

## Privacy: a guide for Queensland Government volunteers

The following is a guide on how to appropriately collect, store, use and disclose personal information when providing services as a volunteer with the Queensland Government.

### What is personal information?

Personal information is any information that would allow an individual to be identified. It may include the individual's name, address, age, date of birth, marital status, ethnicity, religious or political belief and any distinctive physical characteristics (e.g. birthmarks or tattoos). Sometimes personal information about an individual can reveal their identity even if their name is not mentioned. Personal information can also be an audio or video recording or a photograph of the individual. It also includes sensitive information such as a person's medical, financial or criminal history details.

### Be careful who you tell

When you are assisting an individual you may become aware of their personal information. Do not discuss any of this personal information, including an individual's name, with your friends or family. Provide personal information to other people on a need-to-know basis.

### Protect people's personal information

Protect an individual's personal information against loss and keep the information secure. If you need to take home any work documents (which may include personal information) ask the manager or person in charge before you take the documents home. There may be specific requirements around the handling and storage of any information or files that you need to be made aware of prior to taking the information home with you.

### Access to personal information

If a client of the department asks you to access their personal information, ask for assistance from staff. The access and amendment to departmental information is administered under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

### How are people informed about how their privacy is protected?

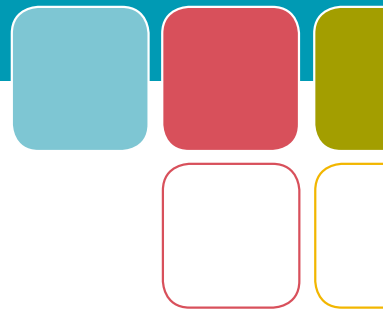
#### Privacy notice

A specific privacy notice is required for each situation and must be provided when personal information is collected, regardless of the way that it is collected (e.g. over the telephone, in an interview or on a videotape).

Make sure that the individual knows:

- why the information is being collected
- whether or not the collection is required by any law that authorises the department to collect the personal information
- any other organisation or department that may be given their personal information to assist in providing them with a service.





## Privacy plan

A privacy plan is developed for each department. Copies of the privacy plan can be made available to the public either through the Internet or by contacting the Privacy Contact Officer in the relevant department. The privacy plan includes:

- the nature of the records of personal information kept by or on behalf of the department
- the purpose for which each type of record is kept
- the classes or types of individuals about whom records are kept
- the period for which each type of record is kept
- the people who are entitled to have access to personal information contained in the records and the conditions under which they are entitled to have that access
- the steps that should be taken by people wishing to obtain access to that information.

## A guide to giving a privacy notice

On a form	A privacy notice is either on the form or provided as a separate leaflet with the form. If it is a separate leaflet, ensure that it is given out with the form. Let the person know about the privacy notice and make sure that they understand what will happen with their information.  To check their understanding, you can ask the person to explain what they understand from the privacy notice. An example of the type of question that you can ask is: <i>What is your understanding of why we are collecting this information?</i> If they can summarise what you have told them, you could determine that they understand what you explained to them.
During an interview	A written privacy notice is to be handed to the individual at the interview. Give the interviewee time to read the notice and try to answer any questions they may have about the notice before you proceed with the interview. Seek assistance from staff if there are questions that you cannot answer.
Over the telephone	Give an oral privacy notice. Staff will provide you with a written version of the privacy notice that is to be used when giving an oral privacy notice. The notice should be explained clearly and you should make sure the interviewee has understood the notice.
Recurring contacts	You do not have to explain privacy notices at the same level of detail during recurring contacts. You can give information in layers, from a full explanation of the privacy notice to a brief refresher as the person gets more familiar with the system.
Audio or videotape or photos	Use an oral or printed privacy notice. You may need to organise for a consent form to be signed by the person before taking the video or photos. Ask staff for assistance.
What to do if a person has a literacy problem or a disability that prevents them from understanding the privacy notice	If the person has a literacy problem or a disability that prevents them understanding the privacy notice, you could give the notice to a parent, guardian or support person. You can ask a family member, advocate, friend or interpreter to explain the notice.

## Volunteers working with Queensland Health

Volunteers working within Queensland Health are covered by the confidentiality provisions in Part 7 of the *Health Services Act 1991* in the same way as current and past employees, temporary staff, trainees, students etc.

## Further information

Contact the Office for Volunteering on 13 13 04 or [volunteering@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:volunteering@communities.qld.gov.au)