# How do I build an eConsent? [pdf upload]

There are several ways to build an electronic consent document (eConsent) using the REDCap eConsent framework. These instructions explain how to upload a portable document file (pdf) of the consent form and enable the eConsent framework to capture the written elements of informed consent. At Yale, this method can be used for research, including FDA-regulated studies subject to 21 CFR Part 11 requirements. For more information, refer to Yale's Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) eConsent Guidance.

#### To build an eConsent you will follow the steps outlined below:

- STEP 1. Create a new project.
- STEP 2. Build your eConsent instrument(s).
- STEP 3. Set up your Signature(s).
- STEP 4. Enable the eConsent Framework.
- STEP 5. Upload your PDF Consent Form.
- STEP 6. Test eConsent.

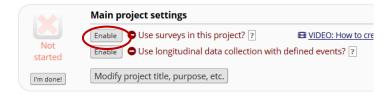
In this tutorial, you will build an eConsent in a new, stand-alone project that is distinct from your REDCap project with data collection forms. This ensures that the personal identifiers collected on the consent forms are securely maintained and separated from the participant study ID and research data.

#### **STEP 1: Create a New Project**

Your eConsent should be set up as a new project, not an instrument within the main research project.
 To create a new project, follow the instructions found under FAQ: Create a New Project.
 Your REDCap project can contain more than one consent form for the same study.

**Pro Tip:** Use a project title that includes or "Study Name/ID/Acronym" + eConsent

- 2. After your project is created, open it, and go to the 'Project Setup' tab to enable the survey design.
  - a. Under 'Main Project Settings' select the 'Enable' button for the option 'Use surveys in this project?'



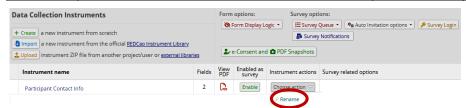
3. Next, click 'Online Designer' under 'Design your data collection instruments & enable your surveys.'

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4. Change the default 'My First Instrument' name by selecting the 'Rename' option found under the 'Choose action' drop down menu. Your first instrument will contain the participant's contact information. Rename this instrument. Then click 'Save'.

In the example below, the first instrument is renamed 'Participant Contact Info'.



5. Open the first instrument, click the 'Add Field' button.



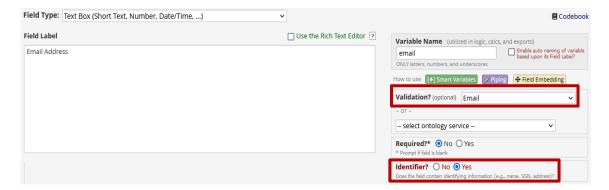
6. Add field(s) to the Participant Contact Information form.

**IMPORTANT:** You must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through a consent/HIPAA waiver to collect and use identifiers prior to informed consent.

Pro Tip: Duplicate information can create data discrepancies.

Participant name will be captured on the eConsent survey with their signature. To avoid discrepancies, you may wish to limit this form to other identifiers, such as email.

- a. If you are consenting remotely or plan to share the signed eConsent electronically, create a field to capture the participant email.
  - i. Under the 'Validation', select the Email option.
  - ii. Under 'Identifier?', select Yes to tag the field as an identifier.

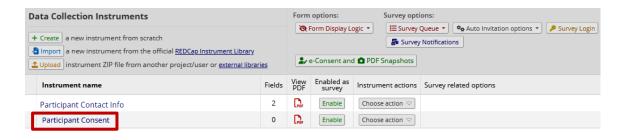


7. Return to the Online Designer by clicking on Return to list of instruments

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8. Create another instrument by clicking "+ Create button". This form will be your consent instrument.



**Pro Tip:** If you are using more than one eConsent on the same study, create multiple forms within you project for each participant population. To do so, repeat Step 4, but be sure to use a nomenclature that allows you to distinguish your eConsents (e.g. *Adult, Child*).

#### STEP 2: Build your eConsent instrument.

1. Select the newly created **Consent Form** instrument.

**Pro Tip:** Do NOT use embedded fields or the rich text editor in your eConsent Form. These features do not work well with the PDF snapshot in the eConsent Framework.

