

Qatar's new data law

Under Qatar's new data privacy law businesses must take action to protect personal data or face fines of up to \$1.47million.

An individual's personal data is defined as "data relating to an individual whose identity is determined, or able to be reasonably determined, either through the data or through linking this data with other data".

The law applies to all data that is collected electronically. It does not apply to any personal data processed by individuals privately within a family context. It also does not apply to any data gathered for official surveys or statistics.

Special protection is offered to data that is linked to the following:

- children;
- physical and mental health;
- crime.

This is also true with data collection. For example, a parent's consent must be given in regards to the collection and processing of personal data of their child.

Businesses must implement credible measures to ensure data is safe. This includes training to protect data from loss, damage, tampering and illegal access.

Direct marketing must have prior consent from the intended recipient. It must also include a means by which the recipient can opt out of future communications.

Complaints in relation to breach of data privacy may be made to the Qatar Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Government authorities can process data without being bound by the law as long as it is linked to the following:

- the protection of national security or public security;
- protection of international relations of the country;
- protection of economic or financial state of the country;
- prevention of any crime or collection of information on a crime or an investigation of a crime.

It also states that a company is exempted from the law if it is performing one of the following:

- performing a task pertaining to the public good;
- executing a court order;
- protection vital interests of the individual;
- meeting the objectives of scientific research that benefits the public;
- collecting information to investigate crime when asked by officials.

If any queries regarding data are raised by the government, a company has a period of 60 days to respond. For more information, please contact us.

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