

Consumer information: data loss

What happened?

SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) can confirm that a sample of data containing personal information relating to approximately 32,000 ambulance attendances between 2000 and 2003 has been lost. A data storage device containing the data was stolen from an external consultancy firm. SAAS were notified of this loss in late July 2021 and have been working the firm and SA Health to identify and contact affected individuals.

The data loss was reported to the South Australian Police, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Privacy Committee of South Australia.

What information was included in the data?

The data relates to sample of Ambulance attendances in the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The data contains a combination of the following:

- Personal information (i.e. consumer name, date of birth, gender, address)
- Ambulance attendance details (i.e. address of ambulance call out, transport destination)
- Patient condition and some treatment codes
- Billing codes and details (no payment details were included in this data)
- Ambulance Cover membership details
- Pension Concession number (if relevant)
- Department of Veterans' Affairs number (if relevant)

We recognise this data is very personal in nature and we regret this has happened.

Is SAPOL investigating the theft?

SAPOL investigated the theft and did not charge anybody or recover the data. SAAS was advised the investigation is complete.

Why did the consultancy firm have my data?

Following an internal review, SAAS identified the data sample was provided to the consultancy firm in 2003-2004. At the time, a series of issues were being considered about private health insurance arrangements, including cover for ambulance attendance and transport. SAAS formed a working group to consider how the changes might affect the financial resourcing of the service and the Ambulance Cover scheme. The consultancy firm were provided the data to undertake some financial modelling.

Is my data safe?

SAAS is unable to give any assurance about the safety of the data. SAAS has received no notification the data has been used inappropriately.

Some of the data lost contains Pension Concession Numbers. SAAS alerted Services Australia who applied additional security measures to protect associated Centrelink records and to detect suspicious activity. No action is required from you. Services Australia will contact you if they detect unusual activity.

You can request a replacement Centrelink concession card via your Centrelink online accounts linked to your myGov. If you are concerned, please call the Scams and Identity Theft Helpdesk on 1800 941 126 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm AEST).

What have you been doing about this?

Once alerted to the theft, SAAS worked with SA Health to undertake the task of matching personal contact information to current records so we could reach out to those impacted.

SAAS will only contact consumers by written, printed correspondence or telephone call. We will not communicate with affected consumers via SMS (text message), social media, or unsolicited email.

Who can I go to for support and counselling about the loss of my personal information?

SAAS has partnered with IDCARE, Australia's national identity and cybersecurity community support service. Their case managers can work with you to address concerns about personal information risks, instances where you think your information may have been misused, or queries about how it might be used.

IDCARE's services are available at no cost to you. To contact them, either complete an online 'Get Help' form at www.idcare.org or call 1800 595 160 or (08) 7078 7741 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm ACDT).

If this matter has caused you any personal distress and you require further support, please consider the list of service providers available from the [Mental Health Services Directory on the SA Health Website](#).

How do I know this won't happen again?

The data lost was released in 2003-2004 when SAAS was not part of the Government of South Australia. As a government agency since 2008, SAAS has robust policies and procedures for data sharing and disposal to ensure the highest levels of security and safety with the management personal information.

How do I get more information?

Anyone with concerns or requiring information in relation to this data loss incident should contact the dedicated SAAS information line on 1800 512 213 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm ACDT) or email Health.SAASPrivacyEnquiries@sa.gov.au. You can also go to www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SAASdata.

Can I have this fact sheet in another language?

This document is available in Italian, Vietnamese, Greek, Mandarin and Cantonese at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SAASdata.

I used an Ambulance in 2000, 2001, 2002 or 2003 and I'm concerned my information might be in the data lost, what do I do?

Please call 1800 512 213. Our team will try to determine if you are an affected individual after you answer a few identifying questions.

To ensure individuals' information is protected, in some instances, you may be referred to our Freedom of Information process to gain access to the data. This will be free of charge. Our team will assist you in this process.

What do I need to do?

No action is required from you. We apologise for this unfortunate event and reassure you that actions have been undertaken prevent any similar occurrence.

SAAS is committed to delivering the very best patient care to all members of the South Australian community.

