



Yukon
Information
and Privacy
Commissioner

211 Hawkins Street, Suite 201
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1X3
T: 867.667.8468
F: 867.667.8469
1-800-661-0408 ext. 8468
www.ombudsman.yk.ca

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner offers advice on applications used for remote work, in light of COVID-19 pandemic

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner, Diane McLeod-McKay, is offering additional guidance to organizations and their employees in regard to protecting personal information while working from home or other remote locations. In particular, McLeod-McKay is focussing on the many applications that support remote work and the potential privacy risks of using them. Her comments are offered to increase awareness of these risks for government, public organizations and businesses, as well as Yukoners in general, all of whom may be using these platforms.

Because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, many Yukoners are now working from home, rather than going into their workplace. This often requires that they use a variety of applications which were developed to support both socializing and remote work. These tools include file sharing and editing, teleconferencing and chat.

“Working remotely is not new,” said McLeod-McKay. “In recent years, the number of applications that support remote work has grown significantly. However, there are privacy risks associated with some of these applications that Yukon government departments, other public bodies, health care information custodians, businesses and all Yukoners should be aware of, to help them stay cyber-safe during this time.”

McLeod-McKay has developed guidance on this issue, which can be found on her website [here](#). She encourages all persons, including workers and managers, to read the document and, if they require further clarification, to contact her office.

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The guidance on applications for working remotely supplements a guidance document issued by McLeod-McKay in March, which provided general advice for employees of public bodies and custodians who are handling personal information and personal health information as they work from home. It can be found on her website [here](#).

As well, as part of efforts to implement “physical distancing”, last month McLeod-McKay began limiting personal contact with her staff by advising the public that her office would accept complaints and enquiries by phone and email, rather than in person. In the case of sensitive personal information, she recommends telephone rather than email.

The contact information for the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner, who also serves as the Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, is:

Phone: 867-667-8468

Toll free in Yukon: 1-800-661-0408 (ext 8468)

Fax number: 867-667-8469

Email: info@ombudsman.yk.ca

The Ombudsman, Information and Privacy Commissioner, and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner is an independent officer of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. For more information, please go to www.ombudsman.yk.ca/.

Contact:

Elaine Schiman

Communications Manager

Office of the Yukon Ombudsman, Information and Privacy Commissioner & Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner

elaine.schiman@ombudsman.yk.ca

867-332-4555

867-334-2975

www.ombudsman.yk.ca

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