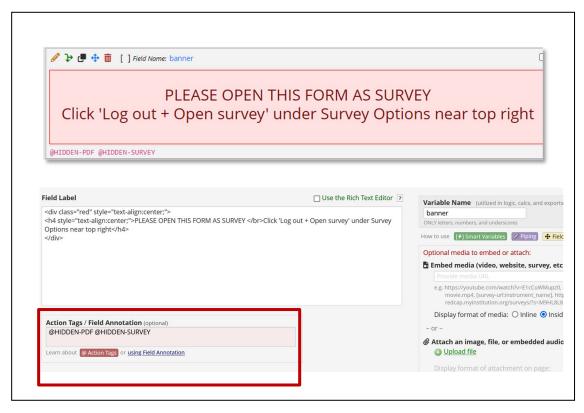
- 2. **If you will be consenting in-person/onsite**, add an instruction banner at the top of the instrument to remind staff to open the instrument as a survey.
  - a. Insert a descriptive field.
  - b. Copy the code below to the 'Field Label' box:

```
<div class="red" style="text-align:center;">
<h4 style="text-align:center;">PLEASE OPEN THIS FORM AS SURVEY </br>
Click 'Log out +
Open survey' under Survey Options near top right</h4>
</div>
```

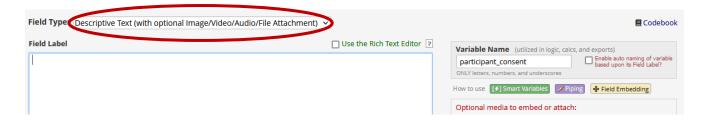
- c. Add the following 'Action Tags' to the Action tags/Field Annotation box:
  - i. @HIDDEN-SURVEY this action tag will ensure the warning message appears on the instrument but not on the survey.
  - ii. @HIDDEN-PDF this action tag will ensure the warning message will not be included on the PDF copy of the consent form.

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Instruction banner for in-person consenting:



- 3. Create ONE descriptive field as a placeholder for your eConsent pdf document.
  - a. To add a descriptive field, click the 'Add Field' button.
  - b. Under the **Field Type** menu, choose 'Descriptive Text' and create variable name.

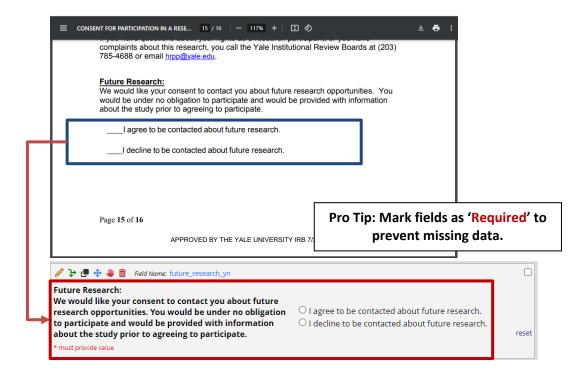


- c. You will use this field to upload your eConsent **in STEP 4- eConsent Framework**. The Field Label and other field settings can remain blank.
- 4. If your research consent contains study-specific permissions, add fields to capture response items, as shown in example.
  - a. To prevent study staff completing this instrument in form mode, add @READONLY-FORM action tag to these fields.

Action Tags / Field Annotation (optional)
@READONLY-FORM

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To contact participants for future research, your eConsent fields would look like this:



#### **Step 3: Setup Signature**

Electronic signature procedures and verification procedures will vary based upon the regulatory requirements for your research. Refer to *Yale HRPP eConsent Guidance* for more information. If your consent requires a signature (i.e. you do <u>not</u> have a waiver) you will collect the *name*, *signature*, *and date of consent from the participant and person obtaining consent* to comply with 45 CFR 46 regulations. To limit the collection of personal information, do <u>not</u> include date of birth as a validation field.

