

Web Site Privacy Notice

It is important to protect your privacy in the online world, and to insist that the Web sites you deal with respect your privacy.

This means, among other things, that Web sites should fully and accurately inform you about what personal information they collect, why they collect it, and what they intend to do with it. They should always seek your voluntary, informed consent before they collect, use or disclose your personal data, and they should provide you with meaningful options for resolving privacy issues and complaints.

The technology that enables the Internet is constantly changing, but the good news is that standards for privacy continue to rise. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada is committed to upholding and defending your privacy rights, whether online or offline, and helping organizations that are subject to federal privacy laws in Canada respect your privacy rights and honour their obligations to you.

This page summarizes our privacy policy and information practices for this Web site. It is intended to provide you with a complete and accurate basis for making informed decisions when choosing to communicate with our Office via this site.

During a visit to our Web site, your privacy is respected. We do not collect personal information about you unless you choose to send us an e-mail, in which you voluntarily provide your name and contact information. The nature of the Internet is such that it passively and automatically collects certain information about a user's traffic patterns, linked to their Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. These are unique Internet "addresses" assigned to all Web users by their Internet Service Providers (ISP). IP addresses are automatically logged by Web servers. While the IP address does not identify an individual on its face, it may with the cooperation of the ISP be used to locate and identify an individual using the Web. The IP address is considered personal information because it is an identifying number, and IP addresses are therefore protected by most privacy legislation. The privacy issues surrounding IP addresses are explained further below.

Visitors' personal information received via e-mail is provided only to our Office personnel, who require the information to respond to inquiries. We do not use this information for any other purpose. We protect all personal information in our custody with strong security safeguards, including strict access controls.

As we cannot guarantee the security of electronic systems or e-mail, we do not recommend sending sensitive personal information or complaints electronically at this time. For all such matters, please contact us by postal mail at: Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 112 Kent Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1H3, or by calling 1-800-282-1376 toll-free, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time.

Our Web site is hosted on servers owned and managed by a third-party, Magma Communications. Any personal information collected on our behalf by Magma Communications, such as server log data (see below), is managed in accordance with this privacy policy, and is protected by applicable law.

Server logs: Our servers automatically log information about visits to our Web site in the normal course of establishing and maintaining Web connections. Server logs record statistical information, such as visitors' IP addresses, type of operating systems, time and duration of visit, Web pages requested, and identify categories of visitors by items such as domains and browser types. These statistics are reported in aggregate form to our Web and communications staff, and

are used to improve our Web site and ensure that it provides the optimal Web experience for visitors.

We do not link server log information to any other data in a way that would enable us to identify individual visitors. However, we may review server logs for security purposes, for example, to detect intrusions into our network. The possibility therefore exists that server log data, which contains visitors' IP addresses, could in instances of criminal malfeasance be used to trace and identify individuals. In such instances, raw data logs would be shared with appropriate investigative bodies authorized to investigate such breaches of security. Under normal circumstances, these logs are retained for a maximum period of 45 days.

Cookies: Our site makes use of "per-session" cookies. Cookies are small text files offered to your computer by Web servers in order to keep track of your browser as you navigate the site. Unlike "persistent" cookies, which are stored on your hard drive and can last for years, even decades, "per-session" cookies are stored only in your browser's temporary (cache) memory and are deleted when you shut down your browser.

Here is how our session cookies work: Each time you visit our site, our Web server offers your browser a temporary session cookie containing only a randomly-generated alphanumeric string. As you navigate the site, this unique alphanumeric text string is read back to our Web server, allowing us to generate an anonymous "click trail" profile of your visit. From the aggregated information on unique visits, we learn how visitors interact with our site, how we can improve our site design and content, and how to improve visitors' experiences.

Our use of session cookies ensures your online privacy and security. Here's why:

- The contents of our session cookie are not linked, shared or associated in any way with personal information that you may have supplied to us or made available elsewhere.
- A new and unique session cookie is randomly generated for each visit. This means that we cannot track or link together multiple visits by any single user over time.
- Our session cookies cannot be "read" by any other Web servers, meaning that you cannot be tracked or profiled using our cookie when you surf across multiple sites on the Web.

NOTE: Visiting our Web site with cookies disabled will have no significant impact on your browsing experience. You can set your browser to detect and reject cookies. Please consult your browser's Help Menu for instructions.

Other sites to which we provide links may be governed by different policies. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada does not assume responsibility for the information practices of these other Web sites, and we strongly encourage all Web visitors to review the privacy policies and statements of all externally-linked sites.

Contact: Questions about this policy may be directed to our Chief Privacy Officer, Ms. Maureen Munhall, who is also the Director of the Human Resources Branch. You can contact Ms. Munhall by e-mail at mmunhall@privcom.gc.ca, through our toll-free line at 1-800-282-1376 or by postal mail at:

112 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1H3

Web site privacy and privacy legislation

Web site privacy policies and the Privacy Act

The Treasury Board of Canada issued a [Directive on Government of Canada Web site privacy policies](#) in August 2000 to help government institutions write Web site policies that are compliant with the [Privacy Act](#).

If you are concerned about a collection or use of personal information by a federal government institution, contact the Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator of that institution. Contact [our Office](#) if you feel that the institution has not addressed your privacy concerns.

Please do not make complaints or provide sensitive personal information by e-mail, as security cannot be ensured.