



TITLE

INFORMATION CLASSIFICATION

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Provincial

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Corporate Services Executive Committee

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SPONSOR

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Not applicable

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October 16, 2022

NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this document, please contact the Policy & Forms Department at policy@ahs.ca. The Policy & Forms website is the official source of current approved policies, procedures, directives, standards, protocols and guidelines.

OBJECTIVES

- To set out the classifications applied to all information (**health information, personal information, and business information**) in the custody and control of Alberta Health Services (AHS).
- To support the expected InfoCare behaviours of **AHS people** when handling information and to meet AHS' legal obligations as a public body holding personal information and as a custodian of health information.

PRINCIPLES

AHS has a duty to protect information in its custody and control from unauthorized access. All information in the custody and control of AHS shall have an information classification level and corresponding labelling and handling controls applied to it. Information shall be protected in accordance with the applied classification.

AHS is committed to ensuring that the resources applied to information are applied in accordance with the risk posed to the organization should the information be compromised. Classification levels applied shall be used to direct security controls that are required to protect health information, personal information, and business information.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. Classifications

- 1.1 The information classifications to be applied to information are: restricted, confidential, protected, or public. The classification of:
- a) “restricted” shall be applied to information where unauthorized disclosure could cause serious risk or harm to any individual, AHS, third-party, or to the integrity, image, service delivery, or sustainability of AHS;
 - b) “confidential” shall be applied to information where unauthorized disclosure could cause moderate risk or harm to any individual, AHS, third-party, or to the privacy of individuals, compromise the organization’s ability to respond to disaster, or threaten the secure containment of vital records;
 - c) “protected” shall be applied to information where unauthorized disclosure could cause low risk or harm to any individual, AHS, or third party. Protected information is available to AHS people who are authorized to view protected information; and
 - d) “public” shall be applied to information which can be distributed to any person inside or outside of AHS.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding any analysis relating to potential harm of disclosure pursuant to the *Health Information Act (Alberta) (HIA)* or the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta) (FOIP)*, all personal information and health information shall be classified “confidential”.

DEFINITIONS

AHS people means Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of AHS (including contracted service providers as necessary).

Business information means general information, which is any recorded information about AHS’ business activities such as those related to facilities, infrastructure, and security; policies and programs; budgets, expenses, and contracts; reports and statistics, etc., that are under the custody or control of AHS.

Health information means one or both of the following:

- a) diagnostic, treatment and care information; and
- b) registration information (e.g., demographics, residency, health services eligibility, or billing).

Personal information means recorded information, not governed by the *Health Information Act* (Alberta), of any kind stored in any format that identifies an individual including, but not limited to:

- a) address and contact information (including an identifying number or symbol assigned to an individual);
- b) race, ethnic origin, gender, or marital status;
- c) educational, financial, employment, or criminal history;
- d) opinions of others about the person;
- e) the image of a person on a photograph; and
- f) personal views and opinions of a person (except if these are about another person).

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
 - *Collection, Access, Use, and Disclosure of Information Policy* (#1112)
 - *Privacy Protection and Information Access Policy* (#1177)
 - *Records Management Policy* (#1133)
 - *Records Retention Schedule* (#1133-01)
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
 - Access & Disclosure (Health Information Management): disclosure@ahs.ca
 - Information and Privacy: privacy@ahs.ca
 - Whistleblower Line (Confidential): 1-800-661-9675
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
 - *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Alberta)
 - *Health Information Act* (Alberta)

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
October 16, 2019	Revised
Click here to enter a date	Optional: Choose an item