



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION &
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

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News Release

**For Immediate Release
November 8, 2017**

**Chicken catching organization not authorized to surveil employees,
Commissioner finds**

VICTORIA—In an investigation report released today, Acting Information and Privacy Commissioner Drew McArthur found a BC chicken catching organization was not authorized by the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) to collect the personal information of employees, farmers and other contractors via video and audio surveillance.

Earlier this year, media reported that the company implemented surveillance in response to the release of a covert video showing chickens being mistreated. The surveillance was installed after receiving advice from a crisis management consultant. Commissioner McArthur initiated this investigation in response to the media coverage.

“Video surveillance is too often seen as the solution to business problems. But it’s rarely effective in solving those problems, and worse, it’s often unlawful. In this case, the organization should have avoided employee misconduct by implementing less privacy invasive measures, such as improving hiring, training, and supervision practices. Merely implementing surveillance afterward, when those responsible had been terminated, was ill-considered.

“Organizations should know that any surveillance measures must be reasonable and authorized by PIPA,” says McArthur.

The report found that the company collected personal information without the consent of the recorded individuals, which included employees, farmers, and other contractors. The company did not conduct a privacy impact assessment prior to implementing the surveillance and did not have the appropriate policies and procedures in place.

“The best way for an organization to demonstrate compliance with PIPA is to have an appropriate privacy management program. Had this been in place, the surveillance likely would not have been implemented.”

Investigation Report P17-01: Use of employee surveillance by a BC chicken catching organization makes seven recommendations to bring the company into compliance with PIPA.

These recommendations include stopping the use of video surveillance, deleting stored footage and creating a privacy policy.

The office has released a guidance document, [Employee Privacy Rights](#), to assist organizations considering the use of employee monitoring.

Investigation Report P17-01: Use of employee surveillance by a BC chicken catching organization is available for download at <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/reports/investigation-reports/>

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