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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Information and Privacy Commissioner provides guidance on access to information, including possible delays during COVID-19

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) has issued a guidance document and an information sheet in regard to delays in processing access to information that may occur as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Diane McLeod-McKay is working to help the public, public bodies and custodians understand the rights and responsibilities set out in Yukon’s privacy laws, and how access to information challenges should be managed during the pandemic.

The IPC is responsible for monitoring compliance with both the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPP Act) and the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* (HIPMA). McLeod-McKay has reminded public bodies and custodians under both pieces of legislation that these laws remain in effect.

“This means that public bodies and custodians must continue to protect the privacy of Yukoners and process access to information requests as required by both Yukon’s privacy laws,” said McLeod-McKay. “However, I recognize that a number of public bodies and custodians are facing significant challenges delivering services as a result of implementing COVID-19 emergency measures. Many employees are now working from home and, in some cases, custodians which are businesses have had to close. This means it may be difficult for them to meet the legislated timelines for responding to access to information requests under both laws.”

To address this reality, McLeod-McKay worked with the ATIPP Office at the Yukon government to establish a plan for public bodies to manage access to information requests while the COVID-19 measures are in effect. In addition, McLeod-McKay has now issued guidance for custodians about how to manage their obligations under HIPMA, with a focus on managing access to information requests during this time.

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“Yukoners continue to have rights to privacy and to access information under both the ATIP Act and HIPMA, even during difficult circumstances such as the ones we are all experiencing due to COVID-19,” added McLeod-McKay. “My responsibilities include promoting compliance with both laws and informing the public about their rights, so I have issued a number of documents throughout this emergency to help public bodies and custodians meet their obligations and to keep Yukoners informed. As part of this, I have now developed a new information sheet for the public which outlines what they need to know about exercising their rights to privacy and to access information during the pandemic.”

The [guidance](#) document for custodians and the [information sheet](#) for the public are both located on the IPC website.

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/.

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