



Call Monitoring/Recording Notification: Best Practices for Researchers

Supervisory monitoring is an essential part of the research process. In order to ensure the proper execution and conduct of interviews, a certain percentage of interviews in all studies are subject to validation and quality control. Researchers also monitor and record for training purposes and to determine that both interviewers and respondents understand the questions being asked.

It is a researcher's responsibility and obligation to protect the interests of their interviewers, their clients, their business, the study itself, and research participants. Through monitoring and recording, researchers are able to verify that no breach or abuse of their interviewers, clients, business, study, or participants has taken place.

Federal Consent Requirements

Federal law requires only one-party consent, which means that one party to the conversation must have knowledge and give consent to the monitoring or recording. Federal law applies only in those states which do not have a call monitoring or recording statute.

State Consent Requirements

State laws vary between one-party and all-party (also referred to as two-party) consent. In the all-party consent states, before monitoring or recording may commence all parties participating in the call must give their consent, or otherwise be notified that the call may be monitored or recorded (with a necessary opt-out option: if one party does not want the other to record or monitor the call, they can ask them to stop, or can terminate the call). It is important to note that this consent must be obtained at the onset of the call, and before any such monitoring or recording begins.

Ethical Best Practices

Researchers should always obtain consent from all parties on a telephone call prior to beginning monitoring or recording.

MRA suggests the following sample verbal notification at the beginning of each call where recording or monitoring may occur:

“This call may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance purposes. Your continued participation in this telephone survey serves as express consent to be monitored or recorded.”

Or alternatively:

“This call/session may be monitored and recorded for record-keeping, training and quality-assurance purposes.”

Presuming the research participant does not object, or hang up the phone, he or she is considered to have consented to the monitoring or recording. Also, in order to ensure verifiable consent on the interviewer's side, research organizations should have their telephone interviewers sign basic consent agreements prior to recording or monitoring any telephone call.

More Information

For more information on laws and best practices impacting research, contact MRA, and consider becoming a [member](#) to get free access to the [MRA Compliance Guide](#).