

Confidentiality Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002

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Originally Posted: March 26, 2003

On December 17, 2002, the President signed into law the Confidentiality Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002. The Confidentiality Act has two main functions:

- "To ensure that information supplied by individuals or organizations to an agency for statistical purposes under a pledge of confidentiality is used exclusively for statistical purposes;" and
- "To authorize the sharing of business data among the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics for exclusively statistical purposes."

The law is intended to assure individuals and businesses providing data to Federal statistical agencies that the information they provide will not be used for unauthorized purposes or for legal actions against them. In addition, the law establishes three "Designated Statistical Agencies" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis) and allows them to share statistical information to improve efficiency, reduce burden, and enhance the quality of statistical data indicators. Unauthorized disclosure or other nonstatistical data usage without public notice remains prohibited and subject to criminal or civil penalties under Federal law. The director of the Office of Management and Budget will oversee the confidentiality and disclosure policies enacted by this law.

Under this act, the designated statistical agencies are allowed to share business data for statistical purposes only. The agencies must develop written agreements specifying data sharing procedures and regulations, establish a system to allow authorized access to confidential data, and monitor compliance with the law. Designated statistical agencies are still required to follow previous statutes regarding individual agency responsibilities. All three agencies must also ensure that shared business data are not published in a form that would breach confidentiality by identifying respondent organizations or names.

Source: "Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002," Title V, Public Law 107-347, December 17, 2002, on the Internet at <http://www.access.gpo.gov/>, visited February 25, 2003.