen, and that doesn't help them make informed decisions.

When replacing paging systems buyers should choose a system that supports the transmission as well as the security of attachments. With email or casual messaging, there is no assurance that these attachments are encrypted. However, these attachments are also governed by HIPAA requirements and are just as vulnerable to hacking and cyberattacks.



## 5. Pagers cannot escalate alerts



## Pagers cannot escalate alerts

When physicians are unable to answer a page in a timely manner, traditional pagers can't escalate the alert to go to the next person on call. As a result, critical alerts can go unaddressed, which can prevent a patient from getting the prompt care he or she needs.

When evaluating paging systems it's important to consider alert escalation features. They ensure that critical messages not addressed within a pre-determined amount of time will be escalated to the next in line on the care team.

Healthcare personnel should also have the option to select which user(s) will receive an alert if it goes unaddressed. They will also need the option to select the amount of time required to escalate the message to a person within the care team who is available.



# About OnPage

OnPage's award-winning HIPAA-compliant incident alert management system for healthcare professionals provides the industry's only ALERT-UNTIL-READ notification capabilities, ensuring that critical messages are never missed. Through its clinical communications platform and smartphone app, OnPage gives healthcare providers a secure, reliable, fast way to communicate with colleagues for better patient outcomes.

OnPage's escalation, redundancy and scheduling features make the system infinitely more reliable and secure than pagers, emails, text messages and phone calls. OnPage shrinks resolution time by automating the notification process, reducing human errors and prioritizing critical messages to ensure fast response times.

Whether to minimize IT infrastructure downtime or to reduce the response time of healthcare providers in life-and-death situations, organizations trust OnPage for all their secure, HIPAA-compliant, critical notifications needs.

**Contact OnPage to secure and modernize your clinical communications**

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