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Privacy guardians issue joint statement on COVID-19 contact tracing applications

VICTORIA— Federal, provincial and territorial privacy guardians today issued a [joint statement](#) calling on governments to ensure that COVID-19 contact tracing applications respect key privacy principles.

Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia Michael McEvoy says if done right and with privacy principles in mind, technology can be used as a means to address the COVID-19 crisis.

“There may be a place for contact tracing apps as the province determines next steps in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. If the government goes down this road, what most British Columbians would expect, is that any initiative would be voluntary, would collect the minimum amount of personal information necessary, and critically, whatever personal information is collected would only be used for the purpose of fighting COVID-19. These are among the conditions necessary for any contact tracing app to gain the support and trust of British Columbians”, says Commissioner McEvoy, who continues to be in discussions with the Ministry of Health and Public Health Officer about the issue.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia recently published [tips for public bodies and organizations setting up remote workspaces](#), and [guidance for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) to assist public bodies and organizations with understanding their privacy obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information:

Joint Statement by Federal, Provincial and Territorial Information and Privacy Commissioners: [Supporting public health, building public trust: Privacy principles for contact tracing and similar apps](#)

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