PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

Personally identifiable information (PII) is any information that, if lost or stolen, could be used to trace an individual’s identity. Protection of PII is the duty and responsibility of any company with access to confidential client data. Even seemingly common information such as names, addresses and birth dates can cause harm if it falls into the wrong hands.

Understand that personally identifiable information is valuable to thieves, who will go to great lengths to access it. Depending upon the nature of PII that is compromised, the implications can be a loss of privacy, financial fraud, identity theft, or worse.

CATEGORIES OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION:

- Sensitive or confidential PII include:
  - Financial account information
  - Credit card information
  - Medical records
  - Social security numbers
  - Passport numbers
  - Driver’s license number

- PII that can be used when combined with other data include:
  - Address and telephone number
  - Date and place of birth
  - Names of family members, especially mother’s maiden name
  - Work history
  - Vehicle registration and insurance data

PROTECTING PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION:

- Be aware of scams and fraudulent requests for PII.
- Keep all confidential and sensitive information secure, including hard and soft copies.
- Protect your passwords and access to any computers that contain secure information.
- Never provide sensitive information over unsecure data lines such as Wi-Fi.
- Report and security breaches immediately, along with what information was compromised.

Key Points

- Personally identifiable information (PII) can be used to cause harm.
- PII must be kept secure.
- Never provide PII to an unknown requester.
- Report PII security breaches immediately.