

FIPPA Faux-Pas



Notice #4: E-mails containing PI

January 2009

As discussed in a previous notice, under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) there are **statutory rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information (PI)**.

A general best practice is to **avoid sending PI over e-mail**, or, if doing so is unavoidable, keep in mind that PI can be sent in password-protected attachments.

When using e-mail, please remember that

- **e-mails containing PI can only be shared with other employees who need the information in the performance of their duties** (FIPPA section 42 (1)(d)), and sending an e-mail containing PI to someone (directly or through a forwarding or “cc” function) **who does not need the information in the performance of his/her duties may constitute a breach of privacy under FIPPA**;
- e-mails are easy to copy/send compared to letters and memos, and additional forwarded copies may exist, often without the knowledge of the original sender
- as for all records containing PI, **e-mails that contain PI must be kept for at least one year if the PI is used** (FIPPA Regulation 459); you can delete the e-mail from your inbox if you archive it or print it out and keep a paper copy;
- e-mail records containing PI should be filed, secured and used with the same care as other confidential records; and
- **deleted e-mails may still have to be retrieved to satisfy a request for information made under FIPPA.**

Your continued cooperation and collaboration is much appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the IPO. For more tips and best practices pertaining to FIPPA, please view the FIPPA Guide on the [IPO website](#).



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Visit the [IPO website](http://142.51.14.1/Laurentian/Home/Departments/University+Secretariat/Information+And+Privacy+Office/) for additional resources.