



OFFICE OF THE  
INFORMATION &  
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER  
for British Columbia

Protecting privacy. Promoting transparency.

**News Release**

**For Immediate Release  
Jan. 13, 2015**

### **Privacy Commissioners sign new MOU on private sector privacy**

**VICTORIA**—The Information and Privacy Commissioners of British Columbia and Alberta and the Privacy Commissioner of Canada have renewed their commitment to collaborate in an effort to better protect Canadians' personal information in the digital age.

The three Commissioners, who have responsibility for enforcing private sector privacy laws in their respective jurisdictions, signed a revised Memorandum of Understanding outlining how they will work together to provide comprehensive privacy protection for Canadians in the years to come.

“For more than ten years, our three offices have worked together to inform individuals about their commercial privacy rights, and provide businesses with practical guidance to comply with privacy laws. This coordinated effort is critical in a world where data knows no borders, and more companies do business in multiple provinces as well as online,” said B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham.

“It is more important than ever that organizations implement comprehensive privacy practices, and be transparent about those practices when it comes to customers as well as Privacy Commissioners.

“I look forward to continuing the collaborative and productive working relationship with my colleagues across Canada,” said Denham.

Recent collaborative work has continued to provide the public with comprehensive privacy protection as well as practical advice, including:

- Guidance for private sector organizations on how to build a privacy management program step-by-step;
- A guidance document to help small and medium-sized enterprises understand their privacy responsibilities when using cloud technologies;
- An online self-assessment tool to help organizations assess security measures while offering guidance on minimum security requirements in 17 different categories; and
- Best privacy practices for mobile app developers.

The MOU is attached.

# Memorandum of Understanding

Between  
The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada,  
The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, and  
The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia

WITH RESPECT TO  
Co-operation and Collaboration in Private Sector Privacy Policy, Enforcement, and  
Public Education

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As the offices of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia, have oversight responsibilities for our respective private sector privacy laws within our jurisdictions.

As there are circumstances where the Offices have concurrent or overlapping jurisdiction over organizations operating across Canada.

As the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, S.C.2000, c.5, s.23, the *Personal Information Protection Act*, S.A. 2003, c. P-6.5, and the *Personal Information Protection Act*, S.B.C. 2003, c. 63, provide for consultation and collaboration.

As there are interests and benefits resulting from cooperation and collaboration in policy, enforcement, public education, and compliance, both within the oversight offices and to organizations, and individuals in Canada.

**GIVEN** the responsibilities and mandates of the named parties,

**THE PARTIES AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

## 1. OBJECTIVE OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### 1.1 Objective of the Memorandum of Understanding

The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set out a framework to support federal/provincial collaboration and co-operation in order to:

- Leverage the resources of the Offices to maximize capacity and impact in oversight activities, while at the same time reduce overlap and inefficiencies.
- Increase knowledge sharing and enhance relationships between the Offices in order to ensure consistent, co-ordinated, efficient and harmonized oversight of private sector privacy in Canada.
- Carry out joint instructions of the Privacy Commissioners.

## 2. APPROACH

### 2.1 This Memorandum of Understanding includes the following

## areas:

- **Enforcement:** The parties will consult to identify enforcement matters that are of mutual interest and determine how to respond in a co-ordinated and harmonized manner (as laws allow).
- **Policy:** The parties will consult to identify common principles and areas of mutual policy interest, and to develop and implement strategies to achieve policy goals and objectives. In particular, the parties will focus on emerging privacy issues to ensure a proactive, co-ordinated and consistent policy position and response whenever possible.
- **Public Education and Compliance Resources:** The parties will consult on the development of public education initiatives, and collaborate when it is mutually beneficial and of interest to do so. The parties will, whenever possible and as resources and laws allow, collaborate when issuing compliance guidelines to enhance harmonization and consistency in private sector privacy compliance.
- **Information sharing** on matters of mutual interest to collectively increase the Offices' knowledge and understanding of private sector privacy matters.

## 2.2 Role of Private Sector Privacy Forum

The primary vehicles for achieving the objectives set out in this Memorandum of Understanding will be the Private Sector Privacy (PSP) Forum and the PSP Forum Working Group:

### PSP Forum

- Activities of the PSP Forum will include, but are not necessarily limited to:
- Developing protocols to address the sharing of information, determination of jurisdiction, transferring complaints, and carrying out parallel and joint investigations.
- Identifying opportunities for collaborative policy and public education. The Offices commit to advising and updating each other with regard to all such proposed and ongoing initiatives and will consult to prevent duplication or inconsistencies.
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing with regard to internal protocols, including the development of templates, reporting formats and case management systems.
- Consulting on issues of jurisdiction between Offices, and with respect to other dispute resolution forums.
- Coordinating and participating in staff exchanges.
- Jointly sponsoring, supporting and participating in conferences and training activities.

Each Office will name one or more representatives to participate in the PSP Forum. The representatives will include senior staff responsible for investigations, policy, public education and compliance. Membership in the Forum may be delegated. Attendance at bi-monthly meetings is open to other staff involved in privacy sector privacy oversight.

