

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Use of Scanned Signatures Procedure</b>	<b>NUMBER:</b>	NSHA REB-SOP-1-007
Effective Date:	May 30, 2016	Revision:	September 29, 2017
Applies To:	NSHA REB Office Personnel, Researchers		

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe the use of electronic signatures / scanned signatures on communications, including approvals from the Nova Scotia Health Authority Research Ethics Board (NSHA REB).

With any signature there is a risk that someone may fraudulently use it elsewhere, and the risks are the same whether the signature is on paper, or electronically embedded. However, precautions will be taken to minimize the potential risks of misappropriation and/or inappropriate use outlined in this SOP.

## 2. POLICY

Since the implementation of the Romeo electronic database within the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) research community, the NSHA REB uses and accepts electronic signatures as legally binding and equivalent to handwritten signatures to signify and formally acknowledge an Agreement between the NSHA REB and the Principal Investigator and/or members of his/her research team.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- *Electronic Signature (e-signature):* Any electronic means that indicates either that a person adopts the contents of an electronic message, or more broadly that the person who claims to have written a message is the one who wrote it (and that the message received is the one that was sent by this person).
- *Scanned Signature:* A digital copy of a signature (converted to an electronic image file) derived from an original hand-written version.

## 4. PROCESS/ GUIDELINES

- 4.1 The scanned signature can only be used with authorization from the signatory.
- 4.2 No scanned signature shall be used except for the purpose for which it was authorized, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the authorization.

- 4.3 The scanned signature will be kept as a PDF file and stored in a restricted folder on the REB shared drive. Only REB staff has access to this folder.
- 4.4 Each document on which the scanned signature is used has been checked for accuracy and completeness by the responsible REB Office Personnel and has been approved electronically by the assigned Co-Chair prior to the scanned signature being affixed to the document.
- 4.5 Each scanned signature will be permanently deleted from the REB shared drive upon termination of appointment with the REB.

## 5. REFERENCES

[Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA\)- S.C. 2000, c. 5 \(Section 31\)](#)

## 6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. NSHA REB-SOP-1-003 (Signing Authority)
2. NSHA REB-SOP-4-003 (Delegated Review Procedure)
3. NSHA REB-SOP-4-005 (Ongoing Review & Reporting)
4. NSHA REB-SOP-6-001 (Communication: Investigators and Research Staff)

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**Version History**

<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)</b>	<b>Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)</b>
May 30, 2016	Original version	
September 29, 2017		Updated terminology/roles to remain consistent