

Know your Obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act*

The *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) sets out the ground rules for how private sector organizations may collect, use or disclose personal information. As well, PIPA requires organizations to protect and secure personal information against unauthorized use or disclosure. The law also gives individuals the right to access their own personal information. Non-profit housing providers, non-profit service providers and co-ops are all subject to PIPA. As a result, they are required to protect information about their tenants and employees in accordance with the rules in PIPA.

When Using The Housing Registry

As users of The Housing Registry, we need to work together to protect confidentiality and keep information secure. This includes all staff and volunteers. Here are some measures that users of The Housing Registry must take:

- Limit access and disclosure: Information should only be accessed and shared on a need-to-know basis. This means you are not permitted to browse or search for someone you know in The Housing Registry out of curiosity or for other purposes that are not related to your work.
- Limit use: Users with access to The Housing Registry are permitted to use personal information in The Housing Registry only to assess an applicant for housing – and for no other purpose.
- Keep information secure: Keeping information secure includes giving computer access only to those who need it to do their job, and providing access to the minimal amount of information required. It also includes hiding monitors from view of office visitors and not allowing others to overhear private conversations.

When someone calls:

If someone calls regarding a file, verify their identity before even confirming if there is a file. Ensure that the person you are releasing information to is who they say they are and that they are authorized to access the information. Best practice is to confirm a minimum of 4 personal information items, such as address, birth date, telephone number, etc. before disclosing any information. If the caller is not authorized to access the file, you can still provide general information regarding The Housing Registry procedures and explain how to become an authorized contact on a file.

When you work on a file:

Every time you work on a file, document your actions and reasoning in a factual manner, without making assumptions or judgements. Keep in mind that an individual has the right to obtain a copy of their file. If the request is for records in The Housing Registry, let the individual know that only BC Housing's Privacy Office can provide a copy of a file and that the request must be made in writing to: BC Housing Privacy Officer, 1701 – 4555 Kingsway, Burnaby BC V5H 4V8 or FIPPA@bchousing.org.

Complaints:

Be prepared to receive complaints. Have procedures in place to receive and respond to complaints or inquiries about your policies and practices relating to the handling of personal information.

Questions:

Don't hesitate to contact BC Housing's Privacy Officer if have questions. For more information and training for new staff and volunteers, visit BC Housing's website at <https://www.bchousing.org/partner-services/non-profit-training-resources/privacy-toolkit>.

Hold the Date – 2015 Annual Meeting of Members

On February 24, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon. More information and a formal invite will arrive by email in December.

Next Council meeting – December 16, 2014

If you have a topic that you would like the council to discuss, please send it by email at thehousingregistry@bchousing.org, or contact council Chair Dana Hill at dhill@cmhakootenays.org.