

Client confidentiality and privacy obligations

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) is an Australian Government statutory agency within the Attorney General's portfolio. It is responsible for freedom of information, privacy and information policy functions and provides information and advice to individuals, businesses and agencies www.oaic.gov.au

What are the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)?

1. Open and transparent management of personal information.
2. Anonymity and pseudonymity.
3. Collection of solicited personal information.
4. Dealing with unsolicited personal information.
5. Notification of the collection of personal information.
6. Use or disclosure of personal information.
7. Direct marketing.
8. Cross-border disclosure of personal information.
9. Adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers.
10. Quality of personal information.
11. Security of personal information.
12. Access to personal information.
13. Correction of personal information.

[Fact sheet: Australian Privacy Principles](#)

Who does the Privacy Act apply to?

All organisations that provide a health service are covered by the Privacy Act (whether or not they are small businesses). Organisations providing a health service include:

- Traditional health service providers such as private hospitals and day surgeries, doctors and specialists.
- Pharmacists.
- Allied health professionals.
- Complementary therapists.
- Other services like gyms, fitness services and weight loss clinics, child care and schools (if they provide a health service and hold health information).

www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-topics/health-for-service-providers

The Privacy Act requires entities to take 'reasonable steps' to protect the personal information that they hold from misuse, loss and from unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure.



What steps can I take to protect my clients' personal information?

1. Only collect information you need.
2. Don't collect personal information about an individual just because you think that information may come in handy later.
3. Tell people how you are going to handle the personal information you collect about them.
4. Think about using personal information for a particular purpose.
5. Think before disclosing personal information.
6. If people ask, give them access to the personal information you hold about them.

7. Keep personal information secure.
8. Don't keep information you no longer need or that you no longer need to retain.
9. Keep personal information accurate and up to date.
10. Consider making someone in your organisation or agency responsible for privacy.

[!\[\]\(339a16584d5da0f0a3ca4e9ec17bf6a1_img.jpg\) Fact Sheet: 10 Steps to protect other people's personal information.](#)

Where can I go for more information?

- Fact sheets and information sheets are available to help health service providers understand and meet their obligations under the [!\[\]\(c6a8736a601a632e2c96605cf66055ed_img.jpg\) National Privacy Principles](#) while providing client services.

[!\[\]\(3211b5d1d968fc1665909b34f9f16010_img.jpg\) Sharing health information to provide a health service](#) (e.g. where a team of practitioners need to share relevant information to provide healthcare).

[!\[\]\(6059a5aa8b4ca7bb793408023d6c6e42_img.jpg\) Guidelines on Privacy in the Private Health Sector.](#)

[!\[\]\(c50c8b7b2cc2cf9ff925edec0ee94c0d_img.jpg\) Guide to information security.](#)