

About this Standard

Most services providers are subject to FOIP regulations. This standard is about ensuring that service providers

- have policies, procedures and practices around protecting the confidentiality of information about individuals
- ensure that their documentation is consistent with
 - FOIP requirements
 - any requirements that are part of its agreement with the service funder, including the content and format of individuals' files
 - other related federal, provincial or municipal legislation (e.g., *Access to Information Act*, *Children First Act*)

In any situation where there is a request for disclosure of sensitive information, service providers must protect individuals from unwarranted disclosure

See Service Alberta

- FOIP
- *Access Your Personal Information.*

See Appendices

- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and Records Management Regulation*
- *Informed Consent*

When sharing or disclosing confidential information, service providers must ensure that

- the employees who receive and share the information are involved with those specific individuals
- the information is required in the course of an employee's normal employment duties within the organization
- the information is used only for its intended purpose
- the information is shared on a need-to-know basis with external people or entities (e.g., funding bodies, health professionals) as per policy and procedures
- all electronic information has safeguards in place (e.g., password protection, staff training on the safe use of electronic documents and information)
- employees understand how confidentiality is necessary when using electronic devices, mobile devices, social media, etc.

Information sharing might take place when

- individuals are transferring to or accepting additional services from other service providers
- someone (e.g., other service providers) need full disclosure of highly sensitive information (e.g., behaviours resulting in legal action or confinement) to make informed decisions about the individuals

Mechanisms need to be in place for service providers to do checkups to ensure confidentiality policy is being followed. Furthermore, service providers must have the individuals' and/or guardians' informed consent in order to share information.

The *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) is Alberta's privacy law that

- applies to provincial private sector organizations, businesses and, in some instances, non-profit organizations
- addresses the protection of personal information and
- provides a right of access to an individual's own personal information.

Organizations that are subject to PIPA must develop and follow policies that are **reasonable** to meet their obligations under the *Act*.

For PIPA's purposes, "reasonable" refers to any thing or matter that which a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances

Quality of Service Indicators

These indicators address staff's responsibility to protect individuals' confidentiality in daily interactions and when using technology.

CET Accreditation Level 2 is available for organizations that want to strive for a higher level of excellence. For this standard, Level 2 looks for policy and procedures around the individuals' electronic and physical files and information (e.g., reviewing, retaining, destroying).

Policies that support this Standard

- Protecting individuals' confidentiality (e.g., physical and electronic information)
- Funders' and legislative requirements for protecting individuals' confidentiality

Documentary Evidence that supports this Standard

- Release of information forms

Standard 30: *The service provider has a process to ensure that information about individuals is kept confidential*

Organizational Framework Level 1 Indicators

1. Policy and procedures outline how to protect the individuals' confidentiality
2. Practice is consistent with policy and procedures about how to protect the individuals' confidentiality
3. Policy and procedures meet the relevant funders' and legislative requirements
4. Practice is consistent with policy and procedures about meeting funders' and legislative requirements
5. The service provider informs employees about its practices around protecting individuals' confidentiality
6. Release of Information forms protect the individuals' confidentiality by
 - a. being specific to the individuals identified
 - b. being authorized by the individuals
 - c. identifying to whom the information will be released
 - d. having a start and end date

Standard 30: *Staff are supported in relation to keeping individuals' information confidential*

Quality of Service Indicators

1. Staff
 - a. protect the individuals' confidentiality when using their electronic mobile devices, social media, etc.
 - b. use electronic devices and social media responsibly
2. Staff protect the individuals' confidentiality in their daily interactions with individuals