



State of Louisiana

Division of Administration
Office of the Commissioner

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Data Policy Violation Prompts New Statewide Data Security Policies

BATON ROUGE – In Saturday’s Louisiana Property Assistance Agency (LPAA) surplus equipment auction, computer laptops and desktops from the Recovery School District (RSD) were found to not have been properly cleared of data. Current state policy requires that agencies clear computers and electronic media of all data according to standards from the National Institute of Standards and Technology guidelines for media sanitation. This procedure was not followed in the case of these RSD computers. As a result of this incident, the Office of Technology Services (OTS) is implementing new statewide data security policies that require agencies to certify electronic media has been appropriately cleared of data before it is reused or auctioned.

The Attorney General’s office was notified of the issue and has provided legal and IT forensic support. The Department of Education (DOE) has notified the parents of the 210 students whose data was included on the devices. The agency has located all other former RSD equipment auctioned Saturday to ensure no other violations occurred.

A customer who purchased two RSD laptops contacted DOE when he noticed files still on the computers. DOE officials are currently investigating the source of this policy violation and are taking steps that will ensure compliance with the data policies in the future. In the meantime, LPAA will not accept electronic media from RSD until the agency can certify that all auditing standards are met.

“We have zero tolerance for these violations. Current state policy requires that agencies clear computers and electronic media of data, and that did not happen in the case of RSD,” said Dickie Howze, Chief Information Officer for the Division of Administration. “We will hold the agency accountable for this incident. We have been able to obtain these devices to ensure they are cleaned properly, and we believe these new security measures will help ensure these violations do not happen in the future.”

Currently, state policy requires that agencies clear computers and electronic media of all data according to protocols from the National Institute of Standards and Technology guidelines for media sanitation.

Effective immediately, additional requirements will ensure that agencies individually certify items have been sanitized according to the standards. The new policy will also require an individual identifier be assigned to each item so it can be tracked to the individual responsible for sanitizing the equipment. Agencies will be required to keep detailed records for each piece of equipment or electronic media that has a memory to spot check compliance and to incorporate compliance with IT sanitization policies as part of agency audit process.

OTS is verifying that all equipment housed in the LPAA warehouse is cleared of data. Property managers and other agency leaders are currently being certified under the new policy. Until that process is complete, deliveries and pick-ups of electronic media from the warehouse where surplus equipment is stored have been frozen. The monthly auction scheduled for November is not expected to be delayed.

Under the new policy, LPAA will require a certification by agencies that any surplus computer equipment or electronic media with a memory, such as printers and scanners, is marked with an individualized identifier confirming it is sanitized. Warehouse truck drivers will be instructed not to take computer equipment, servers, scanners, and printers without the proper documentation.

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