

Quality Site Requirement Alert (QSRA) 2012- 07
QSR #10 Security, Privacy & Confidentiality
March 16, 2012

Volunteer security, privacy, and confidentiality guidelines are shared in Publication 4299, *Privacy, Confidentiality, and Standards of Conduct – A Public Trust*. These guidelines must be followed.

The second key principle in Publication 4299 specifies partners and volunteers must protect physical and electronic data gathered for tax return preparation both during and after the filing season. This includes securing the equipment used at the VITA/TCE site such as computers and printers, used during return preparation.

Concern:

Lost or stolen computers put taxpayer's information at risk. To instill Public Trust, Partners and Site Coordinators must have a process to ensure this equipment and taxpayer data is adequately protected at all times. Volunteers must protect the taxpayer data and equipment entrusted with them.

The process must:

- o Secure the equipment used for electronic tax return preparation and filing. The equipment should be secured while at the site and when the site is not open.
- o Ensure portable equipment is under the care of a volunteer at all times.
- o Use limited or controlled access locations for storing equipment.
- o Ensure the information provided during the course of tax return preparation is under the care of volunteers at all times (this includes the information stored on computer hard drives).
- o Use locked storage for documents that must be retained after the taxpayer leaves the site (including the data stored on computer hard drives).
- o Record the make, model, and serial number of all computer equipment used and keep in a secure location.

References:

- o Publication 1084, *IRS Volunteer Site Coordinator's Handbook*, pages 22-23.
- o Publication 4299, *Privacy, Confidentiality, and Standards of Conduct – A Public Trust*, pages 7-8 provides guidance for reporting lost or stolen equipment.

If you have any questions, please discuss them with your site coordinator, contact your local IRS SPEC relationship manager, or e-mail partner@irs.gov.

Thank you for volunteering to serve your community and for your
dedication to providing top QUALITY service!