

Article 3
Information Privacy Issues

In the last few years there has been a growing interest in personal member information that you either:

- Retain at your office,
- Collect from contractors,
- Pass on to the benefits administrator?

First off, what is considered private and what is considered public information. A simple definition is,

- Public information is anything about an individual that would normally be found in a telephone book.
- Also any direct information about your position at your place of business such as title, contact phone number and business address.

Let's review a few specifics now about personal information and privacy.

The accuracy of the information you retain on your membership.

All the information you have on a member must be available to them to verify and request that corrections be made.

- Have a well-defined process to follow when a member is reviewing their information with your designated privacy officer,

- The data corrections should be made on a timely basis
- The newly revised information should again be reviewed with the member.

The information is not being misused,

When you request private information from a member, it must be for a specific business purpose that the member agrees to.

- The forms you use to collect member details should include a notice outlining what the information will be used for along with an area for a consent signature.
- Ensure these original forms are now properly stored and saved for later reference.

The information is secure

A members' information is in many forms at your office, it's in a database system, it's on printed reports that are on people's desks or on the way to a contractor, in emails and it may be in the garbage can.

- Change reports to only include what is required for the report user,
- Ensure printed reports are properly destroyed after use.
- Ensure the member database is secured and access to it is well controlled.