



Risk Management FAQs – Preserving Client Confidentiality During Telecommuting

To guide members and their staff, the COVID-19 Task Force has developed a set of risk management FAQs to provide some pointers on appropriate practices to maintain client confidentiality when working from home. Please note that these pointers are not meant to be exhaustive.

1) How can I maintain client confidentiality when transporting client files/documents from the office to home (and vice versa)?

Some pointers are:

- Ensure that the client files/documents are stored securely when transporting them from the office to home (and vice versa).
- Do not leave your client files/documents unattended or with a third party to mind while transporting them from the office to home (and vice versa).
- Do not carry client files/documents openly where confidential client information can be easily seen by third parties.
- If you are carrying client files/documents while on public transport, ensure that no one nearby can read the documents/files (including cover pages). The same applies if you are carrying client files/documents in a public area.

2) How can I maintain client confidentiality when working from home?

Some pointers are:

- Avoid placing confidential documents/files at a location where they are clearly visible or in the line-of-sight of family members.
- Store confidential documents securely, for example: (1) for physical documents, in locked cabinets or drawers; and (2) for digital documents, on a secure cloud system.
- Take work calls or video conference calls behind closed doors.
- Do not discuss confidential work matters or share confidential client information with your family members.
- Ensure that confidential documents are password-protected or encrypted to prevent unauthorised access.
- Use privacy filters to minimise family members from viewing confidential information on laptops.
- Activate self-locking mechanisms for the computer screen if the computer is left unattended for a certain period.
- Properly dispose confidential documents that are no longer needed, through shredding or similar means.

3) As an employer, what can I do to ensure that my law practice employees are aware of their client confidentiality obligations during telecommuting?

Some pointers are:

- Implement appropriate policies and procedures in your law practice regarding confidentiality, cyber security and data protection obligations to be observed during telecommuting.
- Communicate to your employees the importance of preserving client confidentiality during telecommuting.
- Provide guidance to your employees on how they can minimise inadvertent or accidental confidentiality breaches, for example, they should check email recipients carefully to avoid

accidentally or inadvertently sending emails containing confidential information to the wrong recipient.

- 4) If I have a query on client confidentiality when working from home, how I can obtain assistance from the Law Society?**

Please write in to the Law Society at membership@lawsoc.org.sg or call 6538 2500.

COVID-19 Task Force
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