

# **Privacy Policy**

## **Purpose of Policy**

This policy addresses: what personal information about visitors is collected on this site; how private information is held; how it will be used; and under what conditions this information may be shared or released to another party.

Montgomery County's policies exist to ensure that government is open and that the public has a right to access appropriate data/information possessed by County government. At the same time, there are exceptions to the disclosure of data/information provided by County policies, and State and Federal laws. These exceptions include the privacy of individuals. Information collected at this site becomes public record and may be subject to inspection and copying by the public, unless an exception in law exists.

During your visit to Montgomery County's website, information that is not readily identifiable to an individual may be automatically collected and stored. The following sections of our Web Privacy Policy explain these uses:

- A. Information that Montgomery County May Collect and How It May be Used
- B. Personal Information and Choice
- C. Public Disclosure
- D. Cookies
- E. Security
- F. Disclaimer

## **Information that Montgomery County May Collect and How It May be Used**

If you do nothing during your visit to the County website but browse or download information, we may automatically collect and store the following information about your visit:

The Internet Protocol (IP) address and domain name used, but not the email address. The IP address is a numerical identifier assigned either to your Internet Service Provider or directly to your computer. We use the IP address to direct Internet traffic to you;

The type of browser and operating system you used and your connection speed;

The date and time you visited this site;

The web pages or services you accessed at this site; and

The website you visited prior to coming to this website.

The information we collect or store is used to improve the content of our Web services and to help us understand how people are using our services. Additionally, the data we collect helps us route Web traffic and track down

viruses and attacks against our site. Our website logs do not identify anyone personally, and we make no attempt to link them with the individuals that browse the County website.

If during your visit to the County website you participate in a survey or send an email, the following additional information will be collected:

E-mail correspondence: The e-mail address and contents of the e-mail;

Surveys: Any information you volunteered in response to a survey.

The information collected may not be limited to text characters and will include audio, video, and graphic information formats you send us. The information is retained in accordance with the County's policies.

Montgomery County may use your email to respond to your message, to assist in obtaining information you have requested, to address issues you identify, to further improve our website, or to forward the email to another agency for appropriate action. Survey information will be used for the purpose designated.

### **Personal Information and Choice**

"Personal information" is information about an individual that is readily identifiable to that specific individual. Personal information includes personal identifiers such as an individual's name, address, business address, e-mail address and phone number.

We will not collect personal information about you unless you participate in an activity that requests information (i.e. sending an e-mail or participating in a survey). If you do not to participate in these activities, your choice will in no way affect your ability to use any other feature of the County's website.

If you provide the County with personal information, such as sending an e-mail to any County employee, or by filling out and submitting an online form located on the County's website, the County will treat such e-mails and submitted online forms the same way it treats letters to any County department.

The collection of personal information requested from or volunteered by children on-line or by email will be treated the same as information provided by an adult.

### **Public Disclosure**

Montgomery County strives to protect personally identifiable information by collecting only information necessary to deliver our services. All information that may be collected at this site becomes public record that may be subject to inspection and copying by the public, unless an exemption in law exists. For instance, if personal information is requested or volunteered, County rules and regulations, New York State FOIL law, or other Federal statutes may protect it from disclosure. Unless confidentiality is specifically authorized by law, no privilege or protection from disclosure is warranted or otherwise implied by the County.

In the event of a conflict between this Privacy Policy and any applicable law governing disclosure, the governing law is controlling.

## **Cookies**

### **What Is a Cookie?**

A cookie is a small data file which may include an anonymous unique identifier that is sent to your browser from a website's computers and may either be used only during your session (a "session" cookie) or may be stored on your computer's hard drive (a "persistent" cookie). Cookies can contain data about user movement during the visit to the website. If your browser software is set to allow cookies, a website can send its own cookie to you. The County's website may send cookies that will be placed on your machine.

### **Why Are Cookies Used on Websites?**

Cookies are a mechanism for maintaining continuity during a user's visit to a website. They allow data to be maintained for users' benefit as they navigate a site. This is referred to as "session" or "management" cookie. These cookies go away when you terminate your visit to the website as they are maintained only in your browser's active memory during your session.

Cookies may also be stored on your computer so that you can be recognized by a website on subsequent visits. They are read by the website that set them whenever you re-visit the website. They are often used on websites that require you to login so that you can avoid having to enter all of your login information every visit. They may store information on your unique identifier and the areas of the website you have visited before. These cookies are stored on your computer's hard drive after you have left your website visit and consequently are often referred to as "persistent" cookies.

### **User Choices Regarding Cookies**

You may be able to configure your browser to accept all cookies, reject all cookies, or notify you when a cookie is set. (Each browser is different, so check the "Help" menu of your browser to learn how to change your cookie preferences.)

## **Security**

Montgomery County has taken several steps to safeguard the integrity of its telecommunications and computing infrastructure. Security measures have been integrated into the design, implementation and day-to-day practices of the entire operating environment as part of its continuing commitment to risk management. The County, however, does not guarantee the absolute security of information it maintains.

## **Disclaimer**

This website may contain hypertext links to external websites and pages containing information created and maintained by public and private organizations other than Montgomery County. These may include links to websites operated by other government agencies or by nonprofit organizations. When you link to another site, you are no longer on the Montgomery County website and this Privacy Policy will not apply. When you link to another website, you are subject to the privacy policy of that site. The County's website is designed to provide businesses, visitors and residents access to County government departments, services and programs. Secondly, the website also provides businesses, residents and visitors links to pertinent visitor-related information about the area. From time to time, departments may wish to provide links to other sites that provide local, state or federal government information, additional information about the community, including festivals, cultural events and local news, or other information supporting the department's mission and programs.