



March 2020



## The Israeli Privacy Protection Authority Issues a Guide on Privacy Aspects of COVID-19

Reading time: 1 minute

The Israeli Privacy Protection Authority (“PPA”) issued, on March 23, 2020, [a guide on privacy aspects relating to the spread of COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#) (the “Guide”). This client update reviews key issues addressed in the Guide.

At the outset, the Guide stresses the **obligation to use personal data, gathered in connection with the current state of emergency, solely for the purpose for which it was collected** (e.g., preventing the spread of Coronavirus and ensuring the safety of employees who are at risk). Using such personal data, or disclosing it to third parties, for any purpose other than the specific purpose for which it was collected in the first place may be considered a violation of privacy if done without consent of the data subject.

The PPA also provides guidance on whether employers may **notify employees or visitors of the place of employment of an employee who was diagnosed with Coronavirus**. Per the PPA, such notice may be provided in good faith, however, must be **limited only to information that is relevant under the circumstances, without exposing unnecessary information**. For example, to the extent possible, the employer should avoid disclosing the name or other identifying details of the employee if providing information on the location and time of potential exposure can fulfil the purpose of such a notice. Furthermore, to the extent possible, such notice should be provided only to **relevant parties** (e.g., people who were in contact with the employee, to the best of the employer's knowledge).

The Guide also addresses data protection considerations with respect to [working and studying from home](#). In that context, the PPA has clarified that the current state of emergency **does not justify violations of the Privacy Protection Regulation (Data Security), 5777-2017**.

The Guide further contains recommendations for maintaining information security when working or studying from home, including, e.g., avoiding, to the extent possible, use of free applications, ensuring that the organization's systems (including the operating system) are up to date and protected by security software such as firewalls and anti-virus programs, using "strong" passwords, and taking measures for securing remote connections, such as the use of two-factor authentication (2FA). Additional guidance from the PPA on remote work can be found [here](#).

We note that the PPA is operating a 'hotline' offering fast and practical solutions for privacy concerns in light of the current state of emergency. The PPA can be contacted through its [Facebook page](#) or via email [ppa@justice.gov.il](mailto:ppa@justice.gov.il).

Gornitzky's Cyber-Security and Privacy team is at your service should you require any clarifications or assistance.

**For further information please contact:**



**Assaf Harel, Partner**

✉ [assafh@gornitzky.com](mailto:assafh@gornitzky.com)

\*This update was prepared with the assistance of Linor Vertnik.