

## **FAQ: Data Retention and Destruction: Video and Audio Data**

### **Definition of Data**

“Data” refers to recorded information, regardless of form or the media on which it may be recorded.

### **Definition of Identifiable Data**

Data is identifiable if the identity of the participant is known or may readily be ascertained. This includes, for example, indirect identification through the use of a code or other indirect identifiers.

### **Video and Audio (AV) Data**

Audio and video recordings are always considered to be identifiable in the context of human subjects research. Options for de-identifying audio and video recordings include altering an individual’s voice or blurring their face. Another option is to transcribe the recording, remove any potential identifiers from the transcript, keep the de-identified transcripts, and destroy the original recording and any back-up recordings that have been made. Retention or destruction of video and audio recorded data may be subject to a number of considerations:

- **Purpose of retaining AV data:** What is the purpose and use of retention? For example, is the retention necessary to achieve the specific purpose for which the data were gathered and used? Is its retention for, and necessary to, secondary uses?
- **Type of AV data collected:** Are they sensitive data? What may be the effect on the participants of conservation of the data if security is violated?
- **Nature of research under review:** Does the field require retention of AV data for the continuity of scientific research? What are the professional standards for the relevant discipline?
- **Informing participants:** Have the participants provided informed consent to the purposes, uses and retention of the AV data collected? Have they been informed of any potential for secondary use of such data?
- **Access to AV data:** Who is authorized to have access to the data? How will access be managed?
- **Data storage, security, and protection:** Will the AV data obtained be stored securely and protected with all the precautions appropriate to the sensitivity of the data?