

Confidentiality Policy

PURPOSE

This policy provides all employees of the County of Monmouth guidance and direction on the safeguarding of confidential information they acquire in the course of their employment.

SCOPE

In the event that there is a conflict between this policy and its procedures, and any collective negotiations agreement, the terms and conditions of the agreement shall prevail with respect to the employees covered by that agreement. Employees of Constitutional Offices will be governed by the specific policies set forth by their Constitutional Officer.

POLICY

Certain information and records acquired in the course of employment such as medical, personnel, financial, legal, business, client information and security codes are classified as confidential and may be accessed and utilized for business purposes only. In addition, there are laws including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), which govern County employees' obligations regarding use and release of certain information, including time sensitive deadlines.

PROCEDURE

- I. All employees are required to acquaint themselves with the above referenced laws as well as regulations and policies relative to their specific work assignments.
 - A. All employees are provided with a copy of the HIPAA Handbook, which they are required to review and retain.
 - B. Requests for information from the public shall comply with OPRA and be referred to the designated custodian of records for your department or your immediate supervisor.
- II. All records regardless of medium are the exclusive property of the County of Monmouth and shall not be moved from the premises or copied without authorization.
- III. Employees are strictly prohibited from accessing or utilizing confidential records for personal reasons.
- IV. Questions regarding confidential information, disclosure of information or any related issues must be brought to the attention of the employee's immediate supervisor.
- V. Violation of or failure to comply with any aspect of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

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COMPLIANCE

The County Administrator is responsible for ensuring the Confidentiality Policy is adhered to by all employees. Department Directors are responsible for implementing these principles in their respective Departments and ensuring that confidential information is safeguarded. Acknowledgement by employees will be required annually to ensure that every employee has read and understands the Confidentiality Policy.