



WV Executive Branch Privacy Tip REDACTION



Have you ever needed to remove personally identifiable information (PII), such as SSNs, from a document before you provide it to a third party? If so, it's very important that the PII be redacted.

What is redaction?

Redaction is editing, modifying or revising a document to permanently remove confidential or sensitive information.

Why should I redact a document?

All members of the Executive Branch workforce are responsible for the protection of PII, and preventing unauthorized third parties from accessing or viewing PII.

Redaction may be required when PII is included in documents that are supplied to requests for information (such as by the media or other third party), as well as information provided under a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

How should I redact a document?

1. Make a photocopy of the document – DO NOT redact the original.
2. On the photocopy, use a black marker to conceal the PII that you want to redact. Be sure that the PII is totally covered with the black ink. A permanent marker is best.
3. Make sure the ink is dry, and then photocopy the redacted document.
4. Visually inspect this 2nd photocopy – you should not be unable to read any of the PII through either the front or the back of the document. This 2nd photocopy can be provided to the recipient.
5. Save the 1st photocopy (with the black ink redaction) with the original, to show the redaction effort.

This process may seem a bit onerous, but it ensures that the PII cannot be recovered. If you don't make the 2nd photocopy, it is occasionally possible for PII to be read from the back of the document.

Using a marker also prevents issues that are associated with white-out and other concealers. These products can often be "scratched off" to reveal the covered text. Additionally, these products can damage photocopiers if they are not allowed to dry properly before a copy is made.

If you would like to review the redaction procedure issued by the WV State Privacy Office, please click on the following link:

<http://www.privacy.wv.gov/privacypolicies/Documents/Redaction%201.20.11.pdf>

Note: Your agency/bureau/department/division may have specific requirements – always check your policies and procedures. If you have questions, contact your Privacy Officer.