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INFORMATION YOUR ORGANIZATION COLLECTS:

The following table shows the information you selected when filling out the privacy tool.

Type of Information What you collect Who collects it For what reason Who uses it Stored by Shared with
Contact Information Name

Address

Postal Code

Phone Number

Email Address

Sales representative in the field

Website or IT support

Owner Operator

To complete a sale/transaction

Customer service

Delivery services

Sales representative in the field

Electronic File

Paper File

Purchase Information Product/service preferences

Sales representative in the field

To complete a sale/transaction

Customer service

Customer relationship management

In-store sales representative

Electronic File

Paper File

CONSENT PRACTICES

Consent is voluntary agreement with what is being done or proposed. Consent can be either express or implied. Express consent is given explicitly, either orally or in writing. Express consent is unequivocal and does not require any inference on the part of the organization seeking consent. Implied consent arises where the consent may reasonably be inferred from the action or inaction of the individual.

EXPRESS CONSENT

You indicated that you collect the following information that is either sensitive or potentially sensitive.

Product/service preferences

When collecting sensitive or potentially sensitive information, you should always make sure you get express consent from your

customer. In other words, you must ask the customer directly if they consent to you collecting the information and/or disclosing the information to another company. For example, if you collect financial information for a credit check, have the customer sign an application form that states that you will disclose the information to a credit reporting agency and that the customer consents to this.

Express consent should be used whenever possible and in all cases when the personal information is considered sensitive.

IMPLIED CONSENT

You collect the following information to complete a sale or other transaction, verify a customer's credit, place a special order for a customer, arrange for a delivery, or process a return:

Product/service preferences

So long as the information collected is necessary to complete one of the actions listed above, you can assume the customer has consented when he or she provides you with the information. (This is called "implied consent".)

Remember:

You can't refuse to complete a transaction if the customer refuses to consent to the collection of information that isn't necessary to complete the transaction.

If you decide later to use this information for another purpose, you have to go back and get the customer's consent.

OPT-OUT CONSENT

You collect the following information for secondary purposes, such as marketing, administering a customer loyalty program, or customer relationship management:

Product/service preferences

In these circumstances, you have to give the customer an opportunity to tell you they don't want you to use their information for that purpose. This is called an "opt-out".

Opt-outs must be clear, easy to understand and easy for the customer to do. You can have an opt-out box on a paper-based or web application form, for example, that tells customers that if they don't want to receive promotional material in the mail, just check here. You may want to let the customer know what they'll be missing - special deals and new product information, for example - but don't minimize, hide or obscure the opt-out. And don't make it complicated, like requiring the customer to call a special phone number between certain hours. The point is to let the customer decide.

SECURITY PLAN

EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO CUSTOMER INFORMATION

You indicated that there are no employees in your organization who see or process information unnecessarily. This is a good practice. By limiting the number of people who view or process information you reduce the risk of inappropriate use or disclosure.

STORAGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION: PAPER FILES

The following includes the types of information you may store in paper files:

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

It is extremely important to take all measures possible in order to safely store your customer's personal information. Try the following methods to protect those files by moving them to:

A locked cabinet
A restricted area
An area with an alarm system

STORAGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION: ELECTRONIC FILES

The following includes the types of information you may store in electronic files:

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

It is extremely important to take all measures possible in order to safely store your customer's personal information. Try the following methods to protect those files by using:

Computer passwords
Firewalls
Encrypted data files
Encrypted personal information that is sent or received over the Internet (by email or through web forms, for eg.)
Electronic audit trails that identify who has access information
Keeping backup files in a locked cabinet
Be especially careful with laptops, USB keys and electronic wireless devices. These types of devices can potentially store a large quantity of your customer's personal information. All of these devices should be password protected and have the strongest form of protection possible.

COLLECTION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION

You indicated that you collect the following information that is either sensitive or potentially sensitive:

Product/service preferences

Because of the nature of this information, consider using more than one method to ensure that it is kept confidential.

Finally, go through your old files and destroy any personal information that you no longer need in order to fulfill the purpose that you collected it for.

THIRD PARTIES LIST

You share personal information with the following third party suppliers or agents:

With No Other Parties

You'll have to review the privacy practices of these firms to make sure they meet the same standards that you apply to your business. You should also talk to your lawyer about adding special clauses to any contracts that involve you sharing information with a third party to:

require the third party to protect your customer information
give you the power to audit the third party to make sure they're complying with fair information practices
make sure the third party only uses the information for the purposes set out in the contract
require the third party to pass on to you any requests from customers to see their customer records

CREATING A PRIVACY BROCHURE FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

A good privacy statement tells your customers:

what personal information you collect

how you use that personal information
when you assume an individual has consented and when you ask for consent
when and how an individual can opt out of collection
who to talk to in your organization if they have questions or complaints

A good privacy statement also makes it much easier to provide your staff with the information they need to answer any customer questions about your privacy practices.

