

The Facts of Life

(about proper information destruction)

There comes a time when every employer has to provide their employees with guidance on proper information disposal.

Read how and why you should discuss this vital subject in a timely and appropriate manner.



Information Destruction is a *Fact of Life.* And Providing Healthy Guidance is Your Responsibility.

It is inescapable. Every working day, employees handle and discard information that should be destroyed. We thought you could use some advice on how to best address this important new fact of life. After all, if you don't, who will?

Not Talking to Employees About Information Destruction Can Lead to Misconceptions and Problems.

If they don't receive their guidance on information destruction from you, where will they get it? By word of mouth from people that don't have their best interest at heart? From others who don't know what they are talking about or who are setting a bad example? If you don't provide the guidance, the wrong person might and everyone will suffer the consequences.

Talking About Proper Information Destruction Shows You Care.

Talking about proper information destruction and providing the legally required written direction demonstrates to employees and regulators that proper data destruction is a priority within the organization. When employers avoid the responsibility to provide proper guidance on information destruction, they are sending a message that it is not important and that they don't really care. Show employees you do care by giving them the guidance they need.

Talking About It Protects Them and Gives Them a Healthier Perspective.

Improper information destruction practices create an unhealthy situation. Employees instinctively know that it is not right to put sensitive information at risk. Tolerating inappropriate behavior by not providing proper guidance effectively endorses that behavior, leaving employees feeling bad about their work environment.

A Bad Decision Could Affect the Rest of Their Career and Hurt the Organization.

The consequences of casually discarding information without the proper training could cost your organization a lot of money, time and embarrassment. Employees who are not properly trained to utilize the organization's information destruction policies and procedures not only put the organization at risk, but also themselves and their associates.

And Then There is the Issue of Your Organization's Reputation.

One of the most troublesome aspects of improper data disposal is the harm it can do to your organization's reputation. Studies have shown that customers are far less likely to do business with an organization when they fail to protect data. New laws now require that both the authorities and the media be informed of data breaches. In today's world, reputation is everything. Providing the proper direction regarding information destruction protects your organization's reputation.

And remember, you are not in this alone. We can help by providing your organization with the legally required employee guidance.

(see back panel)



Laws, Regulations, Fines and Breach Notification Provide Even More Incentives to Talk to Employees about Proper Information Destruction Procedures.

The following list of laws and regulations require you to provide guidance to employees regarding proper information destruction.*

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Financial Services Modernization Act (GLB)
- Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act (FACTA)
- Regulation S-P (Security and Exchange Commission)
- Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH)
- The Red Flag Rule
- State Laws related to Data Protection
- Fines: There have recently been millions of dollars in fines for discarding undestroyed information.
- Breach Notification: Laws now require your organization to publicly disclose when information has been potentially disclosed to unauthorized individuals.

* This list is not meant to be exhaustive but to provide examples of major data protection legislation that require organizations to establish written information destruction policies and procedures.

The fact is that virtually every data protection law within the US and other developed nations require all organizations in possession of personal customer information to establish written information destruction policies and procedures.

HOW TO TALK TO EMPLOYEES ABOUT THE FACTS OF LIFE REGARDING INFORMATION DESTRUCTION.

DON'T WAIT – Make Sure They Know What to Do Prior to Being Put in a Compromising or Tempting Situation.

There is no better time to address the issue than when employees are hired and before they are exposed to sensitive information. Lack of training is the most commonly cited cause for the continuing rash of regulatory fines and sanctions related to improper disposal. The sooner proper direction on information destruction is provided, the safer your organization.

Be Clear and Direct and Make Sure They Understand.

Every data protection law on the books requires that information destruction policies and procedures be provided in writing. The simple reason is that employees need clear direction. The good news is we can help provide the required language simply and quickly.

Let Them Know You Have Their Interest at Heart.

It is also important to verify that employees understand the consequences of improper information disposal. Employees need to realize that proper information destruction is in their best interest as well as the organization's. Everyone loses if there is an expensive data breach.

Repeat the Message and Check in with Them Periodically.

A message as important as proper information destruction deserves repeating. There are many things vying for employees' attention. Reminding them of their responsibility to comply with destruction procedures at every turn and routinely verifying compliance improves discipline. After all, one momentary lack of judgment can have life-altering consequences.

Practice What You Preach.

You can't expect employees to take information destruction procedures seriously if you don't. Let employees know that you have the same responsibility and demonstrate how important you consider the issue.

HOW WE CAN HELP!

Through NAID, our nationally recognized industry association, we have the ability to help you provide employees with the legally required direction. It is quick, easy and painless – and it only takes one phone call.

In the end, however, the responsibility is yours and yours alone. Whether you let us help, seek out other resources, or find your own way, we wish you all the best with this important and time-honored responsibility.



For more information contact:

ABOUT NAID

Established in 1994, the National Association for Information Destruction (NAID) is the non-profit watchdog organization of the data destruction industry. The mission of NAID's more than 1,000 member-locations around the world is to promote the proper destruction of discarded personal and proprietary information through standards enforcement and education.



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