Phone Consent

A minimal-risk phone survey or interview may qualify for a verbal consent process. The request for telephone consent is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. When obtaining consent over the phone, the IRB typically asks the investigator to submit a phone "script" that addresses the key elements of informed consent. Phone scripts for minimal-risk research typically include statements that explain the following:

- Introduction of the researcher and how the researcher obtained the contact information of the participant.
- A statement that the project involves research and that participation is completely voluntary.
- The purpose of the phone survey or interview and what participants will be asked to do.
- The approximate length of the phone call.
- Information about confidentiality and the use of the study data: who will have access to the data, how it will be used, how long it will be kept. If the survey or interview involves health information, the script must include certain HIPAA statements.
- A statement about risks and benefits of the study.
- An offer to answer any questions about the above information.
- An invitation to choose whether or not to participate in the research.
- Contact information for the researcher if the participant has questions after the phone call.

For some projects, investigators are approved to obtain informed consent over the phone for research that is greater than minimal risk or that will involve ongoing contact with participants. In those cases, investigators are required to mail a full, written consent document to the potential subject in advance of the phone conversation. This type of consent arrangement is discussed in the Remote Consent guidance document.