At a minimum, membership in the Forum will include the following:

- Director-General Investigations, PIPEDA, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Director of Policy and Research, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Director, Compliance and Special Investigations, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta

- Deputy Registrar/Assistant Commissioner, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia

PSP Forum meetings will be held bi-monthly via teleconference, and will be held in person once a year in conjunction with a meeting of the Privacy Commissioners.

The PSP Forum is chaired by one of the members appointed by agreement among the membership. The Chair will rotate on a bi-annual basis. The Chair is responsible for:

- Setting the agenda for regular meetings. Agendas should reflect the sharing of policy and public education initiatives of interest, research, compliance guidance materials, and significant investigations.
- Co-ordinating in-person meetings with hosting office.
- Distributing minutes.
- Co-ordinating annual reports of the PSP Forum's activities to the Commissioners pursuant to section 2.4.

### **PSP Forum Working Group**

Activities of the PSP Forum Working Group will include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Carrying out the instructions of the PSP Forum.
- Ensuring regular information sharing between member offices with respect to ongoing parallel or joint investigations.

Membership in the PSP Forum Working Group will include, at a minimum, the following:

- A representative from the PIPEDA Investigations Branch, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Director of Policy and Research, Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Director, Compliance and Special Investigations, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta
- Deputy Registrar/Assistant Commissioner, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia

PSP Forum Working Group meetings will be held as necessary during those months when the PSP Forum does not meet.

## **2.3 Resource requirements**

Each Office will fund its own participation in the PSP Forum, including costs associated with participating in in-person meetings. The Office responsible for chairing PSP Forum meetings will be responsible for hosting teleconference meetings. The Office hosting in-person meetings will be responsible for costs related to the meeting facilities, refreshments and other related costs.

Where there may be costs associated with collaborative policy, public education and compliance work, the Offices will, at the start of such initiatives, identify required resources and agree to a plan for resourcing such initiatives.

## **2.4 Reporting**

Matters of interest and/or minutes of each meeting of the PSP Forum will be communicated to the respective Commissioners.

Once per year, the PSP Forum will formally report activities to the Commissioners.

## **2.5 Information sharing, ownership, confidentiality and security**

Information, including case specific information containing personal information where necessary, may be shared between the Offices for the following purposes;

- To assess jurisdiction and transfer complaints as necessary;
- To evaluate whether or not investigations or complaints relate to the same or similar matters in order to assess whether or not a parallel or joint investigation is appropriate;
- To conduct parallel or joint investigations;
- To otherwise assist in the conduct of an ongoing or potential investigation of a complaint or, where applicable, audit; and
- To assist the Privacy Commissioners in carrying out their respective functions and duties.

Non-case specific information may also be shared between the Offices for the following purposes:

- To coordinate or participate in staff exchanges and staff training activities;
- To develop or discuss policy, internal protocols, public education material, templates or case management systems;
- For any other purpose consistent with the objectives of this memorandum of understanding.

Information shared pursuant to this memorandum will only be used for the purposes for which it was originally shared.

Each Office will treat confidential or personal information received in a confidential manner in accordance with each Office's requirements. Confidential or personal information will be shared only in accordance with statutory conditions and requirements. The Office receiving confidential and personal information will not, without the express written consent of the Office that shared the information, further disclose the information unless required by law. The Office sharing the information will clearly indicate which aspects, if any, of the information being shared are confidential or contain personal information. All reports and documents, draft or otherwise, prepared by an Office remain the property of that Office and when provided to another Office are provided on the understanding that they will be not be disclosed, copied or distributed without permission.

## **3. ADMINISTRATION**

**3.1** The Privacy Commissioner of Canada, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia, are charged with carrying out this Memorandum of Understanding.

### **3.2 Duration, Amendment and Termination**

This Memorandum of Understanding supersedes all other Memoranda of Understanding signed between the parties and will come into force the day it is signed and will remain in force until another memorandum is signed, or it is terminated in accordance with this Memorandum.

The terms and conditions of this Memorandum of Understanding may be amended by mutual agreement in writing. Any of the parties may withdraw from this Memorandum by giving at least one month's written notice to the other parties. The parties may also terminate this Memorandum by mutual consent in writing. All confidentiality or non-disclosure provisions, undertakings and other restrictions in section 2.5 will remain in force after termination of the Memorandum of Understanding or a party withdraws.

### **3.3 Dispute resolution process**

Although disputes are unlikely to occur, there is a potential for disagreement among the parties to this Memorandum of Understanding. Disputes among staff of the respective Offices should first be subject to resolution among the staff. The next level of dispute resolution is between the Commissioners or Assistant Commissioners, as appropriate.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, THE FOLLOWING HAVE AFFIXED THEIR SIGNATURES TO THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN TRIPLICATE IN ENGLISH AND IN FRENCH, EACH VERSION BEING EQUALLY AUTHENTIC:

*Original signed by*

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Daniel Therrien  
Privacy Commissioner of Canada

**IN Gatineau**

**THIS 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014**

*Original signed by*

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Jill Clayton  
Information and Privacy Commissioner, Alberta

**IN Gatineau**

**THIS 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014**

*Original signed by*

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Elizabeth Denham  
Information and Privacy Commissioner, British Columbia

**IN Gatineau**

**THIS 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014**