

If you wanted to know...

How to access your personal information held by the province

... Read on ...

In the course of their operations, many provincial ministries and agencies routinely collect personal information from and about individuals. This information can cover a wide range of subjects, and may be held in various formats, including paper, computer tapes, videotapes, microfilm or sound recordings.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the *Act*) authorizes provincial ministries and agencies to collect personal information in certain circumstances. The *Act* gives you the right to request access to any personal information about you that a government organization may hold. (You also have a right to request general records held by government organizations.) The *Act* applies to all provincial ministries and most provincial agencies, boards, and commissions, as well as community colleges and health councils.

If you want to check what information is on file about you related to a specific program, do you know where to turn? You may not know exactly what records you are seeking, or if the records are even held by the provincial government, rather than the municipal or federal governments. There are two directories that may assist you in your search:

Directory of Records

The Freedom of Information and Privacy office of Management Board Secretariat maintains a Directory of Records on its website, www.gov.on.ca/mbs/english/fip. It describes Ontario ministries and agencies covered by the *Act*, the types of records they maintain; the users of the records; retention, and disposal information, and the telephone number and



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address of each institution's Freedom of Information and Privacy Co-ordinator. The directory also describes what each institution does, as well as the kinds of general records and personal information they keep.

The directory lists government records under the following categories:

- *General Record* – any record not considered to be a personal information bank or a public record;
- *Personal Information Bank* – a collection of personal information that is organized and can be retrieved under an individual's name or other personal identifiers;
- *Public Record* – a record containing personal information that is available to all members of the public;
- *Common Record* – a personal information bank that is common to more than one organization.

Use of the search feature is encouraged, as some records may not be located where you expect them to be. For example, Coroner's Reports and records about the Ontario Provincial Police are found under the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Family Responsibility Office records are under the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Directory of Institutions

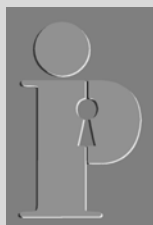
The *Directory of Institutions* lists all institutions that are covered by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. It includes ministries and provincial agencies, municipalities, and local boards. The address of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Co-ordinator for each institution is included.

If you would like to download a generic access/correction request form, you will find a link under *How to Make an Access Request*.

Information and Privacy Commissioner

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, who produced this *If you wanted to know...* publication as part of her efforts to help educate the public about its access and privacy rights, 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*.

If you have questions of a general nature about access or privacy, you can contact an Information Officer in our Communications department at 1-800-387-0073.



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is published by the **Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner**.

If you have any comments regarding this publication, wish to advise of a change of address, or be added to the mailing list, please contact:

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