



EAA issues Information Security and Privacy Protection Policy and Guidelines for Estate Agents

(29 December 2009) The Estate Agents Authority (EAA) has issued an information security policy and guidelines to provide further guidance to the estate agency trade on the protection of personal data privacy.

With mounting public concern about data security and the fact that estate agency practitioners often need to handle the personal data of their clients, the EAA commissioned a consultant to draw up an information security policy and guidelines for estate agents.

The *Information Security and Privacy Protection Policy and Guidelines for Estate Agents* seek to lay down the minimum requirements for the trade in regard to the protection of personal data privacy. While the policy is applicable to estate agency firms of all sizes, two different sets of guidelines have been formulated, with one for small agencies and another set for medium and large agencies.

Topics covered include controlling and regulating the right to access data, information system integrity, regulating and monitoring the use of data and information, including monitoring the services provided by contractors, and staff training and awareness.

EAA Chief Executive Officer Mrs Rosanna Ure said, “Estate agents have a duty to implement information security measures to protect data security. The policy specifies only the minimum requirements. Estate agencies should formulate their own policy and put in place security measures upon evaluation of the particular risk of exposure, given their operating environment and available resources.”



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The EAA reminds the trade that if practitioners fail to implement measures to protect information security, and leakage of clients' personal data occurs, they may have breached the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and also the EAA's Code of Ethics. Management of estate agencies is reminded that they should establish proper systems and procedures to supervise their staff to prevent non-compliance.

To draw practitioners' attention to the policy and guidelines, a practice circular has been issued. Courses under the EAA's Continuing Professional Development Scheme will also be organised to brief practitioners on the subject.

The policy and guidelines have been posted on the EAA website: <http://www.eaa.org.hk/publications/ispppgea.pdf> .

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