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Personal Information Protection

The importance of protecting personal information has increased along with the popularity of use of IT. Today, many companies have personal information, for example, data on their customers, which can be easily compiled, circulated, processed, and transmitted around the world with the latest information technology. When used properly, such data is very useful for businesses. On the other hand, if companies do not manage such data properly, personal information might be disclosed to unknown parties unintentionally. In fact, this kind of accident occurs. Even when the leak of personal information causes no harm to the individuals concerned, many people may feel uncertain and uncomfortable since individuals do not know who is managing their personal information or how it is being used. This apprehension over protecting personal information has become a major obstacle to participation in electronic commerce, and there are many people who choose not to make online transactions even though they are Internet users. In addition, the enforcement of the Basic Resident Register Network in 2002 raised public awareness of the need to protect personal information.

Personal Data Protection Law

The Diet passed Personal Data Protection Law (tentative translation) at its 156th ordinary session in May 2003.

The law establishes:

- (1) the basic concepts regarding the proper handling of personal information,
- (2) the basic items for the government's fundamental policies and measures,
- (3) responsibilities of the national government and local governments, and
- (4) the obligations of private companies in handling personal information.

The government is taking the necessary measures based on the law, which will be enforced within two years after its promulgation date of May 30, 2003.

METI is carrying out awareness-raising activities for companies and consumers regarding the law, on matters such as the Japanese industrial standard (JIS) on the protection of personal information and METI guidelines. In addition, METI is investigating measures by various organizations for protecting personal information and the handling of personal information inside and outside Japan, as well as going feedback for METI's policies such as its guidelines.

>> For details, refer to the [Japanese Web site \(Personal Data Protection Law\)](#) (link to the

website of the Prime Minister's Office)

Privacy Mark System

The privacy mark system is a system that permits companies that properly handle personal information to use the privacy mark logo as proof that the company has been evaluated and authorized by third-party organizations such as the Japan Information Processing Development Corporation (JIPDEC) or its designated institutions. The system was launched in April 1998.

[\(For details\)](#)

>> [Privacy Mark System \(JIPDEC\) \(only available in Japanese language\)](#)

Guidelines

[Concerning Protection of Personal data \('98\) \(PDF file: 128KB\)](#)

[Information Policy Top](#)