BRITISH COLUMBIA

MEMORANDUM

Ref: 44692

VIA e-MAIL

Date: June 2, 2006

To: Assistant Deputy Ministers of Corporate Services

Re: **Use of Portable Storage Devices**

In regards to the "Investigation Report 2006 – 048 – Loss of custody of 41 computer data tapes containing personal and sensitive information", recommendation number 7 (attached) describes the need to store sensitive or personal information on the government network and not on "non-encrypted" portable storage devices (e.g., disks, memory sticks, MP3 players, CDs/DVDs) or local hard drives. In support of this recommendation:

- management, employees and contractors are to be reminded that they are responsible for the information and storage devices under their care;

- information temporarily stored on a portable storage device should be transferred to the government network as soon as practicable and then deleted from the portable storage device. Government information should be stored on the government network whenever possible to ensure the protection and long term availability of the information;

- sensitive or personal information must be encrypted when stored on portable storage devices to ensure protection from loss, compromise or unauthorized disclosure. Staff should ensure that information in their care is protected commensurate with its value and sensitivity; and

- government policy (Core Policy and Procedures Manual 6.3.5(a) 6)) requires that all information technology hardware purchases be handled by Shared Services BC (CITS). I have asked Shared Services BC to temporarily stop issuing memory sticks until a suitable encryption mechanism can be identified and implemented. Ministries can contact their Client Business Analyst for advice on short term alternatives to the use of memory sticks and exception processes.

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As part of recommendation number 5 (attached), Mr. Bruce Cuthbert and Mr. Brent Grover from my office are conducting a feasibility study on the encryption of portable storage devices and backup storage devices to protect government data. Results of this study will be used to select encryption products and processes to ensure the protection of government's information assets.

[Original Signed By:]

Dave Nikolejsin
Chief Information Officer

Attachment

cc: Mr. Gordon Macatee, Deputy Minister

Ms. Elaine McKnight, Assistant Deputy Minister

Assistant Deputy Ministers of Corporate Services, Advisory Council Information Management

Mr. Bruce Cuthbert, Director, ICT Architecture & Standards

Mr. Brent Grover, Manager, IT/IM Policy

Attachment

Excerpt from “Investigation Report 2006 – 048 – Loss of custody of 41 computer data tapes containing personal and sensitive information”

Recommendation number 5

It is recommended that government consider the feasibility of encrypting government data on portable storage devices (e.g., Blackberries, laptops, etc.) and on backup storage devices.

Recommendation number 7

It is recommended that government issue policy that all computer files containing personal information be stored on the government network and not on “non-encrypted” personal computing devices or data storage media (e.g., personal computer hard drives, laptops, PDAs, etc.).