



News Release

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Commissioner Ann Cavoukian launches multi-level information drive for *Right to Know Week*

TORONTO – Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, is launching a multi-level information drive during *Right to Know Week* to help Ontarians understand their rights under provincial freedom of information legislation.

"Your *right to know* what your government is doing is one of the core principles of democracy," said Commissioner Cavoukian.

To help mark *Right to Know Week* in Canada (September 27-October 3), she is:

- sending teams to three Ontario cities on Monday, September 28, to set up information tables, where the teams will hand out IPC publications and answer questions from the public;
- promoting these information tables through radio advertisements and a news release;
- posting information to a special *Right to Know* section of her website (www.ipc.on.ca) about individuals *right to know* what governments are doing, plus information about Ontario's two freedom of information (FOI) Acts; information on how to file FOI requests to provincial and local government organizations across Ontario; details on how to file an appeal to the IPC if you are not satisfied with the response you receive from a government organization; and lots more, including an FOI quiz that focuses on your rights; and
- arranging for presentations by her staff to media students at a number of Ontario universities and community colleges on the public's *right to know*, and on how journalists can make good use of freedom of information laws.

"Elected officials and government employees do not 'own' the information now held in government filing cabinets and data bases – it belongs to the people of Ontario," said the Commissioner." The province's FOI laws emphasize that information should be available to the public and that exemptions to the right of access should be limited and specific, she stressed. "Very significantly, they also give you the right to appeal government decisions regarding individual freedom of information requests to my office."

The IPC information tables are being set up, from noon to 4 p.m. on September 28, at:

- Sherway Gardens in Mississauga (near Sears);
- Lime Ridge Mall in Hamilton (near Sears);
- Yonge-Eglinton Centre in Toronto (near the Metro store); and
- Centrepont Mall in Toronto (near No Frills).



The Information and Privacy Commissioner is appointed by and reports to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and is independent of the government of the day. The Commissioner's mandate includes overseeing the access and privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as well as the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, which applies to both public and private sector health information custodians, in addition to educating the public about access and privacy issues.

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