

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: September 7, 2006

From: Deputy Secretary (001)

Subj: IT Directive 06-4, Embossing Machines and Miscellaneous Data Storage Devices
(WebCIMS # 364389)

To: See Distribution Below

1. A recent incident involving excessed embossing machines has revealed another concern associated with the potential breach of VA sensitive information. These machines, and other devices with data storage capability, (such as ID card systems), require close scrutiny in that sensitive information might reside on associated tapes and/or hard drives.

2. With respect to embossing machines, there is an urgent need for a thorough inventory. This must be accomplished without delay. By September 15, 2006, the following information must be provided to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology:

- The total number of embossing machines on hand,
- The total number of embossing machines that have been turned in, sold or excessed to an organization external to VA since August 1, 2005. For each machine excessed to an organization external to VA, provide the name of the organization/company that picked up the excessed machine; if unknown, so state.
- The inventory should be presented by facility for organizations with field components.

Note that negative responses are required. This inventory should be e-mailed to Ms. LaPortia Pratt, Program Coordination Service, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (laportia.pratt@va.gov). In your inventory response include the name/phone number of a point of contact for your organization should any follow-up be necessary.

3. Facility Directors and Information Security Officers must ensure that these machines and all other miscellaneous data storage devices are properly secured and protected against loss or theft. They also must ensure that they are no longer excessed in a routine manner, but are destroyed in accordance with the VA Media and Sanitization and Destruction Program managed by the Office of Cyber and Information Security.

IT Directive 06-04

4. The Secretary has stated numerous times that the protection of VA sensitive data and all veteran information is of the highest priority. We continue to discover incidents of carelessness in the handling of sensitive information – including the handling of devices that contain sensitive data. VA employees must ensure that all VA sensitive information, as defined in VA Directive 6504, *Restrictions on Transmission, Transportation and Use of, and Access to, VA Data Outside VA Facilities*, is always properly safeguarded and they must understand that such security remains the highest priority.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Mansfield', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Gordon H. Mansfield

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