Office of the Information and
Privacy Commissioner of Alberta

PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT
Breach Notification Decision

Organization providing notice under section 34.1 of PIPA	IHS Global Canada Ltd. (Organization)
Decision number (file number)	P2017-ND-152 (File #005455)
Date notice received by OIPC	April 25, 2017
Date Organization last provided information	May 4, 2017
Date of decision	November 8, 2017
Summary of decision	There is a real risk of significant harm to the individuals affected by this incident. The Organization is required to notify those individuals pursuant to section 37.1 of the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA).
JURISDICTION	
Section 1(1)(i) of PIPA "organization"	The Organization is an "organization" as defined in section 1(1)(i) of PIPA.
Section 1(1)(k) of PIPA "personal information"	The incident involved all or some of the following information: • name, • employee number, • salary, • RRSP and TFSA deduction amounts, • Social Insurance Number, and • benefit plan information. This information is about identifiable individuals, including employees in Alberta, and is "personal information" as defined in section 1(1)(k) of PIPA.
DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT	
❑ loss ❑ unauthorized access ☒ unauthorized disclosure	

Description of incident	• On March 17, 2017, an employee with the Organization emailed an Excel spreadsheet containing employee payroll information from his/her corporate email account to his/her own personal email account. The employee had earlier been informed that, due to a workplace reorganization, he/she would be subject to a lay off, with employment ending in April 2017. • The Organization discovered the incident on April 10, 2017 when a manager reviewed the now former employee's email account for any documentation left behind. • The Organization reported it "does not believe that there was a purposeful attempt to misuse the personal information" and the employee's "initial response to [the Organization'] investigation into this matter has been positive." • The Organization reported the now former employee "has readily agreed to allow … forensic IT professionals to review [his/her] home computer", however, the Organization reported it has been unable to arrange this review.
Affected individuals	The incident affected 352 individuals, of which approximately 250 are Alberta residents.
Steps taken to reduce risk of harm to individuals	• Immediately involved Human Resources and external counsel. • As of the date of reporting this matter, the Organization was awaiting: (1) confirmation that no copies were made of the personal information and no further transfer of personal information occurred, (2) completion of a Statutory Declaration to this effect by the former employee, (3) confirmation of a date for a forensic IT review of the former employee's personal computer.
Steps taken to notify individuals of the incident	Affected individuals were notified by letter on May 4, 2017.
REAL RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM ANALYSIS	
Harm Some damage or detriment or injury that could be caused to affected individuals as a result of the incident. The harm must also be "significant." It must be important, meaningful, and with non-trivial consequences or effects.	The Organization reported "The potential harm that could arise is identity theft". I agree with the Organization. The identity, employment and financial information at issue could be used to cause the harms of identity theft, fraud and financial loss. These are significant harms.

Real Risk The likelihood that the significant harm will result must be more than mere speculation or conjecture. There must be a cause and effect relationship between the incident and the possible harm.	The Organization reported that it "assesses the likelihood of harm as remote…if (the employee) was desirous of engaging in nefarious activity, such as identity theft, (the employee) could have surreptitiously done so when (he/she) was employed with the Organization…the Organization does not believe there is any malicious intent in this misappropriation of the personal information…. As well, the Organization said it maintains that the risk of harm to the affected individuals is remote but feels it is appropriate to notify the affected individuals of the breach." In my view, a number of factors reduce the likelihood of harm resulting in this case, including that the employee worked for many years with the Organization and had access to the personal information during that time, the employee said her intention was not to use the personal information relating to the other employees, and the employee was cooperating with the Organization's investigation. Nonetheless, considering the sensitivity of the information at issue, and the fact the Organization has been unable to coordinate a meeting with the former employee to ensure the information was permanently deleted and not copied or forwarded, I believe there is a real risk of significant harm.

DECISION UNDER SECTION 37.1(1) OF PIPA

Based on the information provided by the Organization and given the circumstances of the incident, I have decided that there is a real risk of significant harm to the affected individuals.

The identity, employment and financial information at issue could be used to cause the significant harms of identity theft, fraud and financial loss. A number of factors reduce the likelihood of harm resulting in this case, including that the employee worked for many years with the Organization and had access to the personal information during that time, the employee said her intention was not to use the personal information relating to the other employees, and the employee was cooperating with the Organization's investigation. Nonetheless, considering the sensitivity of the information at issue, and the fact the Organization has been unable to coordinate a meeting with the former employee to ensure the information was permanently deleted and not copied or forwarded, I believe there is a real risk of significant harm.

I require the Organization to notify the affected individuals in Alberta in accordance with section 19.1 of the *Personal Information Protection Act Regulation* (Regulation).

I understand the Organization notified affected individuals in a letter dated May 4, 2017, in accordance with the Regulation. The Organization is not required to notify the affected individuals again.

Jill Clayton
Information and Privacy Commissioner