

Submission Requirements for the AAT Atlas of Medical Thermography

Purpose and Scope:

This document is to advise people who would like to submit materials for publication in the American Academy of Thermology (AAT) Atlas of Medical Thermography. Submission requirements are outlined in detail, including specific instructions on patient privacy law. Only the requirements for submission are given here. The duties of editing and reviewing submissions to the AAT Atlas can be found in the document "Edit and Review Guidelines for the AAT Atlas of Medical Thermography." Atlas subject headings may be found in the current "Main Atlas Headings List" document.

Submission Requirements:

Only AAT members in good standing may submit materials for inclusion in the Atlas. Once a submission has been accepted and published in the Atlas, it will remain in the Atlas regardless of the membership standing of the submitter. Should any material in the Atlas later found to be inaccurate, inappropriate, fraudulent, or superseded by new information, that material may be revised or deleted from the Atlas or moved to an appropriate heading category by the Atlas Editor in consultation with Atlas Reviewers familiar with the particular subject under consideration.

With each Submission to the Atlas, the Submitter must include their Full Name, Address, Organization (if any), telephone contact numbers(s), email address, and Atlas Identifier (if already assigned). Each submission should contain the Working Title, the main image(s), a brief image explanation, and supporting document(s) (if any).

Every contributor to the Atlas will be assigned one unique and permanent identifier (Atlas Identifier) which will appear in the Image Explanation page (and other pages or images if appropriate). This Atlas Identifier will be assigned by the Atlas Editor. Only certain AAT members will have access to the file linking these unique Atlas Identifiers to the submitting members. This is to prevent the Atlas from becoming a venue for member self-advertising, and to protect the medical privacy of the subject in the image(s). Submitted images or other materials for publication must not contain any "watermark" or other marking that directly identifies the contributor or their organization.

All text submissions should be in text format (not a scanned or image format) if possible for ease of editing and publication. TXT, DOC, or DOCX formats are preferred.

Images should be in JPG format and must include a temperature reference scale. Image size should be 320 by 240 pixels, minimum. Video image submissions should be in a current and universally-used format such as MPEG4, MP4, or AVI. Serial images are preferred to video footage due to bandwidth limitations, though video may be acceptable in certain cases (such as time-compressed video). Serial images must be accompanied by a relative time indicator (years, months, days, hours, minutes, and/or seconds, as appropriate) referenced to an index image or other event, but due to medical privacy (HIPPA) rules, the actual imaging date or time may not be included (except for the calendar year).

Images should be obtained and adjusted by the submitter to maximize and clarify the thermal features being considered. Pertinent spot and area temperatures should be part of the submitted image(s) if needed. Arrows or brief text may be added to the image by the submitter to improve understanding of the image features. These additions should not obscure any significant areas of the image.

Any date stamp appearing on the image must be removed or concealed (except for Year). Any patient or location (hospital or clinic name, etc.) information must also be removed. Inclusion of imager make and model, and software name and version, is discouraged unless comparison of imagers or software is the subject of the submission.

The Image Explanation should be brief, concise, and in plain text or Word format. A 100-word maximum submission length is preferred. Additional explanatory information may be placed in the Supporting Documents section if necessary.

Images must have been obtained consistent with AAT Guidelines. Any deviations from AAT Guidelines must be stated in the Image Explanation. Other thermographic techniques such as NIR spectroscopy or microscopy may be added under specific Atlas Headings as they become available through research or clinical application. Conditions and techniques for these special Atlas entries must be stated in the Explanation Section of the submission unless they are specified in future AAT Guideline documents which are referenced in the Submission.

Supporting documents may be images (JPG preferred, GIF or PNG acceptable for line drawings). Laboratory and other third party reports should be submitted in PDF format. Other text documents should be submitted in Word format.

All patient-identifying information must be removed from all materials before submission. Because IR facial images may be used to identify an individual, masking of facial features is required for any facial IR image unless written permission has been obtained from the patient and a copy of the signed permission included in the submission. If the eyes are the subject of the submission, the mouth area may be masked. Likewise, if the mouth area is being studied, the eyes may be masked. See the section below on HIPPA privacy considerations for more details.

The submitter should request that a submission be published under a particular heading, choosing from the topics found in the current Main Atlas Headings List document. The material submitted may fall into one or more categories, in which case it will be entered by the Atlas Editor under the most suitable heading, and links will be added under the other appropriate heading(s) directing the atlas user to the entry. This is to avoid entry of the same material into multiple heading locations while assuring access to users searching under different headings. Should a submission not fall under any of the listed Headings, a new heading or sub-heading may be added to the list to accommodate the submission. The addition of any new heading or sub-heading is under the discretion of the Atlas Editor.

All submission materials will undergo peer-review and editing before acceptance for publication in the Atlas. Reviewers will be chosen by the Atlas Editor based on their expertise of the material being submitted.

Suitable reviewed materials for the Atlas will be sent to the submitter with suggested corrections. The Submitter must make the suggested changes or other acceptable revisions to the original submission before the submission can be accepted for actual publication. Submitter sign-off is advisable even if no editing or review changes are required. Unsuitable materials will be returned with a brief explanation for the rejection. After correction by the submitter, rejected materials may be re-submitted for review up to three (3) times before final rejection is considered by the Atlas Editor.

All submitted materials published in the Atlas become the property of AAT, which shall have an exclusive right to display the materials as edited by AAT. A “watermark” may be added to the images and/or other pages by AAT to identify the image as coming from the AAT Atlas. This watermark should not obscure any pertinent features of the submitted image. Other interested parties and the submitter may request use rights of the submission materials from the AAT which will be granted at the Editor’s discretion.

Patient Privacy of Submissions to the AAT Atlas of Thermography - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) Requirements:

As thermographic images (except for facial images) do not identify any particular individual (much like an unlabeled radiograph does not identify an individual), they fall into the HIPPA category of “de-identified protected health information.” That is: “health information that does not identify an individual and with respect to which there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify an individual.”

To meet this HIPPA requirement for privacy, the following identifiers of the individual (or of relatives, employers, or household members of the individual) must be removed from all materials submitted for publication in the Atlas:

(A) Names.

(B) All geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code if, according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census: (1) The geographic unit formed by combining all zip codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and (2) The initial three digits of a zip code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to 000.

(C) All elements of dates (**except year**) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, imaging date, admission or discharge date, date of death; and all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age (over 89), except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older.

(D) Telephone numbers.

(E) Fax numbers.

(F) Electronic mail addresses.

(G) Social security numbers.

(H) Medical record numbers.

(I) Health plan beneficiary numbers.

(J) Account numbers.

(K) Certificate/license numbers.

(L) Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers.

(M) Device identifiers and serial numbers.

(N) Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs).

(O) Internet Protocol (IP) addresses or numbers.

(P) Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints.

(Q) Full face images and any comparable images (side of face, etc.).

(R) Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code.

This includes Tattoos recognizable on the image(s).

This includes unique recognizable jewelry.

All materials submitted to the Atlas will be reviewed and checked for compliance with these HIPPA requirements for de-identification as outlined above. Materials not in compliance will be returned to the submitter for correction with an explanation as to why the material is not acceptable. After correction, rejected materials may be re-submitted.
