



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
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5211

IN REPLY REFER TO

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10 February 2003

From: Chief of Naval Operations
To: Distribution List

Subj: PRIVACY ACT (PA) PROGRAM UPDATE

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5211.5D

1. Please ensure widest dissemination of this letter throughout your organization and those organizations that report to you. It will be posted on the Navy's Privacy Act (PA) On-line Web Site at privacy.navy.mil/.
2. DON activities are reminded to take proactive steps to ensure compliance with the PA and reference (a). As we move from conducting routine business via paper to electronic media, safeguards must be in place to ensure that privacy considerations are addressed in the reengineering of our business processes.
3. Access to and disclosure of personally identifiable information, such as social security number, date of birth, home address, home telephone number, etc., must be strictly limited to individuals with an official need to know. Activities must take action to protect personally identifiable information from being widely disseminated and posted on electronic bulletin boards for viewing by all personnel. This is not an acceptable practice because the PA strictly limits access to personally identifiable information within an agency to those officers and employees of the agency having an official need to know.
4. It is imperative that DON activities reevaluate the necessity and value of including an individual's social security number and other personally identifiable information in messages, emails, and correspondence in order to conduct official business. The overuse and misuse of social security numbers must be discontinued immediately if we are going to protect personal privacy and make concerted efforts to avoid the potential for identity theft. For example, there is no need to include an individual's social security number in a welcome aboard message. Such messages are routinely posted on command bulletin boards that are viewable by all.
5. In those instances where transmittal of personally identifiable information is necessary, the originator must take every step to properly mark the correspondence so that the receiver of the information is apprised of the need to properly protect the information. For example, when transmitting personally identifiable information in a paper document, fax, or email, it may be appropriate to mark it "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY – PRIVACY SENSITIVE." Any misuse or unauthorized disclosure may result in both civil and criminal penalties." When sending a message that contains personally identifiable information, it should be marked FOUO. It is also advisable to inform the recipient that the message should not be posted on a bulletin board for all to see. In all cases, receivers of message traffic that contain personally identifiable information,

whether marked FOUO or not, must review it prior to posting it on an electronic bulletin board for viewing by all.

6. The collection and maintenance of information that is retrieved by an individual's name and/or personal identifier should be in compliance with the appropriate Privacy Act systems of record notice [see privacy.navy.mil]. If you need to collect and maintain information that is retrieved by an individual's name and/or personal identifier, you must have an approved Privacy Act systems notice to cover that collection. If you are unsure as to whether a systems notice exists or not, contact the undersigned for assistance.

7. PA Coordinators should work closely with command officials to conduct training, evaluate what personally identifiable information can be removed from routine message traffic, review web site postings, review command electronic bulletin boards, etc., to ensure appropriate processes are in place to minimize the misuse and overuse of personally identifiable information that could be used to commit identity theft. Privacy Act Coordinators should also ensure that their PA systems of records managers have a copy of the appropriate PA systems notice and understand PA rules.


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