



Office of the  
Information and Privacy  
Commissioner of Alberta

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## Guidelines for using Social Media for Background Checks

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta has released guidelines on the use of social media for conducting background checks on individuals. The guidelines are designed to ensure that organizations are aware of their responsibilities under the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) when collecting personal information via social media.

The guidelines provide practical advice to organizations on how much information can or should be collected through social media when performing a background check and highlight that it may be challenging for organizations to meet the “reasonable” requirement in PIPA when collecting personal information through social media. The guidelines also point out the hazards associated with using social media to conduct a background check including the inadvertent collection of third party information and the inability to determine the accuracy of information.

The bottom line for the guidelines is to remind organizations that they must not use social media to perform background checks if doing so would result in non-compliance with PIPA.

The guidelines are available on our website at [www.oipc.ab.ca](http://www.oipc.ab.ca)

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