

**West Virginia Executive Branch
Privacy Policy: Security Safeguards**

Spring Cleaning – Any Time of the Year!

Question:

Do I have personal information lying around?

Answer:

Take a few moments to look around... Are you drowning in papers, files, and other debris? Can you see the top of your desk? What about your computer? Do you have dozens of unfiled emails in your computer inbox? Hundreds? More?

If you're like most people, you have too much to do, and not enough time to do it. But we must all find the time to think about information security. It's part of our jobs!

An important way to protect personal information (PI) and other sensitive information is to ensure that unauthorized individuals don't have access to it. This means that we must secure sensitive PI when we aren't using it. Here are some steps you can take to do that:

- ✓ Clean off your desk and work area. Store "in progress" or "on hold" files in a locked desk drawer when you aren't using them. Papers and files containing PI should be locked in our desks or file cabinets whenever we are away from our desks. Not only will this organization prevent inadvertent disclosures of PI (such as to area visitors) but it will also reduce the chance that a file containing PI will go missing.
- ✓ Lock or log off of your computer if you are away from your desk for more than a few minutes. Consider using an automated screen saver to lock your machine whenever there has been no activity in 15 minutes. It is recommended that users are required to either lock or log off workstations instead of allowing screensavers. If screensavers are used, the inactivity period should be set at the lowest number possible.
- ✓ Clean up your virtual work area. If you store sensitive PI on your local hard drive (or on a laptop, PDA or USB drive), remove all information that is not longer needed. Sensitive PI should only be stored long term on Department servers. It is recommended that portable devices should not be used for long term storage. Users should store data on network drives that are backed up regularly.
- ✓ Understand that deleting a file from your computer (or moving it to the trash can) does not necessarily mean the PI is gone.

- ✓ Papers that contain sensitive PI must also be disposed of properly. Use the secure disposal bins provided by your Department. Never put papers containing sensitive PI in the trash cans.
- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings. We all want to be helpful and friendly, but don't be afraid to question someone in your area that you don't know. If a person is behaving inappropriately, such as looking at documents on another person's desk, contact your manager or building security.