

Documents may also be exempted in whole or in part if disclosure would:

- damage international relations or the defence/security of Canada
- damage federal-provincial relations
- be injurious to law enforcement

or they contain:

- advice/recommendations to Ministers
- Canadian positions on international negotiations.

Recent amendments to the *Access to Information Act* make it a criminal offence to falsify, destroy or conceal records or direct/counsel anyone to do so, with intent to deny access under the Act.

## **The Privacy Act**

The purpose of the *Privacy Act* is to protect the personal information held within the Department and also to allow individuals to access their own information and to ensure its accuracy. The Act defines personal information as information about an identifiable individual that is recorded in any form.

**Who?** Canadian citizens or permanent residents have rights under this Act

**What?** There are two basic sets of rights and obligations:

- 1) The accountability of the Department for the protection of personal information that is under the control of the Department:
  - in particular, personal information about an individual may not be disclosed to a third party without the consent of the individual (subject to certain exceptions in the Act);
  - personal information may only be used by the Department for the purpose for which the information was obtained (e.g. PRI number used to pay benefits), or for a use consistent with that purpose (age used or disclosed to allow employee to obtain a pension).
- 2) The right of individuals to know what personal information about them is held by the Department and to have access to that information (subject to certain exemptions under the Act) and the right to ensure its accuracy.

The *Privacy Act* does not protect:

- identity of federal government employees
- identity of someone under contract
- identity of someone in receipt of a discretionary benefit
- identity of person dead more than 20 years.