



**PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT
Breach Notification Decision**

Organization providing notice under section 34.1 of PIPA	The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company (Organization)
Decision number (file number)	P2021-ND-277 (File #020813)
Date notice received by OIPC	April 26, 2021
Date Organization last provided information	November 10, 2021
Date of decision	February 16, 2022
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 whose personal information was collected in Alberta, pursuant to section 37.1 of the <i>Personal Information Protection Act</i> (PIPA).
JURISDICTION	
Section 1(1)(i) of PIPA “organization”	The Organization is an “organization” as defined in section 1(1)(i) of PIPA.
Section 1(1)(k) of PIPA “personal information”	<p>The Organization reported the incident involved the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name,• mailing address,• social insurance number,• segregated fund contract number, and• segregated fund contract holdings. <p>This information is about identifiable individuals and is “personal information” as defined in section 1(1)(k) of PIPA. The information was collected in Alberta via the Organization’s website and/or application.</p>
DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT	
<input type="checkbox"/> loss <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unauthorized access <input type="checkbox"/> unauthorized disclosure	

<p>Description of incident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On April 5, 2021, the Organization was notified of potentially unauthorized transaction activity on its web-based application involving customers of a contracted advisor. • The perpetrator of the unauthorized access leveraged the advisor’s authentication credentials (username and password) to process fraudulent transactions. • The Organization reported that the focus of the attack appears to have been financial fraud.
<p>Affected individuals</p>	<p>The incident affected two (2) individuals whose information was collection in Alberta.</p>
<p>Steps taken to reduce risk of harm to individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled the advisor's access to the web-based advisor-facing transaction processing application. • Contacted banks that received fraudulent transfers. • Reversed unauthorized transactions. • Reviewing recent activity on the impacted accounts. • Took steps to restrict access to the impacted accounts. • Offered credit monitoring to the impacted customers.
<p>Steps taken to notify individuals of the incident</p>	<p>Affected individuals were notified by telephone on April 18, 2021 and by mail on May 7, 2021 and October 4, 2021.</p>
<p>REAL RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM ANALYSIS</p>	
<p>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>	<p>The Organization reported,</p> <p><i>The investigation is ongoing. Unauthorized transactions were processed on the impacted individual's accounts. At this time our investigation suggests the perpetrator(s) came into possession of the advisor's authentication credentials in a manner unrelated to... our operations.</i></p> <p>In my view, a reasonable person would consider the contact and identity information combined with financial information could be used to cause the harms of identity theft, fraud, and/or financial loss. Confirmed valid credentials could be used to compromise online accounts. These are significant harms.</p>
<p>Real Risk 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,</p> <p><i>We assessed there to be a real risk of significant harm to the affected individuals due to financial fraud, as unauthorized transactions were processed on their accounts using their advisor’s credentials. The unauthorized transactions have been reversed.</i></p>

	<p>In my view, a reasonable person would consider that the likelihood of harm resulting from this incident is increased because the incident is the result of malicious actions by an unknown perpetrator. The information at issue was used for fraudulent transactions.</p>
<p>DECISION UNDER SECTION 37.1(1) OF PIPA</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 the contact and identity information combined with financial information could be used to cause the harms of identity theft, fraud, and/or financial loss. Confirmed valid credentials could be used to compromise online accounts. These are significant harms.</p> <p>The likelihood of harm resulting from this incident is increased because the incident is the result of malicious actions by an unknown perpetrator. The information at issue was used for fraudulent transactions.</p> <p>I require the Organization to notify the affected individuals whose personal information was collected in Alberta, in accordance with section 19.1 of the <i>Personal Information Protection Act Regulation</i> (Regulation).</p> <p>I understand the Organization notified affected individuals by telephone on April 18, 2021 and by mail on May 7, 2021 and October 4, 2021, in accordance with the Regulation. The Organization is not required to notify the affected individuals again.</p>	

Jill Clayton
Information and Privacy Commissioner