



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VA Privacy Service

Privacy in Action Speaker Series Event Resource Guide

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Privacy Service, thank you for participating in the *Privacy in Action* Speaker Series event, “Evolution of Privacy in the Federal Landscape.” We hope you found the information presented by our panelists insightful and meaningful to your daily work. Below is a recap of the main topics discussed today, with links to additional information.

Data Privacy vs. Data Security

Data security is the process of protecting data such as Veterans’ Personal Health Information (PHI) across all applications and platforms. The VA implements the following tools and procedures to ensure the security of Veteran and Employee data:

- E-RISK Portal
 - Portal for any VA employee to submit enterprise risk concerns.
 - Once submitted, employees will receive follow-up communication from the Risk Management Directorate (RMD) and will be informed on how their observed risk is being addressed.
- Risk Management Framework (RMF)
 - Disciplined and structured process that combines information security/risk management activities into the system development life cycle.
- Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) Tools
 - Manages the agency’s overall governance, enterprise risk management, and compliance with regulations.
- Continuous Diagnostic Mitigation (CDM)
 - Identifies cybersecurity risks on an ongoing basis, based on what and whom is on the network.

Data privacy is the proper handling of sensitive and personally identifiable information. It covers providing proper notice of information use, stakeholder consent, and compliance with regulations. The VA has implemented the following initiatives to enhance the privacy of Veterans and employees:

- Social Security Number (SSN) Reduction
 - The SSN Reduction Tool was created to reduce or eliminate SSN usage in the VA SSN inventory database.
 - Implemented the Integrated Control Number (ICN), which is a unique identifier for Veterans, dependents and beneficiaries instead of using SSN’s.
- Privacy Impact Assessments
 - VA Privacy Service developed a webinar series training, which reviewed the PIA process and the role of Privacy Officers (POs), system owners and information system security officers in delivering high-quality assessments.



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Implementing NIST Recommendations

VA implements the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) through the Department's Enterprise Cybersecurity Program (ECSP). ECSP creates a program that allows a prioritized focus on cybersecurity activities, clear ownership and accountability of stakeholders, and sustainable security of VA systems.

The Impacts of New Technology

New technologies are rapidly changing the amount of information we have available to us. In the healthcare space, the deployment of Electronic Health Records (EHR) has brought many efficiencies to both patients and doctors. Some efficiencies include faster transfer of patient information between health care providers, accurately diagnosing medical conditions, and a reduction of prescription errors. In general, new technologies impact people, processes, and security.

- **People:** Increased training tempo in response to new technology, as well as new threats to privacy and security
- **Processes:** VA ensures that processes address security and privacy at the enterprise level and have instituted the ECSP to manage cybersecurity processes.
- **Security:** VA has instituted two-factor authentication and enhanced data encryption to keep information private and secure.

How You Can Protect Sensitive Information at VA

- Understand how to employ "minimum necessary" and "need to know" in daily work-life.
- Use encryption when sending sensitive information.
- Maintain a clean desk.
- Keep sensitive information locked and stored. Shred and securely dispose of sensitive information when not used.
- Before sharing personally identifiable information ask why it is needed.
- Be wary of suspicious emails.
- Report privacy incidents immediately.



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More Information

Articles

- **VA SSN Reduction**
 - <https://www.oprm.va.gov/privacy/SSNReduction.aspx>
- **Privacy and Cybersecurity Are Converging. Here's Why That Matters for People and for Companies.**
 - <https://hbr.org/2019/01/privacy-and-cybersecurity-are-converging-heres-why-that-matters-for-people-and-for-companies>
- **White House, industry reveal more details on US privacy framework**
 - <https://iapp.org/news/a/white-house-industry-reveal-more-details-on-us-privacy-framework/>
- **Privacy Acts, OMB Guidance and Circulars**
 - <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/informational/aboutfsis/privacy/privacy-guidance>
- **Office of Management and Budget Privacy**
 - <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-regulatory-affairs/privacy/>
- **Where Did the Right to Privacy Come From?**
 - <https://www.thoughtco.com/right-to-privacy-history-721174>
- **Electronic Health Records: Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security**
 - <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/electronic-health-records-privacy-confidentiality-and-security/2012-09>

Videos

- **Kicking off the NIST Privacy Framework: Workshop #1**
 - <https://www.nist.gov/news-events/events/2018/10/kicking-nist-privacy-framework-workshop-1>
- **The Future of U.S. Data Privacy After the GDPR**
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNe6cABux_E
- **Assessing Privacy Controls Workshop**
 - <https://www.nist.gov/news-events/events/2018/05/assessing-privacy-controls-workshop>
- **Experts in digital privacy and protection weigh in on the current landscape**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnGOG-s4L48>



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