What does Access to Information and Protection of Privacy mean to me?

The University of Regina is a local authority governed by The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LAFOIPOP).

As an employee of the University, you are obligated to protect the integrity of the personal information collected by the University from and relating to its faculty, staff and students.

What is considered personal information?

Personal information is information about an identifiable individual. It includes (but is not limited to) their name, address, telephone number, age, marital status, gender, nationality, Social Insurance Number, employment history, financial data, education and occupation.

LAFOIPOP applies to such personal information and prescribes the duties of the University and its employees with respect to the use, collection, retention and disclosure of personal information.

What is not considered personal information?

Under LAFOIPOP, the following is deemed not to be personal information: classification, salary, or benefits of an officer or employee authority; personal opinions or views of an employee given in the course of employment; and details of discretionary benefits (permit, authorization or financial benefit).

Can we use and disclose personal information?

As an employee of the University, if you require personal information to perform your role or provide services to an individual you may collect, access, use, retain and disclose personal information in accordance with LAFOIPOP. However, you cannot collect, access, use, retain or disclose personal information for personal or unauthorized uses.

What happens if there is a privacy breach?

If you become aware of a privacy breach or unauthorized use or disclosure of personal information, notify the University Secretariat office immediately. A breach or unauthorized disclosure may have ramifications for the University (including legal action, financial costs, and loss of reputation). Individuals who breach LAFOIPOP or misuse personal information may also be subject to disciplinary penalties.

Several cases of suspected privacy breaches have recently been reported in the news. Here are some examples:

- It was reported that theft of a stolen unencrypted flash drive from the University of Victoria contained the names, social insurance numbers and banking information for 12,000 current and former employees (Bell, 2012).
- A BMO customer asserted that her privacy was breached when her monthly account statements were sent to her ex-husband. She later learned that a BMO employee at her branch changed her mailing address to his – without her knowledge or consent (Tomlinson, 2012).
Eastern Health fired five employees for breaching patient confidentiality – including one nurse who looked up the files of 122 patients. The employee had inappropriately accessed the medical records of patients (CBC News, 2012).

In 2009, a software glitch at Ryerson University exposed the personal information of nearly 600 students. It was discovered that an application used by students to register for courses was allowing students to access the names, addresses and social insurance number of fellow Ryerson students (Ruffolo, 2009).

What every University of Regina employee should do to protect personal information:

- Lock filing cabinets containing files that include personal information.
- Put a password protected screen saver on your computer monitor so if you walk away you need to enter your password to use your computer and no one can access your system in your absence.
- Use encrypted flash drives if you need to store information for off-site use. These flash drives can be purchased through IS and they require a password in order to access the information.
- If you carry a University of Regina smart phone, laptop or tablet, make sure they also have a password protected login.
- Ensure when sending a fax that you have the right number or with an email that you have the correct email address and verify that you are sending the correct attachment.
- Add a privacy disclaimer at the bottom of your e-mail. Here is an example for your use:

  This e-mail message is privileged and/or confidential and is only for the intended recipient(s). If you have received this message in error, please advise the sender by return e-mail immediately, and permanently delete this message.

If you have any concerns about Access to Information and Protection of Privacy on Campus, please contact the Head of Access to Information and Protection of Privacy:

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Works Cited

