SmartSuite

Framework / Privacy / Global Privacy Regulations

Canada PIPEDA (S.C. 2000, c. 5)

PIPEDA is Canada's federal private-sector privacy law: ten Schedule 1 principles, meaningful consent, 30-day access requests and mandatory breach reporting.



What it is

The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA, S.C. 2000, c. 5) is Canada's federal private-sector privacy law. Part 1 applies to organizations that collect, use or disclose personal information in the course of commercial activities, and to employee information in federal works, undertakings or businesses, and it makes the ten principles of Schedule 1 binding on them (sections 4 and 5). Part 1 came into force on January 1, 2001 and reached all commercial activity across Canada by January 1, 2004.

Parliament enacted PIPEDA, the Department of Justice Canada publishes the consolidated text, and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada investigates complaints and audits organizations. Organizations in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia are exempt for activity inside their province because those provinces have substantially similar laws, but PIPEDA still governs cross-border flows and federal businesses.

At a glance

PUBLISHER Parliament of Canada (consolidated by the Department of Justice Canada); overseen by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada	TYPE Framework	VERSION S.C. 2000, c. 5, current to September 21, 2026 (last amended March 4, 2025)
EFFECTIVE January 1, 2001 (federal works); January 1, 2004 (all commercial activity)	DOMAIN Privacy	FAMILY Global Privacy Regulations
REGION Canada	ADOPTION MODEL Regulatory Compliance	IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY Medium

Source: laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/p-8.6/FullText.html

Why it matters

- **Ten principles with legal force** Section 5 requires every organization to comply with Schedule 1, where "shall" is an obligation and "should" a recommendation.
- **Consent must be meaningful** Consent is valid only if people to whom the organization's activities are directed would understand the nature, purpose and consequences of what they consent to (section 6.1).
- **Mandatory breach reporting** An organization must report breaches that create a real risk of significant harm to the Commissioner and notify affected individuals as soon as feasible (section 10.1).
- **Records of every breach** Every breach of security safeguards must be recorded, whether or not it is reportable, and provided to the Commissioner on request (section 10.3).

Updated Oct 15, 2026 · © 2026 SmartSuite Inc. All rights reserved.

How SmartSuite supports PIPEDA

Accountability and Purposes Register

Record the designated privacy officer and, for each data category, the identified purpose, consent basis, sharing and retention (clauses 4.1 to 4.5).

Access Request and Complaint Workflows

Track access requests against the thirty-day limit, including any extension notice, plus complaints and their outcomes (section 8, clause 4.10).

Breach Record and Harm Assessment

Log every breach of security safeguards with the real risk of significant harm assessment, the Commissioner report and the individual notices (sections 10.1 and 10.3).

Service Provider Oversight

Manage contracts, safeguards and monitoring evidence for service providers that handle personal information (clause 4.1.3).

Safeguards and Evidence

Centralize evidence of the safeguards in clause 4.7, such as access controls, encryption and training, tied to the data they protect.

Compliance Reporting

Report open requests, breach metrics and evidence coverage by principle on a dashboard for the privacy officer and leadership.

Common framework mappings

APEC PF | CCPA/CPRA | GDPR | ISO 27001:2022 | ISO 27701 | NIST Privacy Framework v1.0 | SOC 2

Official resources

PIPEDA Full Text

Official legal text of PIPEDA detailing requirements for personal data protection in Canada.

laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/p-8.6/FullText.html

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada PIPEDA Guidance

Provides official guidance on implementing PIPEDA requirements for organizations.

priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda

PIPEDA Information and Guidance

Describes compliance support for organizations under PIPEDA from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda

PIPEDA Awareness Raising Tools (PARTs)

Offers training and compliance tools to assist small and medium-sized enterprises with PIPEDA.

priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda

Frequently asked questions

Who must comply with PIPEDA?

Organizations that collect, use or disclose personal information in the course of commercial activities, and federal works, undertakings or businesses for their employees' information. Organizations in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia are exempt for activity inside those provinces because those provinces have substantially similar laws (sections 4 and 26).

What are the ten principles of PIPEDA?

Accountability, identifying purposes, consent, limiting collection, limiting use, disclosure and retention, accuracy, safeguards, openness, individual access, and challenging compliance. They are set out in Schedule 1 and made binding by section 5.

When must a breach be reported under PIPEDA?

When it is reasonable to believe the breach of security safeguards creates a real risk of significant harm to an individual. The organization reports to the Privacy Commissioner and notifies the individual as soon as feasible after determining the breach occurred, and must keep a record of every breach (sections 10.1 and 10.3).

Updated Oct 15, 2026 · © 2026 SmartSuite Inc. All rights reserved.

How long does an organization have to respond to an access request?

With due diligence and no later than thirty days after receiving the request. It may extend by up to thirty days in defined cases, but must send the individual a notice of extension within the original thirty days (section 8).

What are the penalties under PIPEDA?

The Commissioner investigates complaints and the Federal Court can order correction of practices and award damages. Knowingly failing to report or record a breach, or obstructing the Commissioner, is an offence with fines up to $10,000 on summary conviction or $100,000 on indictment (section 28).

License included / downloadable: Yes PIPEDA is a federal statute published by the Department of Justice Canada at laws-lois.justice.gc.ca and is included with the platform for reference.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/canada-pipeda-personal-information-protection-electronic-documents-act

Updated Oct 15, 2026 · © 2026 SmartSuite Inc. All rights reserved.