



Misuse of Information Series

1: Accessing and Using Work Information Appropriately

This fact sheet explains what work information is, when you may access it, and how to use it lawfully and appropriately as a public sector employee.

What is work information?

Work information is any information you access, create, receive, or become aware of in the course of your duties. This includes:

- ▼ physical and electronic documents, files, emails, and records;
- ▼ databases, registers, and spreadsheets;
- ▼ audio, visual, and verbal information obtained through your role; and
- ▼ intellectual property and copyrighted material.

Work information may be sensitive, confidential, restricted, or public. Regardless of type, access and use must always align with your role and authority.

When can you access information?

You may only access work information when:

- ▼ it is required to perform your official duties; and
- ▼ you are authorised to do so.

Accessing information outside these conditions - even out of curiosity, or because you technically can - is unauthorised access and may constitute misconduct or a criminal offence.

Why this matters

Unauthorised access can:

- ▼ harm individuals (particularly where personal information is involved);
- ▼ damage organisational integrity and reputation; and
- ▼ undermine public trust.

Working within your authority

You are responsible for understanding:

- ▼ your role, delegations, and limits of authority; and
- ▼ relevant privacy, information management, and security requirements.

If you are unsure, check policies or seek advice before accessing information.

If you access information unintentionally

If you believe you have accessed information beyond your authority:

- ▼ stop immediately;
- ▼ exit the system or record; and
- ▼ report the incident to your manager as soon as possible.

Prompt reporting protects individuals, your organisation, and you.

Protecting yourself

- ▼ Put your official duties first;
- ▼ Manage conflicts of interest and relationships;
- ▼ Maintain professional boundaries; and
- ▼ Use caution in social and online settings.

Key questions before accessing information:

- ▼ Am I authorised to access this information?
- ▼ Do I need it to perform my duties?

If the answer to either question is “no”, do not proceed.



The Commission can help

We are available to provide support and assistance with identifying, reporting, investigating, managing and preventing misconduct: contact@integrity.tas.gov.au or 1300 720 289.