

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19):

Working with Confidential Information

As a Contact Tracer, you and other members of your team will collect important data that will help public health authorities track COVID-19 cases, determine if someone should be counted as a case, monitor how common the disease is, and evaluate how the effectiveness of the contact tracing program.

The data collected during your interviews with PUIs and contacts will be considered **confidential information**, and that should be communicated during the interview. Below are some principles and considerations for working with confidential information. Your health department will have additional data security and confidentiality guidelines.

Examples of Confidential Information

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Telephone number
- Information of contacts
- Medical history

Principles for Collecting Confidential Information

1. Confidential information should be collected, used, shared, and stored for public health purposes.
2. Policies for collecting and using confidential information should reflect respect for the rights of individuals and community groups and minimize unnecessary inconvenience.
3. Confidential information should be kept in a secure environment and transmitted through secure methods.
4. Minimize the number of persons that have access to confidential information.

Checklist for Working with Confidential Information

- Sign a confidentiality agreement, if required by your health department.
- Review and follow your health department's instructions to maintain confidentiality. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Never storing confidential information on personal devices or on the hard drive of any computer.
 - Not downloading confidential information to thumb drives (USB drives) unless you have specific approval.
 - Keeping all paper documents in a secure area when not in use.
 - Being aware of others in or near your workspace; making sure your computer screen cannot be read by others.
 - Completing all interviews in a secure or private area.
 - Verifying the identity of the person you are talking to by asking for their name and date of birth.
- Think through how you will carry out these instructions in your own workspace. If you have any questions, or note any challenges you might run into, talk to your supervisor for more guidance.

Adapted from: CDC NCHSTP [Data Security and Confidentiality Guidelines](#); CDC Field Epidemiology Manual, [Collecting Data](#).