



SA  
Ambulance  
Service

# Privacy Policy Statement

October 2003

## About this Policy

This Privacy Policy Statement ('Policy') is prepared in accordance with the *South Australian Cabinet Administrative Instruction No. 1 of 1992* ('Cabinet Instruction') and the National Privacy Principles ('NPPs') prescribed in the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988* to the extent of any difference with the Cabinet Instruction.

SA Ambulance Service ('SAAS') is committed to the protection of individuals' personal information in accordance with applicable privacy laws. Those privacy laws set out minimum standards for the way that organisations such as SAAS deal with personal information (including health and other sensitive information). Generally, personal information includes information from which an individual's identity is apparent or is reasonably ascertainable.

## Privacy Commitment

SAAS holds personal information on patients, customers and its staff, and is committed to the security and integrity of that personal information.

## Collection of Information

SAAS only collects personal information which is relevant and necessary in connection with the various aspects of its operations. The purposes for which SAAS collects personal information include:

- providing emergency and non-emergency ambulance services to patients (e.g. clinical care and ambulance transportation);
- providing SAAS products and services to customers (i.e. Ambulance Cover and ACE insurance cover and Call Direct Services); and
- responding to specific issues addressed to SAAS by patients, customers, government agencies, other health service providers (e.g. doctors, hospitals, nursing homes, health care services or medical or other related professionals), and emergency services or law enforcement bodies.

Personal information may also be collected about applicants who apply for employment with SAAS.

The personal information collected by SAAS will vary according to the purpose of its collection; however, in general, this information typically includes:

- names, addresses, contact details (and in the case of patients, details of their carers or family members);
- health information about patients (and in some cases their carers or family members); and
- information about dealings between patients and health professionals.

SAAS usually collects the personal information it requires directly from individuals (either by personal contact or by written correspondence). In all cases, SAAS collects personal information by lawful and fair means. However, from time to time (such as in emergencies) SAAS may collect an individual's personal information from other third-party sources such as family, carers, government agencies, health professionals, emergency services or law enforcement personnel.

In non-emergency situations, SAAS sometimes collects individuals' personal information from third parties on the basis that they have made appropriate privacy-related disclosures to the individual and have obtained their consent to the disclosure of personal information to, and its collection by, SAAS. Where a third party provides SAAS with personal information about another individual, they must ensure that the individual is aware of:

- the disclosure of information to SAAS and the purposes for which it is collected by SAAS;
- the existence of this Policy; and
- the ability to request access to the information held about them, and to advise SAAS if they think the information is inaccurate, incomplete or out-of-date.

In cases where the personal information disclosed to SAAS is sensitive information, the third party must ensure that the individual's consent to disclosure to (and its collection by) SAAS has been obtained.

Commonwealth and state health legislation requires SAAS to collect, retain and disclose certain personal information (including sensitive information) in some circumstances.

It is important that SAAS collects all necessary information that it requires about an individual in order to properly and professionally provide its services. If it is unable to collect all of the information that it requires, SAAS may be unable to properly and effectively provide its services, or it may not be able to supply its services at all.

## Use and Disclosure of Information

SAAS may use and disclose an individual's personal information for the primary purpose for which it was collected, as well as other reasonably expected secondary purposes, where the individual has consented, and otherwise in accordance with applicable privacy laws, including:

- to discuss medical condition or treatment, as appropriate, with a patient's carer or family;
- to disclose to health professionals, as appropriate, for the purposes of health care or continuity of care;
- to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to life or the health of an individual;
- to disclose to health fund providers for a patient's or client's benefit;

## Privacy Policy Statement cont.

- for day-to-day administration and to assist SAAS to manage its services;
- to provide information to agents, contractors and service providers engaged to deliver goods and services or otherwise act on behalf of SAAS, or to provide goods and services to SAAS (the identity of which may change from time to time);
- to disclose to a credit reporting agency in accordance with section 18 E of the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*. (The information which may be given to a credit reporting agency is covered by section 18 E (1) of that Act and includes: particulars to identify the individual, the fact that the individual has applied for credit and the amount, the fact that SAAS is a credit provider to the individual, payments which become overdue by more than 60 days, advice that payments are no longer overdue, cheques of \$100 or more drawn by the individual which a bank has dishonoured more than once, in specified circumstances that in the opinion of SAAS the individual has committed a serious credit infringement, and that the credit provided to the individual by SAAS has been paid or otherwise discharged.);
- to provide clients with updates and other information about SAAS's services and activities from time to time; and
- where required or authorised by law or for SAAS to discharge its duty of care.

SAAS will only transfer personal or sensitive information outside of Australia in accordance with applicable privacy laws (including, but not being limited to, with the individual's consent).

### Data Quality, Storage and Security

SAAS strives to ensure that all personal information it holds is accurate, complete, relevant and up-to-date. All personal information (regardless of its format) is securely stored to safeguard against misuse, loss, unauthorised access, disclosure or modification.

Personal information is held in electronic form on database systems located at SAAS's facilities. All electronic information is protected by password security and other industry standard data protection measures. Hard-copy information is held in secure office facilities at SAAS's premises.

Access to personal information is restricted in accordance with SAAS's procedures to personnel whose job functions require access to such information. Certain administrative functions may from time to time be contracted to third parties outside SAAS, and in these cases appropriate security measures are implemented to ensure the security and integrity of all personal and sensitive information.

### Government Identifiers

SAAS's operations often require it to collect, store, use and disclose certain Commonwealth Government-assigned identifiers (e.g. Medicare numbers and pension numbers), but SAAS has implemented appropriate business systems to ensure the integrity of this information, and in particular to

ensure that these identifiers are not used as a means of identifying an individual in a way that is inconsistent with applicable privacy laws.

### Access and Correction

Individuals may request access to personal information held about them by SAAS in accordance with the South Australian *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

In accordance with legislation, SAAS may deny certain requests for access to personal information. SAAS will correct any personal information which it becomes aware is inaccurate, incomplete, irrelevant or out of date.

The following administrative procedures must also be followed when a request is made to access personal information. The request:

- must specify that it is in accordance with the South Australian *Freedom of Information Act 1991*;
- must be accompanied by a \$22.30 application fee;
- must contain such information as is reasonably necessary to enable SAAS to identify all personal information it holds relating to the request;
- must specify an address within Australia to which any notifications or personal information should be sent;
- may specify the preferred manner in which access to a document is to be granted (although SAAS may in its sole discretion provide access in an alternative manner, or where appropriate, deny a request for access); and
- must be addressed as specified in Point of Contact below.

### Changes to Policy

This Policy is current as at October 2003. SAAS may review and update this Policy from time to time to reflect changes in the law or SAAS's operations and procedures as well as the community's changing privacy expectations. Changes to this Policy will not be notified to individuals, but the latest version will be posted on SAAS's website and is available from SAAS at any time.

### Point of Contact

To request access to personal or sensitive information held in SAAS's records, to make a privacy-related complaint, to obtain more information about SAAS's Policy or to enquire about privacy matters generally, please contact SAAS's Customer Service Centre.

#### Customer Service Centre

Phone: 1300 13 62 72

Fax: (08) 8271 2619

Email: [enquiries@saambulance.com.au](mailto:enquiries@saambulance.com.au)

Surface mail: GPO Box 3  
ADELAIDE SA 5001