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CLIENT ALERT

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REQUIREMENTS FOR NOTIFICATION FOR A BREACH OF COMPUTER SECURITY

Forty-six states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have enacted legislation requiring notification of security breaches involving personal information. The law in New Jersey is:

§ 56:8-163. Disclosure of breach of security to customers

a. Any business that conducts business in New Jersey, or any public entity that compiles or maintains computerized records that include personal information, shall disclose any breach of security of those computerized records following discovery or notification of the breach to any customer who is a resident of New Jersey whose personal information was, or is reasonably believed to have been, accessed by an unauthorized person. The disclosure to a customer shall be made in the most expedient time possible and without unreasonable delay, consistent with the legitimate needs of law enforcement, as provided in subsection c. of this section, or any measures necessary to determine the scope of the breach and restore the reasonable integrity of the data system. Disclosure of a breach of security to a customer shall not be required under this section if the business or public entity establishes that misuse of the information is not reasonably possible. Any determination shall be documented in writing and retained for five years.

b. Any business or public entity that compiles or maintains computerized records that include personal information on behalf of another business or public entity shall notify that business or public entity, who shall notify its New Jersey customers, as provided in subsection a. of this section, of any breach of security of the computerized records immediately following discovery, if the personal information was, or is reasonably believed to have been, accessed by an unauthorized person.

c. (1) Any business or public entity required under this section to disclose a breach of security of a customer's personal information shall, in advance of the disclosure to the customer, report the breach of security and any information pertaining to the breach to the Division of State Police in the Department of Law and Public Safety for investigation or handling, which may include dissemination or referral to other appropriate law enforcement entities.

(2) The notification required by this section shall be delayed if a law enforcement agency determines that the notification will impede a criminal or civil investigation and that agency has made a request that the notification be delayed. The notification required by this section shall be made after the law enforcement agency determines that its disclosure will not compromise the investigation and notifies that business or public entity.

d. For purposes of this section, notice may be provided by one of the following methods:

(1) Written notice;

(2) Electronic notice, if the notice provided is consistent with the provisions regarding electronic records and signatures set forth in section 101 of the federal "Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act" (15 U.S.C. § 7001); or

(3) Substitute notice, if the business or public entity demonstrates that the cost of providing notice would exceed $ 250,000, or that the affected class of subject persons to be notified exceeds 500,000, or the business or public entity does not have sufficient contact information. Substitute notice shall consist of all of the following:

(a) E-mail notice when the business or public entity has an e-mail address;

(b) Conspicuous posting of the notice on the Internet web site page of the business or public entity, if the business or public entity maintains one; and

(c) Notification to major Statewide media.

e. Notwithstanding subsection d. of this section, a business or public entity that maintains its own notification procedures as part of an information security policy for the treatment of personal information, and is otherwise consistent with the requirements of this section, shall be deemed to be in compliance with the notification requirements of this section if the business or public entity notifies subject customers in accordance with its policies in the event of a breach of security of the system.

f. In addition to any other disclosure or notification required under this section, in the event that a business or public entity discovers circumstances requiring notification pursuant to this section of more than 1,000 persons at one time, the business or public entity shall also notify, without unreasonable delay, all consumer reporting agencies that compile or maintain files on consumers on a nationwide basis, as defined by subsection (p) of section 603 of the federal "Fair Credit Reporting Act" (15 U.S.C. § 1681a), of the timing, distribution and content of the notices.

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