



F07-07-MS Health Authority Goes Extra Mile Searching for Records

A health care worker asked his former employer, a health authority, for all records created within a specified time-frame and containing his personal information. He particularly wanted information that contained comments on the quality of his character or that related to his job applications within the health authority or his job performance. He named various types of records and a number of health authority employees he had communicated with as possible sources of records.

The health authority released what it could find but was unable to locate some records related to job applications and to correspondence the applicant claimed to have had with certain health authority employees.

As some information was severed from the records under s. 22(1) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and some of the records the applicant was expecting to receive were not included, he asked us to review the severing and made a complaint that the health authority had not carried out an adequate search for records.

A review of the records found that only one line containing personal information had been severed. The document, a printout of the health authority's intranet site listing the names of job applicants who made online job applications, contained the personal information of the applicant and one other person. The severed information was the name and application status of the other person. Under section 22(1), the health authority was obliged to deny access to this information.

In support of his suggestion that the health authority had not carried out an adequate search, the applicant provided copies of records in his possession that he believed should have been produced.

The health authority agreed to carry out another search, particularly for the records the applicant provided to our office. It contacted 12 health authority employees, including those named by the applicant and employees who worked at the facilities named by the applicant, and the health authority's corporate office. These people were asked to search carefully for records related to the applicant and, if possible, suggest where records might be found. No additional records were found.

The health authority noted that some of the requested records were two or three years old and, in the case of unsuccessful job applications, would have been disposed of. (Section 31 of FIPPA requires public bodies to retain for one year personal information that has been used to make a decision that directly affects an individual.) One email, a personal communication with a supervisor, was likely not retained by the health authority as it was not a work record. Two other emails were auto-responses from the health authority's on-line application system and had not been kept.

Concluding that the health authority had conducted an adequate search for the applicant's records, we closed the file.