

## **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER PRIVACY**

Amended 10/30/06

**I. PURPOSE.** The Social Security Number Protection Privacy Act requires Tuscola County to protect the privacy of social security numbers that it receives by prohibiting the unlawful disclosure of social security numbers, limiting the number of employees who have access to information or documents that contain social security numbers, and properly disposing of documents that contain social security numbers. The Social Security Number Privacy policy and procedures are to be followed by members of Tuscola County's workforce regarding the collection, use and dissemination of social security numbers. These policies and procedures are designed to reduce the prospect of intentional or unintentional use or disclosure of social security numbers.

**II. POLICY.** Tuscola County receives and utilizes social security numbers in conjunction with certain of its employment and municipal related matters. Social security numbers are confidential information and their unauthorized use or disclosure will subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including discharge and may also result in civil actions or criminal prosecutions. The maintenance, use, disclosure and destruction of social security numbers are subject to the following:

**A. Retention and Access.** Tuscola County maintains an employment information file for each employee. This employment information file contains information that is created or received by Tuscola County in order to carry out its employment functions. This file includes records containing social security numbers such as employment applications; I-9 forms; W-4 forms; enrollment/change/claims forms for health, life, and disability insurance; and enrollment/change/claims forms for retirement and deferred compensation plans. The paper copies of the employment information file is kept in locked cabinets in the Human Resources Office and any computer copies are maintained in password controlled files. Access to the employment information file regarding an employee is limited to the Human resources Coordinator and such other employees or agents of Tuscola County designated by the County Controller such as an employee's immediate supervisor with a legitimate need to have access to this information. All records containing social security numbers (whether partial or complete) will be maintained in secured files. Authorized employees using records containing social security numbers will take steps to secure such records when not in immediate use.

**B. Permitted uses of social security numbers.** Use of social security numbers is generally limited to the last 4 sequential digits of the social security number, but it is permissible to administratively use all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number to do any of the following:

- (1) Verify an individual's identity, identify an individual, or do another similar administrative purpose related to an account, transaction, product, service, or employment or proposed account, transaction, product, service, or employment.

- (2) Investigate an individual's claim, credit, criminal, or driving history.
- (3) Detect, prevent, or deter identity theft or another crime.
- (4) Lawfully pursue or enforce a person's legal rights, including, but not limited to, an audit, collection, investigation, or transfer of a tax, employee benefit, debt, claim, receivable, or account or an interest in a receivable or account.
- (5) Lawfully investigate, collect, or enforce a child or spousal support obligation or tax liability.
- (6) Provide or administer employee or health insurance or membership benefits, claims, or retirement programs or to administer the ownership of shares of stock or other investments.

The Human Resources Coordinator maintains a list of forms that may be used with social security numbers.

**C. Prohibited Actions regarding Social Security Numbers.** In order to protect the privacy of social security numbers, the following actions regarding the use of social security numbers are prohibited:

- (1) **Prohibited Public Display.** No employee of Tuscola County shall publicly display all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number. For purposes of this section, publicly display means to exhibit, hold up, post, or make visible or set out for open view, including, but not limited to, open view on a computer device, computer network, website, or other electronic medium or device, to members of the public or in a public manner.
- (2) **Visible Mailing.** No employee of Tuscola County shall mail or otherwise send to an individual any document or information that includes all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number if the social security number is visible on or, without manipulation, from outside of the envelope or packaging.
- (3) **Mailing/faxing of documents.** Without the prior approval of the Human Resources Coordinator, no employee of Tuscola County shall include all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number in any document or information mailed or faxed to a person.
- (4) **Unauthorized Use or Distribution.** No employee of Tuscola County shall use or disclose the social security number of any employee or client without compliance with this policy or with the prior approval of the Human resources Coordinator.

**D. Destruction of records containing social security numbers.** Inactive records containing social security numbers will be retained in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law and Tuscola County's record retention policy. Documents containing social security numbers that are no longer to be retained will be destroyed in a manner that continues to ensure their confidentiality such as on-site shredding and/or incineration or the supervised transport to an appropriate disposal facility.

