

West Virginia Executive Branch
Privacy Tip of the Week

All I want for Christmas...

Dear Santa,

All I want for Christmas is a Privacy Dictionary. I want to know the definitions for PII and PHI and all those other things that I keep hearing about. I've been a really good WV State Employee all year long (just ask my boss) so I think I deserve the gift of more privacy information. Can you please, please, please send me a Privacy Dictionary?

Thank you,
Steadfast Sue

Dear Steadfast Sue,

What a simple request you've made – I was growing weary of requests for iPhones and iPads! I can definitely grant your request for a Privacy Dictionary (or at least an abbreviated version). Thank you for making my job easier – hope the dictionary will make your job easier too!

Sincerely,
Santa

Access: The ability or the means necessary to read, write, modify or communicate data/information or otherwise use any system resource.

Accessibility: The ability to access information and services; the functionality, and possible benefit, of some system or entity.

Confidentiality: The assurance that data will only be exposed to those with a lawful right and need to use.

Incident: Any event that compromises the security, confidentiality, or integrity of PII.

Need To Know: The principle that states a user shall only have access to the minimum information necessary to perform a particular function in the exercise of his or her responsibilities.

Personally Identifiable Information or PII: All information that identifies, or can be used to identify, locate, contact, or impersonate a particular individual. PII also includes Protected Health Information (PHI) as that term is defined below.

Privacy: The appropriate use and disclosure of PII under the circumstances. What is appropriate will depend on context, law and individual's expectations. Also, the right of an individual to control the collection, use and disclosure of PII.

Privacy Officer: An individual responsible for implementing privacy policies and procedures of a Department, leading the Department's privacy program and ensuring that the Department complies with its stated procedures.

Protected Health Information or PHI: A subset of PII and means individually identifiable health information, including demographic information, whether oral or recorded in any form or medium that relates to an individual's health, health care services and supplies, or payment for services or supplies, and which identifies the individual or could reasonably be used to identify the individual.

Redaction: Permanent removal of sensitive or legally protected information, or PII from paper or digital documents.

Unauthorized Disclosure: The release of PII that is not authorized by law, policy or the consent of the individual to whom the PII pertains.

- **Internal Unauthorized Disclosure:** occurs when PII is exposed or potentially exposed to any person(s) within the Department firewall or Department facilities,
- **External Unauthorized Disclosure:** occurs when PII is exposed or potentially exposed to any person(s) outside the Department firewall or Department facilities.

Workforce: Employees, volunteers, trainees and other persons whose conduct, in the performance of work for the State, is under the control of the State, whether or not the State pays them.

This is an abbreviated version of the WV Executive Branch Privacy Policy Definitions. The complete list can be found here:

<http://www.privacy.wv.gov/privacypolicies/Pages/default.aspx>