Security of Facsimile Transmissions

Purpose

• To ensure compliance with the privacy rules in B.C.'s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
• To ensure that confidential or personal information transmitted or received by fax is protected.

Responsibility

The University officials designated by the Board of Governors in its FOI/POP Schedule of Authorized Officers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all departments that use facsimile transmission for confidential or personal information both within and outside the University.

Policy

• The University shall take every reasonable security measure when transmitting or receiving confidential or personal information by fax machine.
• The precautions taken shall be appropriate to the sensitivity of the information transmitted or received.

Procedure

University fax machines shall not be used to transmit and receive sensitive confidential or personal information unless the following precautions are taken:

Sending

1. Material to be faxed shall include a fax transmittal cover page with a confidentiality statement (see Appendix A) and the document will be marked "Confidential". The sender's name, telephone and fax numbers, and the number of pages being sent shall also be noted on the fax cover.

2. The sender shall confirm that the fax may not be casually observed in the recipient's office by telephoning before transmission to ensure:
   o that the intended recipient is either available to receive the fax immediately;
   o that the fax machine is located in a secure location with controlled access; or
   o that the material will be secured upon arrival.

3. The sender shall visually check the number displayed on the screen for accuracy before proceeding with a manual transmission.

4. When using pre-programmed fax numbers, the sender shall double-check the fax number to which the document is being transmitted before sending the fax. If necessary, phone to confirm the destination fax number and recipient.
5. When transmitting or receiving very sensitive material, the sender would confirm receipt of the faxed information by calling the recipient after transmission or have the recipient telephone the sender when the fax is received.

6. Check the fax transmission report to ensure correct transmission and to enable fast action if information was not transmitted correctly. Program the fax machine to print a fax activity history report every 30 to 50 transmissions.

7. Ensure that fax number master lists are current and accurate.

8. Check the accuracy of pre-programmed fax numbers on a regular basis.

Receiving

9. University fax machines shall be located in a secure area with controlled access.

10. Notify the sender of an erroneous transmission and return or destroy the information.

11. Check the number of pages actually received against the fax cover sheet.

12. Consider using the fax machine's confidential mailboxes to secure sensitive information.

13. If a computer is used for receiving, automatically route incoming faxes to a directory that can only be accessed by authorized persons.

Storing

14. If photocopying a fax for retention, destroy extra copies.

15. Retain fax transmission reports and fax activity history reports for a sufficient time to check for unauthorized transmissions.

16. If a computer is used for storing faxes, set-up computer directories so that they are only accessible by authorized people.
Appendix A

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Facsimile Transmission

To:
Fax #: 
Phone #: 
From: 
Fax #: 
Phone #: 
Date: 
No. of Pages (including this cover page):

This fax communication is intended only for the use of the addressee and may contain information which is privileged and confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately by telephone, and return the original to us by mail. Thank you.

Material Confidential? Yes No

Message: 

If you do not receive all pages please call sender

Status of Original:

• to follow in mail
• to follow by courier
• to remain in this office
• other