

## Tip of the Month – November, 2012

### Data Protection and Charitable Organizations

As the holiday season approaches charitable organizations must ensure that they review how they handle the personal information of those they seek to serve! They must also take measures to protect themselves against cyber crimes by individuals who seek to use fraud as a means of livelihood.

Because some charitable organizations often handle very sensitive information relating to the health and well being of vulnerable persons, many times without the financial resources to have proper procedures in place, it is important that organizations take note of the following points and should:-

1. **Tell people what you are doing with their data.** People should know what you are doing with their information and who it will be shared with. This is a legal requirement (as well as established best practice) so it is important you are open and honest with people about how their data will be used.
2. **Make sure your staff is adequately trained.** New employees must receive data protection training to explain how they should store and handle personal information. Refresher training should be provided at regular intervals for existing staff.
3. **Use strong passwords.** There is no point protecting the personal information you hold with a password if that password is easy to guess. All passwords should contain upper and lower cases letters, a number and ideally a symbol. This will help to keep your information secure from would-be thieves.
4. **Encrypt all portable devices.** Make sure all portable devices – such as memory sticks and laptops – used to store personal information are encrypted.
5. **Only keep people's information for as long as necessary.** Make sure your organization has established retention periods in place and

set up a process for deleting personal information once it is no longer required.

It is important to reiterate that anyone who processes personal information must comply with the eight (8) principles of the Data Protection (Privacy of Personal Information) Act, 2003 (DPA), which make sure that personal information is:-

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with your rights
- Secure
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

For more information on this and any other data protection concern you may have, please email us at [dataprotection@bahamas.gov.bs](mailto:dataprotection@bahamas.gov.bs) or visit our website [www.bahamas.gov.bs/dataprotection](http://www.bahamas.gov.bs/dataprotection).

**Remember “Privacy is the Best Policy”**