

South Korea Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) — Amended 2020



Personal Information
Protection Commission

PIPA is South Korea's law regulating the collection, use, and protection of personal information to safeguard privacy rights.

What it is

The South Korea Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) is a comprehensive data protection law that helps organizations safeguard personal information and uphold individuals' privacy rights. PIPA establishes principles and requirements for the collection, use, processing, and management of personal data in both the public and private sectors.

The law is enacted and enforced by the Personal Information Protection Commission (PIPC) of South Korea. It applies to any organization—local or foreign—that handles the personal information of South Korean residents. PIPA covers key areas such as privacy governance, accountability, security controls, data breach notification, and subject rights, making it a foundational regulation for privacy and compliance programs within the country.

At a glance

TYPE Framework	VERSION 2011	EFFECTIVE September 30, 2011
DOMAIN Privacy	FAMILY Global Privacy Regulations	REGION South Korea
ADOPTION MODEL Regulatory Compliance	IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY High	

Source: <https://www.pipc.go.kr>

Why it matters

- **Support privacy rights protection** Prioritize individual data rights and ensure organizational practices are transparent, fostering greater trust with customers and stakeholders.
- **Strengthen data security practices** Require security and organizational measures that reduce the likelihood of data breaches and unauthorized data disclosure.
- **Enhance regulatory compliance** Facilitate alignment with national and international privacy regulations, enabling smoother global operations and reducing risk of legal penalties.
- **Increase audit and oversight readiness** Promote comprehensive documentation and oversight, helping organizations efficiently demonstrate compliance during audits or regulatory reviews.

How SmartSuite supports PIPA (South Korea)

Personal Data Inventory and Classification

Maintain records of personal and sensitive data, processing purposes, and storage locations.

Consent, Lawful Processing, and Data Sharing

Track consent collection, lawful processing, purpose limitation, and third-party data sharing.

Access, Correction, Deletion, and Suspension Requests

Manage access, correction, deletion, and suspension requests with full audit trails.

Personal Information Security Safeguards

Track encryption, access controls, and technical safeguards protecting personal information.

Breach Detection and Regulatory Notification

Manage breach detection, reporting timelines, and regulatory notification requirements.

PIPA Privacy Compliance Reporting

Provide dashboards showing privacy posture, control coverage, and PIPA compliance readiness.

Common framework mappings

APEC PF

GDPR

ISO 27001:2022

ISO 27018

ISO 27701

APPI

NIST Privacy Framework v1.0

Singapore PDPA

Official resources

PIPA Official Text

Provides the complete legal text of the South Korea Personal Information Protection Act.

pipc.go.kr/eng/user/lgp/law/lawsRegulations.do

PIPC Guidelines on Personal Information Protection

Outlines practical guidelines for implementing PIPA requirements in organizations.

pipc.go.kr/eng/user/cmm/privacyGuideline.do

PIPC Security Measures Standards

Describes the security measures required under PIPA to protect personal information.

pipc.go.kr/eng/user/lgp/law/lawsRegulations.do

PIPC Data Breach Notification Guide

Provides guidance on notifying authorities and individuals in case of a data breach under PIPA.

pipc.go.kr/eng/user/cmm/privacyGuideline.do

Frequently asked questions

What is the South Korea Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) used for?

PIPA is designed to protect the personal information of individuals and uphold privacy rights by regulating how organizations collect, use, process, and manage personal data. It establishes comprehensive data protection principles that apply to both public and private sector entities handling the personal information of South Korean residents.

Is compliance with PIPA mandatory for organizations?

Yes, compliance with PIPA is legally required for any organization, whether domestic or foreign, that processes the personal information of individuals residing in South Korea. Non-compliance can result in significant regulatory penalties, enforcement actions, and reputational damage.

Who does PIPA apply to and what is its scope?

PIPA applies broadly to any organization or individual—local or international—that collects, uses, or manages personal information about South Korean residents. This includes businesses, government agencies, and other entities operating in or outside of South Korea if they handle relevant data.

What are the key requirements and concepts in PIPA compliance?

Key requirements include obtaining valid consent, honoring data subject rights, implementing security controls, appointing a data protection officer, and providing notification in the event of data breaches. The law emphasizes principles such as lawfulness, transparency, data minimization, purpose limitation, and accountability.

How should organizations implement PIPA requirements?

Organizations should integrate data protection into their governance structures, establish internal privacy policies, conduct privacy risk assessments, and deliver regular staff training on compliance obligations. Maintaining detailed records of data processing activities and robust controls for consent management are essential for operational compliance.

How does PIPA relate to international data protection frameworks like GDPR?

PIPA shares many core principles with frameworks such as the GDPR, including transparency, individual rights, and security safeguards. Aligning PIPA compliance practices with global standards can simplify multinational privacy operations, support cross-border data transfers, and foster harmonized data governance.

What are the ongoing compliance obligations under PIPA?

Ongoing obligations include regularly reviewing and updating security controls, documenting data processing activities, performing periodic risk and compliance assessments, and ensuring mechanisms are in place to respond promptly to data subject requests and breaches. Continuous monitoring helps organizations stay ahead of regulatory changes and privacy risks.

How would SmartSuite support South Korea Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)?

SmartSuite enables organizations to manage PIPA compliance by centralizing risk and control libraries specific to South Korean privacy law, tracking privacy risks in structured registers, and automating evidence collection for audits. Its workflow tools streamline breach response and data subject request management, while real-time dashboards provide clear visibility into compliance status and the effectiveness of privacy controls.

License included / downloadable: Yes South Korea's Personal Information Protection Act is published by the Personal Information Protection Commission and is freely available on the PIPC government website. License included with platform

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/south-korea-personal-information-protection-act-pipa