

January 27, 2023

Commissioner on Data Privacy Day: BC's public sector privacy protections are stronger – private sector law must keep pace

VICTORIA— BC Information and Privacy Commissioner Michael McEvoy released the following statement in recognition of Data Privacy Day, January 28, 2023:

“Privacy breaches can be devastating. They can cause financial hardship, ruin lives, and destroy hard earned trust between organizations and the people they serve. As we spend more of our lives online than ever before, demands for our personal information intensify and so too do the threats to our privacy.

Data Privacy Day’s message of the importance of protecting our personal information online is urgent: it’s a call not only for all of us to keep privacy front of mind when we provide our personal information, but, critically, for organizations to abide by their legal obligations to protect the personal information they collect, use and disclose.

Next week, February 1, amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* will go into effect, requiring public bodies to develop privacy management programs and to notify our office and affected parties when a serious privacy breach occurs. These are changes that stand to build and strengthen trust between British Columbians and public bodies.

Now it’s time for similar action on the private sector side. On Data Privacy Day, I call on the government of British Columbia to amend the *Personal Information Protection Act*, our private sector privacy legislation, to ensure that it is fit for purpose to face modern privacy challenges. Adding a mandatory breach notification requirement to the legislation would be an important step forward in making that happen.”

Resources:

PrivacyRight: Step-by-step guidance on how to build a robust privacy management program from the ground up: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/privacyright/>

Securing personal information: A self-assessment for public bodies and organizations: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/1439>

Guide for organizations collecting personal information online: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/3535>

Privacy guidelines for strata corporations and strata agents: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/3632>

Privacy tips for seniors: Protect your personal information: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/3434>

FIPPA and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/2402>

Tips for public bodies and organizations setting up remote workspaces:
<https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/2398>

Follow us @BCInfoPrivacy on Twitter

Media Contact

Michelle Mitchell | Senior Communications Manager
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC
250 217-7872 | mmitchell@oipc.bc.ca
Twitter: @BCInfoPrivacy