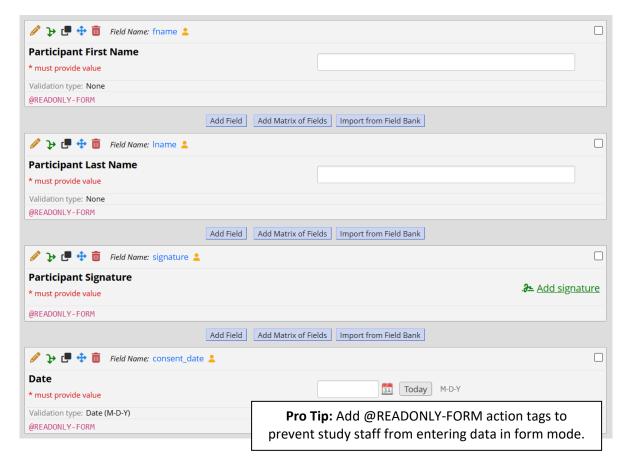


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#### **Participant**

1. Click Add Field to the consent instrument.



- 2. Add fields for identification and signature.
  - a. Name (First, Last)
    - i. Create two separate fields for (1.) first name and (2.) last name.
    - ii. Tag as identifiers and mark as required.
    - iii. Add @READONLY-FORM action tag.
    - iv. The eConsent framework will insert the first and last name on each page of the snapshot PDF consent for audit purposes.

#### b. Signature

- i. Create field for signature. The signature field allows participants to electronically sign via stylus, mouse or finger.
- ii. Tag as an identifier and mark as required.
- iii. Add @READONLY-FORM action tag.

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#### c. Date

- i. Create field for date.
- ii. To ensure data quality and prevent errors, use validation and minimum/maximum range.
- iii. Tag date as an identifier and mark as required.
- iv. Add @READONLY-FORM action tag.

**Pro Tip:** Mark each field as **'Required'** to prevent missing data and non-compliance with regulatory requirements

#### **Person Obtaining Consent**

To ensure best practices and prevent errors, the participant and the person obtaining consent will sign the eConsent in separate REDCap forms.

1. Return to the online designer and create a new instrument 'Person Obtaining Consent.'



2. This form must be completed in survey mode to use the eConsent framework feature in REDCap. Add descriptive fields to support administration.

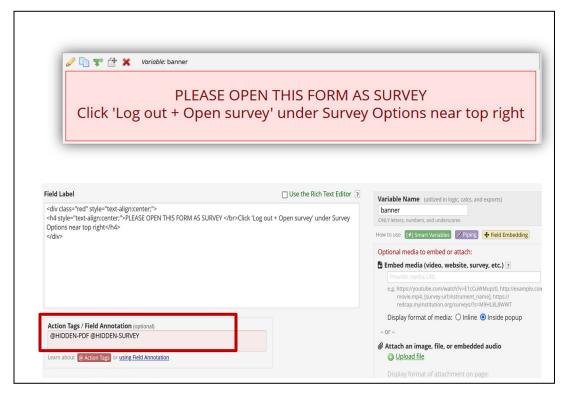
#### a. Instruction Banner

- i. Add a descriptive field to display instructions.
  - Copy the code below to the 'Field Label' box:
     <div class="red" style="text-align:center;">
     <h4 style="text-align:center;">PLEASE OPEN THIS FORM AS A SURVEY </br>
     'Log out + Open survey' under Survey Options near top right</h4></div>
     </div>
  - 2. Add these two 'Action Tags' to the Action tags/Field Annotation box:
    - a. @HIDDEN-SURVEY the warning message will appear on the instrument and not the survey.
    - b. @HIDDEN-PDF the warning message will not print on the PDF copy of the consent form.

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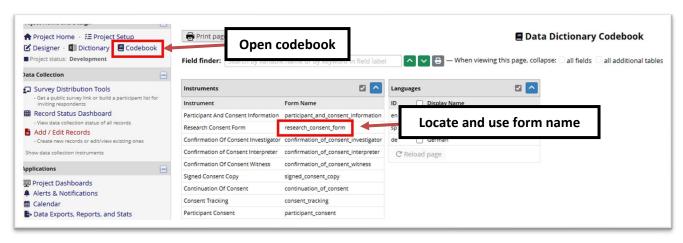


