

Administrative Policy and Procedure

Web policy

Effective date: April 1, 2011

Authority:

- Code of Virginia, §§ 2.2-3800 and 2.2-3803, Administration of systems including personal information; Internet privacy policy.
- Virginia Information Technologies Agency, Enterprise Architecture, ITRM Standard EA225-06 (August 24, 2010)

It is the policy of the Virginia Board of Accountancy (VBOA) that:

- Personal information about citizens will be collected only to the extent necessary to provide the service desired
- Only appropriate information will be collected
- Citizens understand the reason the information is collected and be able to examine their personal record, which is maintained by the VBOA

Information Collection and Retention

The VBOA collects information about each visitor to www.boa.virginia.gov. The VBOA automatically collects and retains only the following information about the visitor:

- Internet Protocol (IP) address
- IP addresses of the locations to which the visitor linked during his or her visit to the website
- Type of browser used
- Date and time of the visit
- Specific pages viewed

The collected information does not personally identify the visitor, is strictly used for statistical reporting purposes, allows the VBOA to track the number of customers who visit the website and identifies the most popular pages so that it can improve site content and accessibility. This information is helpful in that the VBOA uses it to make the site more useful to visitors.

Email

The VBOA website allows visitors to contact the agency or individual staff members by email. If the email message contains personally identifying information, the VBOA will use that information to respond to the inquiry or send follow-up information about services in which the visitor has expressed an interest. Email is not secure against interception. If the communication contains sensitive information such as a bank account number, charge card or social security number, the VBOA advises it be sent by postal mail or phone call.

Security Hardware and Software

For site security purposes and to ensure that the website service remains available to all users, the state computer system utilizes hardware and/or software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information or otherwise cause damage. Except for authorized law enforcement investigations, no other attempts are made to identify individual users or their usage habits.

Though personal information may be required either by law or in order for the VBOA to provide a requested service, the agency is subject to the requirements for administering information systems as established in the Code of Virginia, §§ 2.2-3800-2.2-3809, known as the Government Data Collection And Dissemination Practices Act of Virginia.

Online transactions

When a visitor uses a link to the online application feature on the agency's website in order to access one of the VBOA's current online services, such as the application to obtain a CPA license, the visitor has logged on to a secure process. The personal information submitted by the visitor is captured so that a service may be provided by the VBOA. The personal information provided is required to enable various transactions with the agency online and for VBOA to deliver the requested services. The VBOA will only collect, retain and use personal information when it believes it is essential, and allowed by law, to conduct business and provide services. Without the requested personal information, the VBOA would not be able to provide the online services. Personal information provided to the agency is safeguarded according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Accessibility

To promote Web access for people with disabilities the VBOA strives to meet all guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

Cookies

Cookies are small files either stored on a server or sent back to a visiting computer. In certain applications user information is stored as cookies that are sent back and stored on the user's computer. The VBOA gathers no user information through cookies except for that needed to run the specific application. For certain applications temporary cookies are created to identify an individual and maintain a secure and proper connection during an online transaction.

Links

The VBOA website provides links to other websites. This includes links to websites operated by other state and federal government agencies and CPA organizations. When a visitor links to another site, he or she is no longer on the VBOA website and this Web policy will not apply. When linked to another website, the visitor is subject to the Web policy of that new site.

Links to other sites are included to provide useful and valuable information to visitors. Hyperlinks to external websites and pages may be removed or replaced at the sole discretion of the VBOA at any time without notice.

The inclusion of a hyperlink to an external website is not intended as an endorsement of any product or service offered or referenced on the linked website, the sponsoring organizations or any views that might be expressed or referenced in the website.

The VBOA provides links to many websites that are not controlled, maintained or regulated by the VBOA or any organization affiliated with the VBOA; therefore, the VBOA is not responsible for the content of those websites. Use of information obtained from those websites is voluntary and reliance on that information should only be undertaken after an independent review of its accuracy. Reference at those websites to any specific commercial product, process or service by trade name, trademark or otherwise does not constitute or simply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by the VBOA.

Freedom of Information Act

Virginia FOIA, located at § 2.2-3700 et. seq. of the Code of Virginia, guarantees citizens of the Commonwealth and representatives of the media access to public records held by public bodies, public officials and public employees.

A public record is any writing or recording, regardless of whether it is a paper record, electronic file, audio or video recording or any other format, that is prepared or owned by or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees or agents in the transaction of public business. All public records are presumed to be open and may only be withheld if a specific, statutory exemption applies or are required to be kept confidential as required by law.

For more information on VBOA policy and procedure regarding FOIA consult the VBOA FOIA Policy.

Plug-ins

The VBOA's website, www.boa.virginia.gov, provides content in several formats that require plug-ins, or separate browser components, to properly view. All required plug-ins are free to use. If a visitor's browser or assistive technology cannot view a file using the plug-in, please contact the VBOA staff for an alternate version of the file.

The plug-ins used on the VBOA website are:

- Adobe Portable Document Format files (.pdf) - Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Microsoft Word documents (.doc) - Word Viewer
- Microsoft Excel spreadsheets (.xls) - Excel Viewer
- Microsoft PowerPoint presentations (.ppt) - Power Point Viewer

Override provision

State law, Board regulations and/or policies of the proponent agency override this policy, where applicable. Local ordinance that conflicts with this policy is void.