



**PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT**  
**Breach Notification Decision**

<b>Organization providing notice under section 34.1 of PIPA</b>	Centerfire Contracting Limited Partnership (Organization)
<b>Decision number (file number)</b>	P2017-ND-138 (File #005268)
<b>Date notice received by OIPC</b>	March 21, 2017
<b>Date Organization last provided information</b>	September 1, 2017
<b>Date of decision</b>	October 3, 2017
<b>Summary of decision</b>	There is a real risk of significant harm to the individuals affected by this incident. The Organization is required to notify the individuals pursuant to section 37.1 of the <i>Personal Information Protection Act</i> (PIPA).
<b>JURISDICTION</b>	
<b>Section 1(1)(i) of PIPA “organization”</b>	The Organization is an “organization” as defined in section 1(1)(i) of PIPA.
<b>Section 1(1)(k) of PIPA “personal information”</b>	<p>The incident involved information found on a T4 tax slip, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• name,</li><li>• address,</li><li>• social insurance number,</li><li>• deductions and earnings.</li></ul> <p>This information is about identifiable individuals and is “personal information” as defined in section 1(1)(k) of PIPA.</p>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> loss <input type="checkbox"/> unauthorized access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unauthorized disclosure	
<b>Description of incident</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On about March 2, 2017, the Organization was coordinating the distribution of employees’ T4 tax slips by mail.</li><li>• Due to an administrative error, an employee with the Organization inadvertently mailed employees the Organization’s copy of the T4 slips, which included T4 information about multiple (two) employees on each page.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Organization became aware of the error on or around March 10, 2017 when several staff starting coming forward to report receiving two separate slips in the mail in error.</li> </ul>
<b>Affected individuals</b>	The incident affected approximately 120 individuals, of which approximately 90 were Alberta residents.
<b>Steps taken to reduce risk of harm to individuals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediately distributed a mass email to key personnel within the Organization to have all duplicate slips issued in error returned to the Organization so they can be destroyed.</li> <li>Foreman working on site then delivered this communication verbally or by telephone to all staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Steps taken to notify individuals of the incident</b>	Affected individuals were notified in person or by telephone on March 7, 2017.
<b>REAL RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM ANALYSIS</b>	
<p><b>Harm</b> Some damage or detriment or injury that could be caused to affected individuals as a result of the incident. The harm must also be “significant.” It must be important, meaningful, and with non-trivial consequences or effects.</p>	<p>The Organization reported the “biggest concern would be identity theft through improper use of an individual’s social insurance number.”</p> <p>I agree with the Organization. The identity and employment information at issue could be used for identity theft and fraud. The information could also cause hurt, humiliation and embarrassment among co-workers. These are significant harms.</p>
<p><b>Real Risk</b> The likelihood that the significant harm will result must be more than mere speculation or conjecture. There must be a cause and effect relationship between the incident and the possible harm.</p>	<p>The Organization reported that “identity theft arising from this privacy breach will be on the lower end. All T4 slips issued in error were distributed to other staff within the company, as opposed to a breach which involved unknown third parties. Further we were alerted to this error by employee self-reporting which again speaks to the quality of employees we have at this organization.”</p> <p>In my view, there is a real risk of significant harm in this case. Despite the fact the incident resulted from human error and not malicious intent, the unintended recipients and affected individuals are known to each other through professional/personal relationships, which increases the likelihood hurt, humiliation or embarrassment could result. This same factor makes it less likely that identity theft or fraud will result from this incident.</p>

**DECISION UNDER SECTION 37.1(1) OF PIPA**

Based on the information provided by the Organization and given the circumstances of the incident, I have decided that there is a real risk of significant harm to the affected individuals.

The identity and employment information at issue could be used for identity theft and fraud. The information could also cause hurt, humiliation and embarrassment among co-workers. These are significant harms. Despite the fact the incident resulted from human error and not malicious intent, the unintended recipients and affected individuals are known to each other through professional/personal relationships, which increases the likelihood hurt, humiliation or embarrassment could result. This same factor makes it less likely that identity theft or fraud will result from this incident.

The Organization is required to notify the affected individuals in Alberta pursuant to section 37.1 of PIPA. I understand the affected individuals were notified in person or by telephone on March 7, 2017. The Organization is not required to notify affected individuals again.

Jill Clayton  
Information and Privacy Commissioner