

# Shedding light on data protection – our top tips

The annual cost of identity fraud to the UK economy is estimated at £1.2bn and effects around 100,000 victims. Our top tips are some basic steps you can take towards best practice.



## 1. Get your files in order

The Data protection Act requires that any information or data that an organisation holds about individuals (such as personnel or client files, for example) is readily accessible. This relates to paper and electronic documents so if you have a large archive stored on paper, servers or disks you must be certain that it is well indexed so that you can navigate your way around it.

## 2. Think beyond paper

Consider how sensitive information is currently stored within your organisation. It is likely that you deal with a mixture of paper documents and electronic files. Paper can be difficult to manage securely in terms of tracking access, sharing or updates to documents so it is worthwhile taking the time to digitise sensitive and business critical files.

A good electronic document management system can help you to organise your records and make them readily accessible whilst managing and monitoring access, updates and retention schedules.

## 3. Understand how data is used

Can you evidence the management of sensitive information within your organisation from creation through sharing and processing to timely and secure destruction or archiving? Create and maintain an audit trail by recording details on how records are stored, shared, accessed and updated.

## 4. Safety first

You need to be certain that your confidential data could never fall into the wrong hands. This can have dire consequences in terms of the law, your customers' security and your organisation's reputation. Ensure that sensitive data can only be accessed by authorised people and that you have a record of how it is used.

Paper can never be entirely removed and we would never expect the printers in your office to become obsolete. 'Follow me' printing reduces the risk of confidential documents being printed at an unsupervised device.

## 5. Prepare for a crisis

Have you thought about the consequences of a fire or flood at your premises? How many files would be lost and how would this impact your business and your customers? In many cases a crisis could result in the loss of crucial documents, legal ramifications or even closure.

The Data Protection Act states that systems should be put in place to guard against accidental damage or loss. Digitising your documents reduces this risk and may also remove a large document archive to free up valuable real estate.

## 6. Watch the clock

Disposing of information too soon, keeping it for too long or failing to provide evidence of secure disposal can all land an organisation in hot water with the Information Commissioner's Office.

There are even guidelines on how finely paper is shredded and therefore it is wise to find out what will happen to your shredded documents. Recycling is an obvious 'green' and safe option.

## The 8 Data Protection Principles

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.





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