The following is a sample Privacy Statement that you can use to help create your own brochure. Once you've done so, make sure you have copies of the brochure prominently displayed at the cash and customer service desk. Also be sure to post it on your web site.

Sample Privacy Statement

We collect personal information from our customers in the regular course of doing business. This brochure answers some of your most frequently asked questions, and lets you know exactly how we're protecting the information you entrust to us.

What personal information do you collect about me?

We collect the following information about you:

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

When you visit our web site, we also collect:

information about your computer, including your IP address, the type of operating system and browser you use, and your computer's location
what pages you visit on our site and what links you click on
what other sites you've visited recently

How do you use this information?

The main reasons we collect personal information from you are:

Customer relationship management
Customer service
Delivery services
To complete a sale/transaction

If it's a necessary part of any of these transactions, we may disclose your information to another company. For example, when you apply for credit, we pass on your personal information to a credit reporting agency so we can complete a credit check. We also pass on your name and address to a courier company to complete a delivery.

Use of Personal Information for Secondary Reasons

We also may use your personal information for other, secondary reasons, including:

To complete a sale/transaction

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address

Product/service preferences

Customer service

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

Customer relationship management

Product/service preferences

Delivery services

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address

Sharing of Personal Information with Third Parties

We do not share your personal information with any third parties.

Ontario

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario

2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400

Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8

Phone: (416) 326-3333

Toll-free: 1 (800) 387-0073 (free within Ontario)

Email: info@ipc.on.ca

Web Site: <http://www.ipc.on.ca/>

TRAINING

You have indicated that you do not collect any personal information, therefore it is important to explain to your employees that they are not to collect any personal information about customers.

EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

You indicated that your organization does not collect any information without knowing why.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

HOW MUCH PERSONAL INFORMATION SHOULD YOU COLLECT?

With new information technologies, there's a temptation to collect personal information just in case it could be useful in the future. But under privacy laws, you have to tell your customers why you're collecting the information and then stick to that purpose. If you want to use the information for another purpose, you have to go back to the customer and get his or her permission.

Once you do collect the information, you are also required by law to keep it up-to-date, accurate and secure and to provide customers with access to it on request.

In other words, there are hidden costs and obligations involved when you collect personal information. One of the easiest and cheapest ways you can make your business privacy-compliant is to collect only what you actually need.

Another quick and easy privacy win is to make sure any software or paper forms you use don't have any free-form fields - things like "Notes" or "Additional Information". That cuts down on the possibility that your staff will collect unnecessary personal information.

When you're deciding what to collect, remember that you're obligated to make sure you're only collecting information for purposes that a "reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances". In Quebec, the requirement is that the information has to be "necessary for the object of the file".

So the next step is to review the information you collect and follow the 3 Rs - make sure it's Reasonable, Relevant to your purpose, and Really Needed for your business. If not, don't collect it.

HOW TO PROTECT THE PERSONAL INFORMATION YOU COLLECT?

Now that you've limited the personal information you collect to what's Reasonable, Relevant and Really Needed, the next step is to make sure you keep that information safe and secure.

Under the law, you are required to use security safeguards to protect the personal information you have from things like unauthorized persons getting access to it for copying, modifying or destroying it. Federal laws also talk about protecting it from loss or theft, and Quebec laws call for safety measures that will ensure the information is kept confidential.

Keeping information secure doesn't have to be high-tech. The best protection is to limit who gets access to it on a "need-to-know" basis only. Here's a summary of who uses the personal information you collect in your business.

In-store sales representative
Sales representative in the field

Next, think about how sensitive the information you collect is. Generally speaking, the more sensitive it is, the better your security arrangements should be. Information about a person's health or financial situation is always considered sensitive and must be protected with higher safeguards.

You've indicated that you collect the following sensitive or potentially sensitive information:

Product/service preferences

This information needs to be well protected from prying eyes, so consider using multiple methods to protect it. For example, consider purchasing cash registers that truncate ("x" out) payment or credit card numbers on customer receipts to protect the information from identity thieves.

It is also important to remember that other information may be sensitive, depending on the context. For example, the fact a person subscribes to a magazine for cancer survivors may be sensitive in some circumstances. Customer relationship management databases and lists may also be sensitive because they are a lucrative target for identity thieves who want access to the information so they can impersonate your customers.

Next, think about where you keep your personal information. Security can be as simple as locking a filing cabinet or restricting who has access to an office.

You indicated that you keep the following information in paper files:

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

You indicated that you keep the following information in electronic files:

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

Finally, think about what you do with old files. As a general rule of thumb, you should only keep personal information for as long as you need to fulfill the purpose that you collected it for. After that, you should destroy it.

