


# Customer Segment Story: DENTIST OFFICES

A true testimonial brought to you by **FireKing** 

Protecting and creating “backup copies” of a dental practice’s vital records is a crucial management issue for dentists. When the personal, privileged health information of patients accumulates over the lifetime of a practice, records management and protection becomes an increasingly serious issue that, when mismanaged, can not only threaten the livelihood of a practice, but can also compromise the personal information of patients and possibly create a HIPAA violation. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) regulations are a set of national standards which are designed to force dental practices – along with the rest of the health care infrastructure – to comply with strong security and privacy standards to protect personal health information. Failure to comply with HIPAA can result in civil penalties (mainly fines) as well as, in rare cases, criminal penalties.

*“The FireKing Media Vault is an excellent option for practices that wish to keep their data onsite and safe from the elements.”*

*– Lorne Lavine, DMD Dental Technology Consultants  
[www.TheDigitalDentist.com](http://www.TheDigitalDentist.com)*

“Dentist’s fear of losing valuable records if they convert to an all electronic patient record and billing system is unwarranted if certain precautions are taken,” comments Joseph E. Chasteen of the University of Washington’s School of Dentistry. “First, they should perform at least a daily back-up of the practice data so that no more than one day of business data would be lost during a catastrophic event. Second, they should secure the back-up media so that it cannot be damaged or lost. It is interesting to note that these simple security strategies would not be practical if a dentist continues to use time-honored paper records and dental radiographs.”

Dr. Lorne Lavine, D.M.D, agrees with this recommendation. “I consider data backup and protection to be a vital necessity in the modern dental practice. As more and more components of a practice’s information are stored in a digital format, it is crucial to the dental office to ensure that this data is backed up and protected on a regular basis.”

One measure to be taken which is universally understood is that all categories of medical offices must carefully establish records protection policies and procedures and document why they chose certain tactics and technologies to secure their vital records.

Some of the basics in terms of best practices for vital records protection include: the incorporation of weekly, if not daily, backups of records into the routine, as well as the procurement of fireproof safes and filing cabinets for on-site storage.

Many dental practices prefer to outsource the records-backup process to an outside service provider, which is fine, up to a point. Unfortunately, this thinking can lead to disaster if a fire, hurricane, flood or other disaster occurs and causes damage and destruction where the practice is located. Because every practice will, at some point, have vital records on-site, and obviously, no one can predict the precise time a catastrophe will occur.

Since most dental practices store their data on CDs or on removable Zip drives, they should consider specially designed containers, called “Media Vaults” which are used to store and protect the patient records (CDs, zip disks, diskettes, microfiche) from the harmful effects of heat, humidity, dust and magnetic fields. For the storage of on-site vital records, even if that is only a limited period of time, it is imperative to seek products that are tested by Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or other nationally known independent testing labs. Offices should absolutely steer clear of equipment with manufacturers’ or non-independent ratings. UL, in particular, is the best, as no other testing and standards organization matches their reputation and standards.

According to Bridget Stewart, office manager for the Oceana Dental Center in Oceana, West Virginia, one measure that they took to secure the digitally stored backup records of the practice’s 8,356 patients was to purchase a FireKing MediaVault. This way, the backups are 100% safe from the minute they are created until they are archived.

Simply stated, the need for dental practices to better manage vital records has increased dramatically over the past few years. Start getting behind this issue now to figure out the best set of solutions for your practice.

### **For Further Information:**

The Department of Health and Human Services /HIPAA –  
[www.aspe.os.dhhs.gov/adminsimp](http://www.aspe.os.dhhs.gov/adminsimp)

American Dental Association – [www.ada.org/](http://www.ada.org/)

Dental Technology Consultants – [www.TheDigitalDentist.com](http://www.TheDigitalDentist.com)