#### Instruction banner:



#### 3. Consent Summary

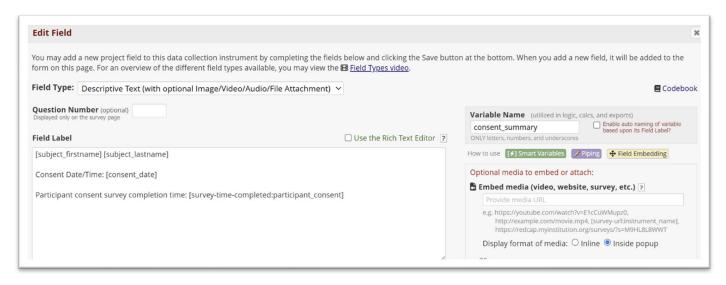
- a. Add a descriptive field to pipe information from participant consent form. To learn more about piping, see *FAQ: Piping*.
  - i. Pipe the following fields:
    - 1. Participant first and last name.
    - Participant consent completion time use smart variable [survey-time-completed:instrument]. Replace 'instrument' with the form name of your participant consent form as shown below.



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#### Example of piping:



#### Add fields for identification and signature:

#### a. Name (First, Last) of Person Obtaining Consent

- i. Create two separate fields for (1.) first name and (2.) last name.
- ii. Tag as an identifier and mark as required.
- iii. Add @READONLY-FORM action tag.

#### b. Optional: Method of Consent

- i. If the consent administration process varies, capture the method (e.g. phone, in-person).
- ii. If including, add @READONLY-FORM action tag.

#### c. Optional: Documentation of Consent process

- i. You may wish to include an acknowledgement that documents the consent process.
- ii. If including, add @READONLY-FORM action tag.

#### d. Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

- i. REDCap options include electronically signing via stylus, mouse or finger.
- ii. Tag as an identifier and mark as required.
- iii. Add @READONLY-FORM action tag.

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#### e. Date

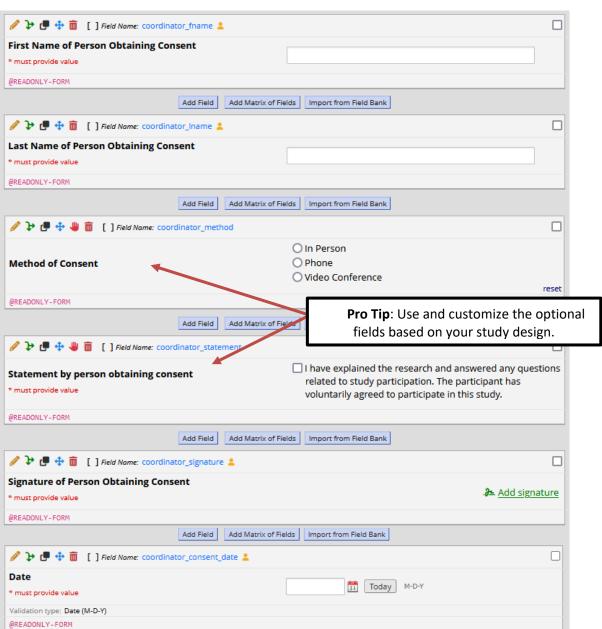
i. Create field for date.

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- ii. To prevent errors, use validation and minimum/maximum range.
- iii. Tag as an identifier and mark as required.
- iv. Add @READONLY-FORM action tag.



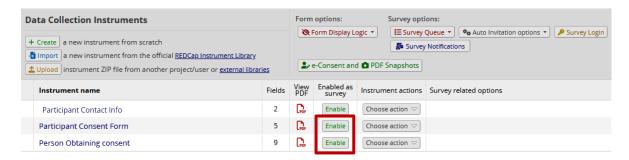
#### Example of person obtaining consent signature fields:



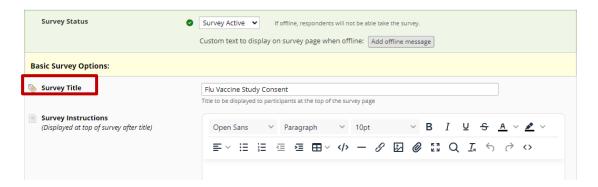


#### **Enable Survey**

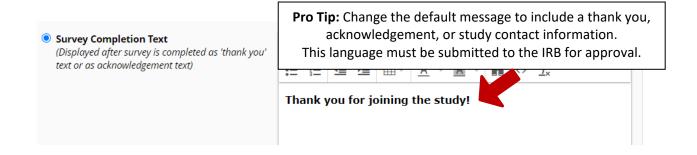
1. When you have finished building your Participant and Person Obtaining Consent Forms, click the 'Enable' button to enable the instruments as surveys.