### **III. PROCEDURES.**

**A. Training.** The Human Resources Coordinator shall insure that all members of its workforce receive appropriate training regarding Tuscola County policies and procedures with respect to the protection of social security number privacy to enable them to carry out their functions within Tuscola County. The Human Resources Coordinator shall document that this training has been provided to each member of the Tuscola County workforce with access to social security numbers. In addition, the Human Resources Coordinator shall document that this training has been provided to each new member of the Tuscola County workforce with access to social security numbers and to each member of the Tuscola County workforce newly provided with access to social security numbers within a reasonable time after those individuals receive access to social security numbers. The Human resources Coordinator shall document that training regarding any material changes in Tuscola County policies and procedures with respect to social security numbers has been provided to each member of the Tuscola County workforce with access to social security numbers within a reasonable time after the material change has been implemented.

**B. Account Number Use.** Tuscola County shall not use all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number as the primary account number for an individual.

**C. Identification Badges and Permits.** Tuscola County shall not visibly print all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number on any identification badge or card, membership card, or permit or license.

**D. Access to Internet or Computer Network.** Tuscola County shall not require an individual to use or transmit all or more than 4 sequential digits of his or her social security number to gain access to an internet website or a computer system or network unless the connection is secure, the transmission is encrypted, or a password or other unique personal identification number or other authentication device is also required to gain access to the internet website or computer system or network.

**E. Transmission over the Internet or Computer Network.** Tuscola County shall not require an individual to use or transmit all or more than 4 sequential digits of his or her social security number over the internet or a computer system or network unless the connection is secure or the transmission is encrypted.

**F. Mailing/faxing of documents.** Tuscola County shall not include all or more than 4 sequential digits of the social security number in any document or information mailed or faxed to a person, unless any of the following apply:

(1) State or federal law, rule, regulation, or court order or rule authorizes, permits, or requires that a social security number appear in the document.

(2) The document is sent as part of an application or enrollment process initiated by the individual.

(3) The document is sent to establish, confirm the status of, service, amend, or terminate an account, contract, policy, or employee or health insurance benefit or to confirm the accuracy of a social security number of an individual who has an account, contract, policy, or employee or health insurance benefit.

(4) The document or information is mailed by or at the request of an individual whose social security number appears in the document or information or his or her parent or legal guardian.

(5) The document or information is mailed in a manner or for a purpose consistent with subtitle A of title V of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley act, 15 USC 6801 to 6809; with the health insurance portability and accountability act of 1996, Public Law 104-191; or with section 537 or 539 of the insurance code of 1956, 1956 PA 218, MCL 500.537 and 500.539.

(6) The document or information is a copy of a public record filed or recorded with a county clerk or register of deeds office and is mailed by that office to a person entitled to receive that record.

(7) The document or information is a copy of a vital record recorded as provided by law and is mailed to a person entitled to receive that record.

**G. FOIA Requests.** Documents that contain social security numbers provided in compliance with the freedom of information act, 1976 PA 442, MCL 15.231 to 15.246, shall have the social security number redacted.

**H. Subpoenas.** Documents that contain social security numbers provided in compliance with judicial subpoenas shall have the social security number redacted.

**I. Individual Requests.** Documents that contain social security numbers may be released to the individual whose social security number is on the document or to their legal guardians without redaction of the social security number.

**J. Deviation from Prohibitions.** The prohibitions on the use or disclosure of a social security number do not apply if the use of all or more than 4 sequential digits of a social security number is authorized or required by state or federal statute, rule, or

regulation, by court order or rule, or pursuant to legal discovery or process; or if the use of all or more than 4 sequential digits of a social security number is by a title IV-D agency, law enforcement agency, court, or prosecutor as part of a criminal investigation or prosecution; or if the provision of all or more than 4 sequential digits of a social security number to a title IV-D agency, law enforcement agency, court, or prosecutor is part of a criminal investigation or prosecution. The Human resources Coordinator may authorize a deviation from the provisions of this Social Security Privacy Policy and Procedures under these circumstances.