



PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT
Breach Notification Decision

Organization providing notice under section 34.1 of PIPA	CNOOC Petroleum North America ULC (Organization)
Decision number (file number)	P2020-ND-111 (File #015180)
Date notice received by OIPC	July 26, 2019
Date Organization last provided information	June 11, 2020
Date of decision	September 24, 2020
Summary of decision	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).
JURISDICTION	
Section 1(1)(i) of PIPA “organization”	The Organization operates in Alberta and is an “organization” as defined in section 1(1)(i) of PIPA.
Section 1(1)(k) of PIPA “personal information”	The incident involved all or some of the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name,• total employment income (e.g. sum of salary, bonus, taxable benefits). This information is about identifiable individuals and is “personal information” as defined in section 1(1)(k) of PIPA.
DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT	
<input type="checkbox"/> loss <input type="checkbox"/> unauthorized access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unauthorized disclosure	
Description of incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On July 10, 2019, an employee of the Organization had a conversation with two other individuals – a former employee and another employee – during which the first employee shared the information at issue in an unauthorized manner.• On July 16, 2019, the second employee reported the incident to his manager, and the Organization began an investigation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Organization discovered that the first employee had authorized access to a spreadsheet of aggregate, non-identifiable compensation data; however, the spreadsheet also included hidden data with individually identifiable information. • The Organization reported that “While it was not apparent that the spreadsheet contained supporting data, when [the first employee] clicked on the aggregate, non-identifiable compensation value it revealed the underlying data.”
Affected individuals	The incident affected 5 individuals residing in Alberta.
Steps taken to reduce risk of harm to individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigated to confirm the nature of the access to and disclosure of personal information. • Obtained undertakings from the individuals involved that they had not and would not share any personal information associated with this incident. • Secured access permissions to the document to prevent further access. • Conducted an audit of the Organization’s systems and confirmed that there was no indication of any further access to or distribution of the separate spreadsheet containing personal information. • Taking steps to help prevent an incident of this nature from occurring in the future, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewing the IT/Payroll data sharing process. - Issuing a reminder to all employees about the Organization’s Privacy of Personal information Standard and Procedural Aids - Taking appropriate corrective action with the employee.
Steps taken to notify individuals of the incident	Affected individuals were notified either in person or by telephone on July 25, 2019.
REAL RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM ANALYSIS	
Harm 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>The Organization reported “This incident presents a potential for harm to the affected individuals. Compensation information is sensitive and its disclosure by way of the conversation in question could cause the harms of hurt, humiliation or embarrassment...” .</p> <p>I agree with the Organization’s assessment. A reasonable person would consider that the contact (name) and employment information at issue could be used to cause the significant harms of hurt, humiliation or embarrassment particularly where there are personal/professional relationships.</p>

<p>Real Risk</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 "... has taken a number of steps to reduce the risk of harm."</p> <p>In my view, a reasonable person would consider that the likelihood of harm resulting from this incident is increased because the information at issue was disclosed to individuals with whom the affected individuals may have a personal/professional reputation. Although the Organization has put additional safeguards in place, these were not in place at the time of the breach.</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.

A reasonable person would consider that the contact (name) and employment information at issue could be used to cause the significant harms of hurt, humiliation or embarrassment particularly where there are personal/professional relationships. The likelihood of harm resulting from this incident is increased because the information at issue was disclosed to individuals with whom the affected individuals may have a personal/professional reputation. Although the Organization has put additional safeguards in place, these were not in place at the time of the breach.

I require the Organization to notify the affected individuals in accordance with section 19.1 of the *Personal Information Protection Act Regulation* (Regulation).

I understand the Organization notified affected individuals in person or by telephone on July 25, 2019 in accordance with the Regulation. The Organization is not required to notify the affected individuals again.

Jill Clayton
Information and Privacy Commissioner