



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

<b>Organization providing notice under section 34.1 of PIPA</b>	Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (Organization)
<b>Decision number (file number)</b>	P2020-ND-087 (File #013075)
<b>Date notice received by OIPC</b>	August 27, 2019
<b>Date Organization last provided information</b>	October 3, 2019
<b>Date of decision</b>	July 28, 2020
<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 those 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 a corporation incorporated under the under the <i>Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act</i> (POARA) and is an “organization “as defined under <i>the Personal Information Protection Act</i> (PIPA).
<b>Section 1(1)(k) of PIPA “personal information”</b>	<p>The incident involved the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• first and last name,</li><li>• email address,</li><li>• event title,</li><li>• ticket (member or non-member),</li><li>• ticket price,</li><li>• company, and</li><li>• dietary concerns.</li></ul> <p>This information is about identifiable individuals and is “personal information” as defined in section 1(1)(k) of PIPA. To the extent this information was collected in Alberta, PIPA applies.</p> <p>Some of the information appears to qualify as “business contact information” which is defined in section 1(1)(a) of PIPA to mean “an individual’s name, position name or title, business telephone number, business address, business e mail address, business fax number and other similar business information.”</p>

	<p>Section 4(1)(d) of PIPA says that the Act does not apply to the collection, use and disclosure of business contact information “for the purposes of enabling the individual to be contacted in relation to the individual’s business responsibilities and for no other purpose.”</p> <p>In this case, I considered that the possibility of unauthorized access to the information was not “for the purposes of enabling the individual to be contacted in relation to the individual’s business responsibilities and for no other purpose.”</p> <p>Therefore, I find that PIPA applies to the personal information about the twenty-seven (27) residents of Alberta.</p>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> loss <input type="checkbox"/> unauthorized access <input type="checkbox"/> unauthorized disclosure	
<b>Description of incident</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On or around July 22, 2019, a staff member with the Organization realized a laptop was missing. Despite search efforts, the laptop was not found.</li> <li>• The information at issue may have been in an event attendees list stored on the laptop.</li> <li>• The laptop was not encrypted.</li> </ul>
<b>Affected individuals</b>	The incident affected 27 individuals residing in Alberta.
<b>Steps taken to reduce risk of harm to individuals</b>	Revised process for recording attendance at events.
<b>Steps taken to notify individuals of the incident</b>	Affected individuals were notified on September 25, 2019.
<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 that the harm that might result from this breach is “phishing attempts”.</p> <p>In my view, a reasonable person would consider that email addresses could be used for phishing purposes, increasing vulnerability to identity theft and fraud.</p>

<p><b>Real Risk</b></p> <p>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 it “If the list was on the computer, the Breach Coach identifies a real risk of significant harm.</p> <p>In my view, the likelihood of harm resulting from this incident is increased because it is not known if the laptop was stolen or lost and it has not been recovered. The laptop was not encrypted.</p>
<p><b>DECISION UNDER SECTION 37.1(1) OF PIPA</b></p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>A reasonable person would consider that email addresses could be used for phishing purposes, increasing vulnerability to identity theft and fraud. The likelihood of harm resulting from this incident is increased because it is not known if the laptop was stolen or lost and it has not been recovered. The laptop was not encrypted.</p> <p>I require the Organization to notify the affected individuals in accordance with section 19.1 of the <i>Personal Information Protection Act Regulation</i> (Regulation). I understand affected individuals were notified on September 25, 2019. The Organization is not required to notify them again.</p>	

Jill Clayton  
Information and Privacy Commissioner