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SI1116
Personal Security – Providing External Information



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1. Objective

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) recognises that occasions may arise when individuals are requested to disclose their occupation and private address to a variety of government agencies and private organisations when transacting essential business matters that are an integral part of everyday life. Whilst it is often impossible to conceal one's true identity in such transactions, an attempt should be made to reduce the risks involved.

The following guidance should be considered when dealing with various agencies. These are a matter of personal choice.

2. Banking

The Banking industry is controlled by Government policy.

Officers may approach their bank manager and ask to view their account details. It may be possible to make local alterations to account details, which may reduce unwarranted attention.

3. Mortgage Applications

Banks and Building Society head offices have been advised by Central Pay Branch that they will not provide details of earnings without the individual's specific permission.

Officers and staff requiring a mortgage are advised to produce their most recent P60 and 3 monthly pay slips as proof of earnings.

4. Estate Agents

Estate agents require information about occupations only when arranging a loan. The procedure described in relation to mortgage applications should be followed in such instances.

5. Department of Education Student Grants

When officers apply for education grants for a member of their family, they should ensure that the officer remains relatively anonymous.

6. Northern Ireland Housing

Executive

When dealing with the NIHE, especially in relation to the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED) Scheme, the Emergency Housing Unit, Security Branch, Dundonald will give assistance in this matter.

7. Land Registration

When completing forms to register ownership of land, generally after house purchase, there is no legal requirement for officers to disclose their occupation.

Land Registry forms are normally completed and signed by solicitors on behalf of purchasers, so police officers and staff should advise their legal representatives of their wishes at an early stage.

8. Blood Transfusion Services

All reference to occupation has been expunged from Blood Transfusion Service files. When blood is given at any Police establishment, then that address should be recorded. Home addresses should not be given.

9. Medical Records in Hospitals

A private word with the family doctor before admission should ensure that indiscreet information does not appear anywhere on the file. A similar procedure should be followed in order to prevent the officer's, or spouse's, home address being recorded on the hospital bed chart.

Similar advice applies to local health centre and dental records. A discreet word with an individual's family doctor/dentist should ensure details do not refer to occupation or place of employment.

10. Injury on Duty

It is imperative that officers completing Injury on Duty forms use their station address and NOT their home address.

11. Home Address

As far as possible police officers and staff should protect the integrity of their home address and not divulge it unnecessarily.

12. Insurance

Applicants for insurance are expected to answer all questions fully and truthfully.

Failing to give a complete answer could mean that insurance claims are reduced or refused and that the policy is cancelled.

For simple life insurance, most insurance companies make no distinction between premiums they charge for police officers and any other kind of government employee.

Officers who have continuing concerns about their security may wish to discuss this issue with their insurers directly. All insurers have procedures for handling sensitive information, which usually involve the customer corresponding directly with the Chief Underwriter.

13. Legal Proceedings

It is recommended that before completing documents that require a declaration of address/occupation, officers and staff consult with their solicitor and discover if it is necessary to complete that particular portion of the document. Where acceptable, use a PSNI address.

14. Special Offers through Staff Associations

When officers wish to avail of offers made

by companies through Staff Associations, they should, in the first instance, contact the relevant Staff Association office.

15. Online/Open Source Applications and Publications

When completing online applications, such as credit card applications and mortgage enquiries, security of personal information cannot be guaranteed. Information supplied may also be passed onto third parties; therefore, officers are advised not to disclose their occupation and employment via this means.

Home addresses and details of employment should not be included on open source publications, websites, and social media. You should consult the PSNI's Protect Yourself booklet for further guidance.

16. The Electoral Roll

Websites like 192.com use information from old electoral registers (before the edited register was introduced in 2002) and information from edited registers published since 2002 to compile and publish their data.

You can have your details removed from these websites by completing a removal request form (available on their website, not the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland website).

In addition, a complaint can be made to the Information Commissioner (www.ico.org.uk) if you feel your personal data is being improperly processed by the website concerned.

17. Matters which cannot be Improved or Altered

Information on some documents cannot be substituted or altered.

18. General

Personal security is a matter for each individual. Through carelessness officers and staff can be their own worst enemies. Business conducted in uniform, or part uniform, is counter-productive from a security perspective.

Appendix A Contact Us

Service Instruction Author

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