



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

09 June 2009

Amicus Legal Ltd found in breach of the Data Protection Act

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has found Amicus Legal Ltd in breach of the Data Protection Act after reporting a laptop computer containing personal information relating to 100,000 customers was stolen. The laptop, privately owned by a contracted consultant, was not encrypted.

Amicus Legal has signed a formal [Undertaking](#) outlining that it will take reasonable measures to keep personal information secure in future. The Undertaking has been signed on behalf of Amicus Legal Ltd by the Chief Executive, Andy Tomkins.

Amicus Legal Ltd will ensure appropriate security measures are implemented to protect personal information more effectively. For example, all portable and mobile devices which are used to store and transmit personal information must be encrypted, with immediate effect.

Sally-anne Poole, Head of Enforcement & Investigations at the ICO, said: "We are investigating a number of the most serious reported data breaches. This case was serious because it involved the data of 100,000 customers, including sensitive information relating to legal advice. This breach illustrates that even though a contractor lost the data, it is the data controller (Amicus Legal Ltd) which is responsible for the security of the information. It is vital that personal information is handled properly and in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

"Since November 2007, 161 data security breaches have been reported to the ICO by the private sector. We urge all CEOs and their senior management teams to take

personal responsibility for treating data protection as a corporate governance issue affecting the whole organisation. They have to make sure that safeguarding the personal information of customers and staff is embedded in their organisational culture.”

Failure to meet the terms of the Undertaking is likely to lead to enforcement action by the ICO. A copy of the Undertaking can be downloaded from [http://www.ico.gov.uk/what we cover/data protection/enforcement.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/what_we_cover/data_protection/enforcement.aspx).

ENDS

If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

1. The private sector, NHS, central government and local government have all reported significant numbers of breaches to the ICO. The latest figures include 140 within the NHS and other health bodies, 53 by central government, 60 by local authorities, 72 by the rest of the public sector and 161 by the private sector.
2. The Information Commissioner’s Office promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is the UK’s independent influential and practical authority on information rights and responsibilities, making a difference to people.
3. The ICO has specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
4. Organisations can now sign the Personal Information Promise to demonstrate their commitment to protecting people’s personal information by visiting the website at www.ico.gov.uk
5. For more information about the Information Commissioner’s Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk
6. Anyone who processes personal information must comply with eight principles, which make sure that personal information is:
 - Fairly and lawfully processed
 - Processed for limited purposes
 - Adequate, relevant and not excessive
 - Accurate and up to date
 - Not kept for longer than is necessary
 - Processed in line with your rights
 - Secure
 - Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection