

West Virginia Executive Branch Privacy Policy: Accountability

Tip: Managing Privacy Effectively

Privacy is a big job. Everyone in the Department has access to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) – about both co-workers and citizens. Private Information such as Social Security Numbers and credit card numbers are PII, and everyone has to work hard to protect PII at all times.

The privacy policies and procedures provide the rules for using and sharing PII. But some common sense can help you avoid common problems.

- ✓ **Be organized.** PII is contained in so many documents, and on almost every computer and storage device. To help prevent losses, keep careful track of documents and storage media. If something does get lost, you'll also realize it sooner and be able to react quickly.
- ✓ **Be careful.** Most security breaches happen because of a simple mistake. For example, it's very easy to put the wrong address on a label. Or the wrong label on a package. When you're sending PII to another person, double check the address!
- ✓ **Be skeptical.** Don't be afraid to question other people, even managers. If someone asks you to use or share PII in a new way, make sure that it's okay. If someone tells you they've deleted the PII from a shared flash drive, confirm that before you toss the drive in your pocket.
- ✓ **Be honest.** Everyone makes mistakes. If you make a mistake with PII, or if you've misplaced PII, call your Privacy Officer immediately. The Privacy Officer can help you recover the PII and address any possible harm.
- ✓ **Learn from the mistakes.** Everyone makes mistakes, but if we make the same mistakes over again, it shows that we're not learning. If you have a problem with a certain process, your manager or Privacy Officer can help you find a way to minimize the likelihood of repeated incidents.

To learn more about Accountability and other applicable Privacy Principals visit the new West Virginia Privacy Office Website at <http://www.wvprivacy.org>

