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Human Resources Bulletin

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SUBJECT: Protection of Personal Information of Job Applicants

Purpose: To provide information about the handling of social security information for job applicants. This bulletin supports the countywide privacy direction as established by the King County Information Privacy Policy and described in the King County Privacy Notice.

Overview: The copying and distribution of job applications, whether in electronic or paper form, can expose personal information to handling and disposal by staff involved in candidate evaluation or interview committees. The King County Application for Employment form and Applicant Data sheet both have areas for applicants to provide their social security number. Both forms instruct applicants that providing social security number is voluntary and is used purely for tracking purposes. Many completed applications include the applicant's unprotected social security number, name and address.

Guidance: Department HR staff are usually the control point for receipt and distribution of completed job applications, however this policy applies to all staff who may receive employment applications, including hiring authorities. The Applicant Data sheet is strictly for EEO purposes and should not be distributed beyond HR staff. All applicant social security numbers **must** be marked over so that they are no longer visible if in paper form, or deleted from electronic application forms prior to copying, storing or distributing the forms. After the completion of the recruitment process, departments must ensure that all copies of application forms that were distributed are returned to department HR staff for proper destruction.

References: King County Information Privacy Policy:
http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/oirm/governance/policies/KCIT_Privacy_Policy.doc
King County Privacy Notice: <http://www.metrokc.gov/terms.htm#privacy>