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RM-03 Protecting the Privacy of Individuals

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act regulates the specific purposes for which Leduc County may collect, use, and disclose personal information. This policy will form part of the FOIP Policy Guidelines referred to in Bylaw 43-99.

Employees are obligated to protect personal information by making reasonable security arrangements as outlined under section 38 of the Act. Security precautions are depending on the sensitivity and nature of the records, i.e. the more sensitive the information in the records, the stricter the security arrangements that are required. Security arrangements should be reviewed with the Records and Information Manager.

The goal is to keep personal information secure from unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure or disposal. This includes Electronic systems, surveillance systems, and hardcopy files used to store and/or share personal information.

Collection of Personal Information:

The collection of personal information under the Act is addressed in section 33. The following principles are recommended for providing notice of collection of personal information:

- Notice of collection is provided in writing and meets the following requirements under Section 34(2).
 - The purpose for which the information is collected,
 - the specific legal authority for the collection, and
 - how the information will be used,
 - the title, business address and business telephone number of an officer or employee of the public body who can answer the individual's questions about the collection.
- Procedures are in place for staff to follow for the use, disclosure and disposal of personal information. If the circumstance arises in which the FOIP Coordinator has determined that notice of collection cannot be providing in writing, procedures are to be in place for staff to follow when providing oral notice.

Access of Personal Information:

Employees with access to information (in any form or medium) about County applicants/clients; employees or business matters may only obtain information that is necessary for job duties and performance. Viewing any information other than that required in performing a job function is a breach of the Leduc County's confidentiality standard, even if one keeps the information to oneself and does not disclose it to any other person.

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Regardless of the format in which information is obtained (either orally, written or electronic) it must be treated with the same level of confidentiality. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidential information is not inadvertently disclosed to persons not otherwise entitled to receive such information. For example:

1. Confidential information should never be discussed in any area where others not entitled to receive that information are present. This includes:
 - In public areas of Leduc County such as elevators, washrooms, lounges, stairwells, or cafeteria facilities;
 - At home or in public places outside of Leduc County, unless required to do so by law or with permission from an authorized individual.
2. Confidential information should never be left unattended in written form on desks or displayed on computer terminals in locations where it may be seen by unauthorized persons (e.g. while transporting records or leaving information on photocopiers, facsimile machines, or white boards).
3. File cabinets and storage areas that contain confidential information should be kept locked when unattended and access should be restricted in rooms where personal records are stored.
4. Staff should limit using e-mail or facsimile transmissions to send personal information and make reasonable efforts to ensure that the recipient of such transmissions is verified.
5. Confidential information should be disposed of in accordance with Records Retention and Destruction Policies. An oath of Office must be read, completed and signed at the time of hire/work commencement. This statement acknowledges that the individual has read this policy and understands the consequences of failing to comply.

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