

The Trustworthy Principle brochure (text) steps necessary to protect personal information

"...those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" 1 Cor. 4:2

Understanding the principles and requirements of the law will give churches the opportunity to establish lawful guidelines, protect its members and adherents and maintain the good reputation of its church in the community. In I Corinthians 4:2 it says "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

The British Columbia PIPA (Personal Information Privacy Act) as of January 1, 2004 allows "the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in a manner that recognizes both the right of individuals to protect their personal information and the need of organizations to collect, use or disclose personal information for purposes that a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances"

The BC Act of PIPA is based on the following principles:

- Someone within the organization must be responsible and accountable for the information collected (Privacy officer);
- How the information will be used must be disclosed to the people who it is collected from;
- Get their consent;
- Only use, disclose and retain personal information in the manner consented to;
- The information must be accurate and corrected if necessary
- The information must be kept secure;
- The organization's action must be open to review;
- People must have access to their information which has been collected; and
- It is possible to challenge whether an organization has complied with the BC PIPA (complaint based enforcement).

So how does the church react to this legislation and protect itself against complaints? By doing the following:

- Develop and make available policy and practices that reflect the mission, value and purpose of the organization
- Consider how gathering personal information furthers the church's mission, value and purpose. Develop and implement policies that apply this act to Human Resources in your church.
- Appoint a responsible person to ensure the church is complying with the privacy policy and PIPA (This person should know and understand the functions of the church - usually a staff person. This task needs to be added to their job description. A volunteer will also need a job description)
- Identify the practical needs of the church in regard to necessary information and what it does to safeguard that information.
- Review the BC Act at this web site: http://www.mser.gov.bc.ca/foi_pop/
- Obtain consent of any person whose personal information the church requires. State the purpose for the use of the information. (see examples on back)
- Make sure that adequate staff and volunteer training takes place on an on-going basis regarding the collecting, use and disposal of personal information.
- The guidelines/policies should include minimum and maximum retention periods and destruction policies and methods related to personal information no longer required or applicable. Have periodical reviews of these time periods.
- Keep personal information secure against loss, theft or unauthorized access or use. i.e. don't leave it lying around. Use passwords on computers.
- Publicize your policies and procedures and use that to strengthen relationships by demonstrating trustworthiness. Develop policies to respond to complaints and keep a written record of them and their resolutions.

Examples of wording to explain purpose of information gathered:

On registration form:

Information contained in this form is collected and retained with full consent for the following uses:

- ...will be used to create a data base for the Church ministries and to enable connection related to them
- ...will be used to create and maintain a contact list for the leaders and participating parents of the children registered for the XYZ program
- ...will be used to create a Church directory for distribution among Church members and adherents
- ...dates provided will be used to create a "best wishes" card ministry for the deacons
- ...or...describe your ministry and purpose

Example of wording for a job description:

- Will ensure that the personal data collected regarding members, adherents and visitors is kept in a secure place
- Will ensure that the data collected will be used for its intended purpose and not distributed to any other organization, agency or individual for use without consent

Mission Statement of the British Columbia Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches: Building a healthy church

By providing leadership and partnering in:

- ✓ Discerning and Nurturing Leaders
- ✓ Promoting Outreach and Church Development
- ✓ Training and Mentoring People for Service
- ✓ Dynamic impact on Evangelism and Discipleship



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"Following the Call" inserts for a Risk Management Guideline are available to each BC Mennonite Brethren Church. Additional copies are available for the reproductions costs of \$20.00 including shipping costs.