- 2. For each survey instrument, go to Survey Settings to configure your survey. Enter the eConsent name in the 'Survey Title' as well as any study-specific instructions and survey customizations.
  - a. Do *not* include version number in 'Survey Title'. The survey will be used for multiple versions.



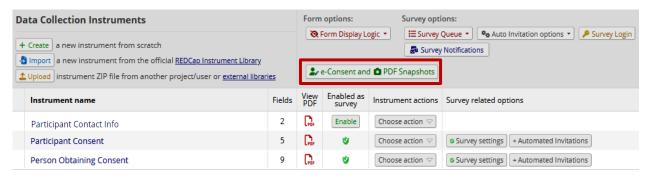
3. Scroll down to 'Survey Termination Options' and edit the text in the Survey Completion Text Box which is set to default to "Thank you for taking the survey. Have a nice day!".



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#### STEP 4: Enable the eConsent Framework

1. Once your surveys are enabled, return to the Online Designer and select the 'eConsent and PDF Snapshots' option.



- 2. Click on 'Enable the eConsent Framework' for a survey. You will enable and configure the eConsent Framework for each eConsent survey individually.
  - a. In this tutorial, you will enable the eConsent framework for the (1.) Participant Consent form and (2.) Person Obtaining Consent form.
- 3. Select your eConsent forms:



4. Configure the eConsent Framework settings.

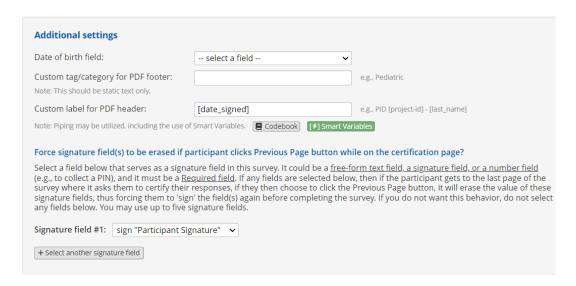


- a. Primary settings:
  - Allow eConsent to be edited by users: Yale HRPP requires to leave this box unchecked to ensure
    the validity of the consent process. Checking this option allows you to edit a signed consent
    form.

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ii. **First and last name fields**: Select the fields where the <u>participant's name</u> was entered by the participant. The eConsent framework will insert the *first and last name* in the footer and the filename of the PDF snapshot for auditing and archiving.

#### b. Additional settings:



- i. Date of birth fields: Yale HRPP discourages the collection of date of birth for eConsent.
- ii. **PDF footer and header:** All eConsent PDFs will contain version, first name, and last name in the footer (if identified in the eConsent settings) and the date/time the PDF is generated.
  - 1. You may add additional fields or text to the footer or header by defining 'Custom tag/category for PDF footer' and 'Custom label for PDF header' and these will be automatically captured in the eConsent PDF snapshot.
- iii. Signature field #1: Associate your signature field here. If multiple signatures are required on a single eConsent instrument, you may add additional signature fields (e.g. Participant, Legally Authorized Representative).

#### c. Snapshot settings:

When the eConsent is activated on a survey, a 'trigger' for an automated snapshot is automatically created for the survey in the 'PDF Snapshots of Records' tab. When the eConsent survey is completed, each instrument with the eConsent framework enabled will generate a PDF snapshot that is automatically saved to the File Repository. See FAQ: eConsent Administration for more information.

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- In the eConsent 'Edit Settings', you may customize the PDF Snapshot's file name or keep the default settings.
- ii. Review and save the settings.



#### **STEP 5: Upload your PDF Consent Form**

1. To utilize eConsent 2.0 versioning, you <u>must</u> upload your PDF consent form in the eConsent Framework Settings.



- a. Click the "Add consent form".
- 2. Identify and upload the consent form.



