



west virginia department of environmental protection

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Randy C. Huffman, Cabinet Secretary
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An Important Message to Our Customers:

West Virginia Department of Environmental (DEP) officials have been notified that a database under the control of the Division of Water & Waste Management was available to the public that contained National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits issued between 1999 and July 2010. Contained within some of those permits was confidential information, specifically the names, addresses, and Social Security numbers of some permit holders.

Upon discovering this issue, DEP's Information Technology Office immediately removed the database from the network to evaluate server activity to ascertain if personal information had been accessed. The confidential information was immediately removed from the database. After evaluation of all available data related to this incident, DEP found no evidence that would indicate that the database was copied or used inappropriately; however, DEP cannot say with one hundred percent certainty that personally identifiable information has not been misused.

We are not aware of any instances of misuse of this information or of any identity theft as a result of the temporary availability of this information. DEP recommends that you carefully review any bills or financial transactions you receive in the near future to ensure that the charges associated with your accounts are accurate.

DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman said, "This relaxation in care for our customers' privacy is totally unacceptable. We conducted a full review and took all necessary steps to ensure that confidential information is deleted from our website and publicly accessible databases. We regret the circumstances and concern this situation has caused."

WHAT HAPPENED?

A database under the control of DEP's Division of Water & Waste Management was available to the public that contained National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits issued between 1999 and July 2010. Contained within some of those permits was confidential information, specifically the names, addresses, and Social Security numbers of some permit holders. Once this was discovered, the DEP's Information Technology Office took immediate action and deleted the confidential information from the database.

WHO IS AFFECTED?

Some people who obtained NPDES permits between 1999 and July 2010 are affected.

WHEN WAS MY PERSONAL INFORMATION EXPOSED?

The information was exposed between January 2010 and July 2010. DEP's Information Technology Office learned of the exposure in late July of this year and immediately took down the database.

WHAT SPECIFIC ITEMS OF MY PERSONAL INFORMATION WERE INVOLVED?

The specific items were your name, Social Security number, and address.

WHAT IS BEING DONE NOW AND WHAT IS DEP DOING TO PREVENT THIS FROM OCCURRING AGAIN?

The Social Security numbers have been removed from the database. DEP has altered its procedures for the collection of private information. DEP conducted a full review of this situation and has taken additional steps to protect our customers' private information.

IF MY INFORMATION WAS AMONG THE FILES EXPOSED, DOES THIS MEAN THAT I'M A VICTIM OF IDENTIFY THEFT?

No. The fact that someone may have had access to your information does not mean you are a victim of identity theft or that they intend to use the information to commit fraud. We wanted to let you know about the incident so that you can take appropriate steps to protect yourself.

HAS MY INFORMATION BEEN USED TO STEAL MY IDENTITY?

At this time, we have no indication that the information contained on the computer has been used for illegal or malicious purposes. However, the potential risks associated with identity theft are serious matters, and that is why we have contacted affected individuals.

WILL DEP CONTACT ME TO ASK FOR PRIVATE INFORMATION BECAUSE OF THIS EVENT?

No. Please be aware that DEP will only contact you about this incident if additional helpful information becomes available. DEP will not ask for your full Social Security number or

for any credit card or bank information. DEP recommends that you do not release personal information to any contacts of this nature that you have not initiated.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You should carefully review any bills that you receive in the near future, especially credit card transactions, to ensure that the charges associated with your accounts are accurate. Individuals whose personal information was involved with this incident can request a free initial fraud alert to be placed on your credit files by calling any of the three major national credit bureaus:

Equifax
1-800-525-6285
www.equifax.com

Experian
1-888-397-3742
www.experian.com

Trans Union
1-800-680-7289
www.transunion.com

When contacting the credit bureau(s), you can request the following:

1. Instruct them to flag your file with a fraud alert, including a statement that creditors should get your permission before opening any new accounts in your name.
2. Ask them for copies of your credit report(s). Credit bureaus must give you a free copy of your report if it is inaccurate because of suspected fraud. Review your reports carefully to make sure no additional or fraudulent accounts have been opened in your name or unauthorized changes made to your existing accounts.
3. Be diligent in following up on your accounts. In the months following an incident, order new copies of your reports to verify your corrections and changes and to make sure no new fraudulent activity has occurred.
4. If you find that any accounts have been tampered with or opened fraudulently, close them immediately. To ensure that you do not become responsible for any debts or charges, use the ID Theft Affidavit form (www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/affidavit.pdf) developed by the Federal Trade Commission to help make your case with creditors.

If there is anything DEP can do to assist you, please call Terrie Sangid at 1-866-568-6649 ext. 1285 or contact us by email at depprivacyofficer@wv.gov. We deeply regret this incident and will keep you fully advised.

Sincerely,
Scott G. Mandirola, Director
Division of Water & Waste Management