But take care. Canadian organizations have ended up in the news when their old files ended up in boxes on the beach or on the back of real estate pamphlets circulated in Toronto. Invest in a shredder for smaller jobs, and use a magnet to destroy any electronic files that may be stored on old equipment. If you're contracting out, make sure you use a reputable firm that will completely destroy your files.

EXPLAIN WHY AND ASK FOR PERMISSION

The best way to manage your privacy risks is to let your customers know why you're collecting the information and ask them for their permission.

There are times when it's obvious your customer knows why you're collecting the information and consents to it. For example, when a customer hands the cashier a payment card, he or she knows your business will record the card number and pass it onto the bank so you'll be paid. The customer's consent to the use of the card number for the limited purpose of payment can be implied from the circumstances.

You indicated that you collect the following information to complete a sale or transaction, verify a customer's credit, place a special order for a customer, arrange for a delivery, or process a return:

Product/service preferences

So long as this information is necessary to complete one of the transactions listed above, you can assume your customer has consented to the collection and use of his or her personal information for that purpose. (This is called "implied consent.") But remember, if you decide later to use this information for another purpose, you have to go back and get the customer's consent.

You have indicated that you collect the following information for the following secondary purposes:

To complete a sale/transaction

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

Customer service

Name
Address
Postal Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Product/service preferences

Customer relationship management

Product/service preferences

Delivery services

Name

Address

Postal Code

Phone Number

Email Address

In these situations - when you're using personal information for a purpose other than the original sale or transaction - you can't assume the customer will consent to it being used for something else, like marketing or customer relationship management. In these circumstances, you have to give the customer an opportunity to tell you they don't want you to use their information for that purpose. This is called an "opt-out".

Opt-outs must be clear, easy to understand and easy for the customer to do. You can have an opt-out box on a paper-based or web application form, for example, that tells customers that they don't want to receive promotional material in the mail, just check here. You may want to let the customer know what they'll be missing - special deals and new product information, for example - but don't minimize, hide or obscure the opt-out. And don't make it complicated, like requiring the customer to write a letter to a specific address within a specific time frame. The point is to let the customer decide.

You have indicated that you collect the following information that is either sensitive or potentially sensitive:

Product/service preferences

With sensitive information like this, you should always make sure you get express consent from your customer. Especially if you're sharing the information with a third party, like a credit reporting agency, you must ask the customer directly if they consent to you disclosing the information. You can do this, for example, by having them sign an application form that states what you will do with the information and that they consent to it.

But remember that you can't refuse a sale if the customer refuses to consent to the collection of information that isn't necessary and legitimately needed to complete the transaction. This is called "tied consent" and it is against the law.

Lastly, under federal law, your customers have a right to withdraw their consent at any time, so long as they give you reasonable notice. The exception is where customers have signed a contract that restricts their right to withdraw their consent.

HOW TO RESPOND TO INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

Responding fairly and quickly to customer concerns is one of the fastest ways to privacy compliance. The single most important thing you can do is to make sure your frontline staff knows exactly what personal information your organization collects and why you collect it, so they can answer customers' questions.

Here are the people in your organization who collect information from customers:

Sales representative in the field

Website or IT support

Other: Owner Operator

If a customer wants more information about your privacy practices, make sure your frontline staff has copies of a brochure that tells customers:

what personal information you collect

how you use it

what other organizations you share it with and why

who in your organization they can contact if they want to see their own records, or have questions or complaints

how to contact the Privacy Commissioner's office for more information or assistance
Also be sure to post a copy of your privacy policy brochure on your web site.

Designing an effective brochure isn't that difficult, once you know what information the customer needs. To make it easier, we'll give you a sample brochure at the end of this training session.

THIRD PARTY SUPPLIERS OR AGENTS

Sometimes sharing customers' personal information is just a regular part of doing business, like when a store passes on a customer's address to a courier to deliver a product. Other retailers may decide to share that information - with the customer's consent - with partners or marketers.

It's important to remember that your responsibility doesn't end when the information leaves your hands. Whenever you share personal information with a third party, it's up to you to make sure it's going to be protected.

Your organization shares personal information with the following third parties:

With No Other Parties

You'll have to review the privacy practices of these firms to make sure they meet the same standards that you apply to your business. You should also talk to your lawyer about adding special clauses to any contracts that involve you sharing personal information with a third party to:

- require the third party to protect your customer information
- give you the power to audit the third party to make sure they're complying with fair information practices
- make sure the third party only uses the information for the purposes set out in the contract
- require the third party to pass on to you any requests from customers to see their customer records
- require the third party to destroy the information once the contract is completed