- a. Define the REDCap consent version in the '# Consent form version' field.
  - i. The '# Consent form version' tracks the unique version of the consent form to be displayed.
  - ii. We recommend using a version system that begins with "RC" (REDCap), a sequential number, and the IRB consent approval date.
    - Once a value is used for a survey, it cannot be reused even in Development mode. Duplicate
      or incorrect uploads cannot be deleted and may result in misalignment with your IRBapproved consent document versioning.

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- b. In the "Placement of consent form", select the field that will display the IRB-approved consent PDF. This is the descriptive field you created in STEP 2 for this consent form.
- c. Click the Consent Form (Inline PDF) tab.

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- d. Click **Choose File** to upload the PDF of your consent form.
- e. Once the upload is complete, click Add new consent form.



WARNING: If you upload an incorrect consent form, you cannot delete the PDF.

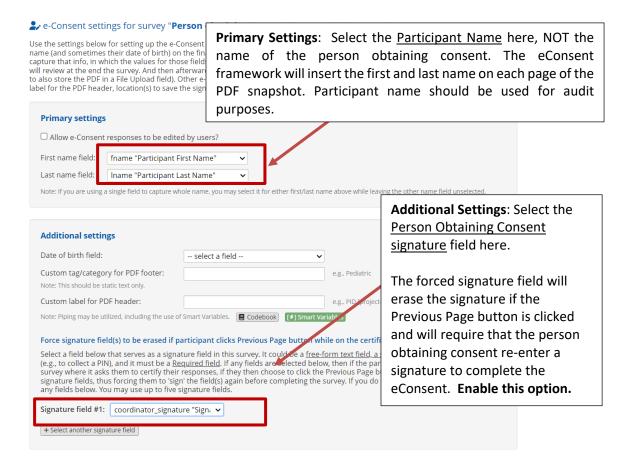
You can deactivate the upload by clicking the 'View all versions' link and selecting 'Set as inactive.' You can then repeat the steps above to re-upload the correct PDF. However, you will not be able to reuse the version number.

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#### **Person Obtaining Consent**

1. Repeat STEP 4 for the Person Obtaining Consent instrument with the considerations below. Do **NOT** re-upload the consent form (skip STEP 5).



#### STEP 6: Test eConsent

Once your consent form is built, it is important that you test the project to verify that the form functions as expected, the consent process described in your protocol can be implemented, and the resulting PDF is correct and readable.

#### Pro Tip: Test thoroughly and carefully before moving your project to production.

Ask a variety of people with different roles on your project to enter test data in your eConsent, to check the functionality and to confirm the legibility of the eConsent found in your file repository.

We have provided a self-evaluation checklist to support testing in STEP 6. You can customize this checklist by adding study-specific quality controls checks to ensure your requirements are being met.

See: eConsent New Build: Self Evaluation Checklist

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## **Revision History**

Version	Effective Date	Section	Page	Description/Rational
2.0	03/24/25	STEP 2: Build your eConsent instrument	4	Added instructions to use 'read-only' action tag to study-specific permission fields to prevent data being entered in form mode.
2.0	03/24/25	Step 3: Setup Signature	5-6	Removed (non-substantive) language.
2.0	03/24/25	Step 3: Setup Signature	6	Removed time field from participant consent form.
2.0	03/24/25	Step 3: Setup Signature	6-10	Included instructions and pro-tip to use 'read-only' action tag fields to prevent data being entered in form mode.
2.0	03/24/25	Step 3: Setup Signature	8	Added a descriptive field 'Consent Summary' to serve as a cross-reference between participant and person obtaining consent forms.
2.0	03/24/25	Step 3: Setup Signature	9	Removed time field from person obtaining consent form.
2.0	03/24/25	Step 3: Setup Signature	9-10	Updated screenshots.
2.0	03/24/25	STEP 5: Upload your PDF Consent Form	14	Updated screenshot.
2.0	03/24/25	STEP 5: Upload your PDF Consent Form	14	Added recommendation to include a <u>sequential number and the IRB</u> <u>consent approval date</u> to the RC version information.
2.0	03/24/25	STEP 5: Upload your PDF Consent Form	15	Included instructions not to re-upload consent form to person obtaining consent form (skip STEP 5).
3.0	07/18/25	STEP 1: Create a New Project	9	Updated screenshot of piping.

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