

**For immediate release**

**June 4, 2024**

**Commissioners launch joint investigation into company that does background checks**

**VICTORIA** - The Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia have launched a joint investigation into Certn (Canada) Inc., a company that offers background check services, including tenant screening services to landlords.

Certn is based in Victoria, British Columbia, and offers its services across Canada.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) will assess Certn's compliance with the federal *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia (OIPC BC) will investigate compliance with its *Personal Information Protection Act*.

The Offices will examine the company's practices with respect to tenant screening to determine if they are compliant with the consent provisions under both laws. The Offices will also assess whether Certn ensures that the information that it collects, uses, and discloses for the purposes of tenant screening is sufficiently accurate, complete, and up to date; and whether the purposes for which it collects that information are appropriate.

**Quote from Privacy Commissioner of Canada Philippe Dufresne:**

*"The personal information that is collected on behalf of landlords during the screening of potential tenant applications raises important privacy considerations. Landlords, and the services that they employ, must comply with Canadian privacy laws. This means collecting, using, and disclosing tenants' personal information appropriately, with consent and sufficiently accurate information, which is important as it may ultimately impact an individuals' ability to find a place to live."*

**Quote from Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia Michael Harvey:**

*"In British Columbia, the Personal Information Protection Act seeks to strike a balance between the privacy rights of individuals and the needs of organizations to collect, use and disclose personal information to run their businesses. The Act applies to anyone renting a property and to the services they employ to do so. At a time when hundreds of thousands of British Columbians are facing affordability and housing challenges, striking this balance and ensuring that people's privacy rights are respected in the rental space is critically important."*

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