

Data Protection Policy

Introduction

The Fire Extinguisher Store needs to gather and use certain information about individuals.

These can include customers, suppliers, business contacts, and other people the organisation has a relationship with or may need to contact.

This policy describes how this personal data must be collected, handled and stored to meet the company's data protection standards — and to comply with the law.

Why this policy exists

This data protection policy ensures Fire Extinguisher Store:

- Complies with data protection law and follow good practice
- Protects the rights of staff, customers and partners
- Is open about how it stores and processes individuals' data
- Protects itself from the risks of a data breach

Data protection law

The Data Protection Act 1998 describes how organisations, including **Fire Extinguisher Store** must collect, handle and store personal information.

These rules apply regardless of whether data is stored electronically, on paper or on other materials.

To comply with the law, personal information must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed unlawfully.

The Data Protection Act is underpinned by eight important principles. These say that personal data must:

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully
2. Be obtained only for specific, lawful purposes
3. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. Be accurate and kept up to date
5. Not be held for any longer than necessary
6. Processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects
7. Be protected in appropriate ways
8. Not be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA), unless that country or territory also ensures an adequate level of protection

Policy scope

This policy applies to:

- All branches of **Fire Extinguisher Store**
- All staff of **Fire Extinguisher Store**
- All contractors, suppliers and other people working on behalf of **Fire Extinguisher Store**

It applies to all data that the company holds relating to identifiable individuals, even if that information technically falls outside of the Data Protection Act 1998. This can include:

- Names of individuals
- Postal addresses
- Email addresses
- Telephone numbers
- ...plus any other information relating to individuals

Data protection risks

This policy helps to protect **Fire Extinguisher Store** from some very real data security risks, including:

- **Breaches of confidentiality.** For instance, information being given out inappropriately.
- **Failing to offer choice.** For instance, all individuals should be free to choose how the company uses data relating to them.
- **Reputational damage.** For instance, the company could suffer if hackers successfully gained access to sensitive data.

Responsibilities

Everyone who works for or with **Fire Extinguisher Store** has some responsibility for ensuring data is collected, stored and handled appropriately.

Each team that handles personal data must ensure that it is handled and processed in line with this policy and data protection principles.

However, everyone has key areas of responsibility:

- Reviewing all data protection procedures and related policies, in line with an agreed schedule.
- Handling data protection questions from staff and anyone else covered by this policy.
- Dealing with requests from individuals to see the data **Fire Extinguisher Store** holds about them (also called 'subject access requests').

- Checking and approving any contracts or agreements with third parties that may handle the company's sensitive data.
- Ensuring all systems, services and equipment used for storing data meet acceptable security standards.
- Evaluating any third-party services the company is considering using to store or process data. For instance, cloud computing services.
- Approving any data protection statements attached to communications such as emails and letters.
- Where necessary, working with other staff to ensure marketing initiatives abide by data protection principles.

General Guidelines

- The only people able to access data covered by this policy should be those who **need it for their work**.
- **Fire Extinguisher Store will provide training** to all employees to help them understand their responsibilities when handling data.
- Employees should keep all data secure, by taking sensible precautions and following the guidelines below.
- Personal data **should not be disclosed** to unauthorised people, either within the company or externally.
- Data should be **regularly reviewed and updated** if it is found to be out of date. If no longer required, it should be deleted and disposed of.
- Employees at **Fire Extinguisher Store should request help** from their line manager or the data protection officer if they are unsure about any aspect of data protection.

When data is **stored electronically**, it must be protected from unauthorised access, accidental deletion and malicious hacking attempts:

- Servers containing personal data should be **sited in a secure location**, away from general office space.
- Data should be **backed up frequently**. Those backups should be tested regularly, in line with the company's standard backup procedures.
- Data should **never be saved directly** to laptops or other mobile devices like tablets or smart phones.
- All servers and computers containing data should be protected by **approved security software and a firewall**.

- **We do not store credit card details nor do we share customer details with any 3rd parties**

Personal data is of no value to **Fire Extinguisher Store** unless the business can make use of it. However, it is when personal data is accessed and used that it can be at the greatest risk of loss, corruption or theft:

- When working with personal data, employees should ensure **the screens of their computers are always locked** when left unattended.
- Personal data **should not be shared informally**. In particular, it should never be sent by email, as this form of communication is not secure.
- Employees **should not save copies of personal data to their own computers**. Always access and update the central copy of any data.

The law requires **Fire Extinguisher Store** to take reasonable steps to ensure data is kept accurate and up to date.

The more important it is that the personal data is accurate, the greater the effort **Fire Extinguisher Store** should put into ensuring its accuracy.

It is the responsibility of all employees who work with data to take reasonable steps to ensure it is kept as accurate and up to date as possible.

- Data will be held in **as few places as necessary**. Staff should not create any unnecessary additional data sets.
- Employees should **take every opportunity to ensure data is updated**. For instance, by confirming a customer's details when they call.
- **Fire Extinguisher Store** will make it **easy for data subjects to update the information Fire Extinguisher Store** holds about them. For instance, via the company website.
- Data should be **updated as inaccuracies are discovered**. For instance, if a customer can no longer be reached on their stored telephone number, it should be removed from the database.
- It is the marketing manager's responsibility to ensure **marketing databases are checked against industry suppression files** every six months.



All individuals who are the subject of personal data held by **Fire Extinguisher Store** are entitled to:

- Ask **what information** the company holds about them and why.
- Be informed **how to keep it up to date**.
- Be informed how the company is **meeting its data protection obligations**.

If an individual contacts the company requesting this information, this is called a subject access request.

Subject access requests from individuals should be made by email, addressed to the data controller at [email address]. The data controller can supply a standard request form, although individuals do not have to use this.

Individuals will be charged £10 per subject access request. The data controller will aim to provide the relevant data within 14 days.

The data controller will always verify the identity of anyone making a subject access request before handing over any information.

In certain circumstances, the Data Protection Act allows personal data to be disclosed to law enforcement agencies without the consent of the data subject.

Under these circumstances, **Fire Extinguisher Store** will disclose requested data. However, the data controller will ensure the request is legitimate, and aims to ensure that individuals are aware that their data is being processed, and that they understand how the data is being used or how to exercise their rights and if necessary will seek advice from the company's legal advisers where necessary.

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