

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees and Contractors

FROM: Joseph F. Klimavicz

SUBJECT: Safeguarding PII on Mobile Devices such as PDAs

Date: December 5, 2007

On June 23, 2006, OMB issued a memorandum (OMB M-06-16) stating “encrypt all data on mobile computers/devices which carry agency data unless the data is determined to be non-sensitive, in writing, by your Deputy Secretary.” NOAA has obtained a DOC waiver allowing us until March 30, 2008 to transition to PDAs which comply with this directive. Therefore, all NOAA must take the following steps:

- All further acquisitions for PDA or hand held computers must meet NOAA’s PDA IT security requirements[\[1\]](#).
- Existing PDA and hand held computers must be secured prior to March 30, 2008.
- A waiver must be obtained from the NOAA CIO via Line Office CIO if a PDA cannot be secured by March 30, 2008. PDAs used for data collection or instrumentation and will never contain PII nor be used to access enterprise messaging fall into this category.

NOAA PDA and handheld computer users must take these additional actions, where technically feasible, to limit the risk of unintentional disclosure of sensitive information:

- All PDAs and handheld computers must be password protected in accordance with DOC policy
- All PDAs and handheld computers will implement the “auto data wipe” feature to counter multiple password guesses
- All PDAs and handheld computers must have data encryption/protection enabled.
- Support central provisioning of device security profiles in a mode compatible with NOAA's enterprise PDA infrastructure.

All Line Offices are responsible for procuring and supporting their own population of PDAs through their existing procurement and help desk support units. Purchasing PDAs with a government-wide purchase card must not exceed the \$3,000.00 micro purchase threshold. The

Acquisition and Grants Office is developing a NOAA-wide Blanket Purchase Agreement that may be in place by January 30, 2008.

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[1] NOAA's PDA IT security requirements are as follows:

- 1) Support FIPS 140-2 encryption for both transmission and storage of data, and is NIST certified, and
- 2) Be compatible with NOAA's enterprise IT infrastructure, and Enterprise Architecture.

As NOAA makes this transition, it is not sufficient to simply add PDAs to the current set of hand held devices. NOAA must remove and properly dispose of all PDAs and hand held computers to be excessed unless a waiver is obtained for their use. In particular,

- All organizations are required to maintain accurate records in the Sunflower personal property database for all PDAs and hand held computers—both in acquiring new PDAs, and in excessing PDAs.
- For security purposes, reset the PDA back to its factory default (cleaning off all names, phone numbers, and other information) before it is excessed.
- For property excessing purposes, NOAA PDA holders must send the “cleaned” PDA to their property custodian for appropriate disposition and updating of the Sunflower personal property system. Specific guidance will be provided separately to property custodians.
- Batteries must be disposed of safely in an ecologically approved manner. See <http://www.epa.gov/garbage/battery.htm>

Users are reminded that even after the transition to standard PDAs, storage of PII is forbidden on mobile computing and storage devices such as thumb drives, MP3 players and PDAs. Contact your local IT help desks for needed assistance regarding ISP selection, calendar synchronization, and data migration.