



GDPR guidelines for union representatives

Fórsa takes the privacy of its employees and members seriously. The Union is working hard to ensure it complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect on the 25th May 2018.

The GDPR significantly changed data protection law in Ireland and across Europe. It strengthened the rights of individuals regarding the storage and use of their personal data, and increases the obligations on organisations. The legal guidelines bring new responsibilities for all individuals and organisations that hold personal data, including union branches.

Over 80% of breaches are caused by human error. The biggest danger is not hackers remotely accessing your systems but rather individuals making mistakes, such as sending group emails using the TO button instead of the BCC button, losing data or being unaware that they have breached the law.

Under the GDPR trade union membership is considered a special category of personal data, this puts an extra onus on unions to ensure members' personal information is processed in accordance with the legislation. Here are some important tips to keep Fórsa members' personal data safe, secure and confidential. These will help you to avoid data breaches.

What is personal data: Personal data means any information relating to an identifiable person including name, phone number, email address, membership number and documents compiled in personal case files.

Email

- When emailing groups of members use the BCC button. If you don't, you are sharing members' contact details with everyone else on the email list and identifying them as members of a trade union, which is a reportable breach.
- Email attachments containing personal data should be password protected and the password sent separately using a different form of delivery – text message or phone call.
- Watch out for phishing emails.

Security

- Personal case files must be stored in a safe and secure place.
- Personal data should not be left unattended in areas where other members or individuals can access it e.g. home, car or a meeting room.
- Personal data should not be visible in the workplace e.g. walls, desk, computer screen, printers and copiers.
- Lock your computer screen if leaving computer/laptop unattended (windows key + L key).
- Password protect devices which hold personal data.
- Be aware that your notes and correspondence may be seen by the data subject.
- Never work on Fórsa sensitive data in a public place or leave in view.
- Destroy unrequired paperwork safely using a shredder.

Data Breach

If you suspect a data breach has occurred you should immediately contact Fórsa's Data Protection Officer (DPO), dpo@forsa.ie. Under the legislation any breaches must be reported to the Data Protection Commission within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach. This must be done by Fórsa's DPO.

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**If you have any data protection concerns or worries please contact
Martina O'Leary, Fórsa Data Protection Officer at dpo@forsa.ie.**