



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION & PRIVACY
COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

Protecting privacy. Promoting transparency.

Practical Suggestions for your Organization's Website's Privacy Policy

Introduction

Websites are one of the main ways that organizations communicate with the public about who they are and what they do. A big concern of visitors to a website is what the host organization will do with their personal information. A good website privacy policy allows an organization to address this concern.

This guidance document is intended to set out the basics of what an organization should consider when developing a website privacy policy.

Why have a Website Privacy Policy?

Trust is a crucial element of any organization's relationship with the public. A website privacy policy creates a transparent environment in which an organization can explain its personal information practices.

Website privacy policies provide an organization with an opportunity to explain its personal information practices to the public.

Practical Suggestions for your Organization's Policy

When creating your organization's website privacy policy, you should keep in mind the following suggestions regarding both content and style:

Content

- **Clearly set out the basics** – Provide enough information so that visitors know what personal information your organization intends to collect, why you are collecting it, how you intend to use it and who you will disclose it to. You should also provide information about how your organization is safeguarding that personal information and how long you intend to retain it.

- **Cookies** – Inform website visitors if you are using cookies to collect any personal information from them.
- **Transfer outside Canada** – Notify individuals if you are transferring their personal information outside of Canada.
- **Consent** -- Avoid mixing “opt-in” consents and “opt-out” consents which might confuse your visitors. Also avoid pre-ticking consent boxes.
- **Access, correction and complaints** – Make your visitors aware they can access their personal information your organization holds and inform them how they can request your organization to correct any errors in this information. Also let visitors know how they can complain about your organization’s compliance with the *Personal Information Protection Act*.
- **Contact information** – Include contact information of someone who can answer questions or concerns about your organization’s personal information practices.

Style:

- **Make your policy easy to find** – Your privacy policy should be accessible from a clearly labeled link on your home page.
- **Write your policy in plain language** – Write your policy so that your intended audience can easily read and understand it.
- **Be specific to your organization** – Your policy should reflect your organization’s business and should not simply use the language from another organization’s policy.
- **Update your policy regularly** – The activities of your business will change over time. You should reflect these changes in your website privacy policy and inform visitors to your website when you have made changes to your policy.

If you have any questions about this document, please contact us at:

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