



THE BERMUDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Information
Commissioner's
Office



PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

Public Access to Information (PATI) workshop with the Information Commissioner

Hamilton, Bermuda: 16 January 2017 – In partnership with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce will host a complimentary morning workshop on Thursday, 2 February 2017 to discuss the Public Access to Information (PATI) Act and its potential effects on business owners.

The PATI Act creates a general right to access records held by public authorities, including paper documents, photos, emails, electronic files and more. A public authority can only refuse to provide a record if it falls within one of the limited exemptions from the right to access in the PATI Act. The ICO is a public office funded by the Legislature that functions as an independent regulatory body to promote and oversee the use of the Public Access to Information (PATI) Act. The ICO is mandated to promote the public's awareness of their rights under the PATI Act; provide general guidance about, and oversight of, public authorities' responsibilities under the PATI Act; and hear, investigate and rule on requesters' appeals from public authorities' decisions about request for records.

Does your business hold public sector contracts? Are you thinking of bidding on a public sector tender? Do you need to apply for a business license, or does a regulatory authority have information about your business? Any of these activities may be affected by the PATI Act. The PATI Act can offer an opportunity to get helpful information about procurement criteria, decisions and past or existing contracts. Some of your business information that is held by public authorities may also be subject to disclosure in response to a PATI request. For each of these issues, the PATI Act strikes a balance between protecting commercial entities and increasing public accountability, particularly over public spending. Join Information Commissioner Gitanjali S. Gutierrez to learn more about the PATI Act and how to navigate its impact.

Ms. Kendaree Burgess, Executive Director at the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce stated: "Our membership spans a number of industries in the public and private sectors. Part of our mission at the Chamber is to represent the collective commercial interests of our members, to act as a conduit between private and public sectors; and to create community awareness. We're excited to partner with the Information Commissioner's Office to offer a complimentary morning workshop on the PATI Act to our members and the community at large."



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Ms. Gitanjali S. Gutierrez, Bermuda's Information Commissioner is excited to present this workshop and says that: "An important part of the Information Commissioner's mandate is to provide education about the rights and obligations under the PATI Act. The PATI Act may invoke apprehension, fear, confusion or indifference for business owners; that is until they find themselves face-to-face with a PATI request that they want to make, or one that asks a public body for information about their own business. The Information Commissioner's workshop with the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce will help business owners navigate the leap from the idea of transparency to the practical reality of the PATI Act's process for obtaining information from public authorities.

Persons can download a copy of the act online at www.bermudalaws.bm (<http://www.bermudalaws.bm/Laws/Annual%20Laws/2010/Acts/Public%20Access%20to%20Information%20Act%202010.pdf>) or on the Information Commissioner's Office website at www.ico.bm.

The morning workshop will take place at The Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, 1 Point Pleasant Road, Hamilton and will begin at 8:30AM. Registration will open at 8:15AM and RSVPs are required – continental breakfast will be served.

Those wishing to attend should contact Korrin Lightbourne at klightbourne@bcc.bm; or call the Chamber on 295-4201.

For further information please contact: Korrin Lightbourne; klightbourne@bcc.bm