



The Security of Confidential Documents in the Workplace

Study conducted by Ponemon Institute
Results sponsored and reported by Shred-it
September 2019

Survey Results Highlighting Responses
from Finance and Healthcare Industries



Ponemon Institute®
Research Report



Security of Confidential Documents in the Workplace

Financial Service = FS. Healthcare = HC

Survey response	Overall	FS	HC
Total sampling frame	15,910		
Total returns	706		
Rejected surveys	55		
Final sample, North America	651	66	65

Part 1. Screening

S1. Which of the following titles best describes your role within your organization?	Pct%	FS	HC
IT leadership (CIO/CTO)	9%	9%	9%
Security leadership (CSO/CISO)	15%	19%	13%
IT security technician/analyst	5%	4%	5%
CFO/Controller	8%	7%	7%
HR executive	5%	5%	6%
Compliance administration	3%	3%	3%
Office manager	20%	18%	21%
Senior management	13%	10%	9%
Business owner	22%	25%	26%
None of the above (stop)	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

S2. How knowledgeable are you about your organization's strategy for the protection of confidential and sensitive information?	Pct%	FS	HC
Very knowledgeable	26%	27%	28%
Knowledgeable	41%	38%	36%
Somewhat knowledgeable	33%	35%	36%
Slightly knowledgeable (stop)	0%	0%	0%
No knowledge (stop)	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Part 1. Background on data breach experience

Q1. Did your organization experience a data breach in the past 12 months?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes, only one incident	23%	23%	23%
Yes, two to five incidents	28%	26%	28%
Yes, more than five incidents	17%	15%	18%
We did not have a data breach (skip to Q4a)	23%	27%	23%
I don't know (skip to Q4a)	9%	8%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q2. Did one or more of these data breaches involve the loss or theft of paper documents or electronic devices containing sensitive or confidential information?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	69%	74%	71%
No (skip to Q4a)	22%	21%	21%
Unsure (skip to Q4a)	9%	5%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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Q3. If yes, what confidential and sensitive information was lost or stolen? Please select all that apply.	Pct%	FS	HC
Employee records, including salaries and employee benefits	36%	36%	33%
Customer/consumer information	47%	46%	44%
Financial statements and information	28%	30%	30%
Internal communications and emails	26%	29%	26%
Management accounting reports and budgets	14%	14%	12%
Marketing & sales reports	23%	24%	25%
Pre-released financial information and forecasts	6%	5%	7%
Legal and/or audit documents	15%	14%	11%
Intellectual property such as trade secrets, source code and formulae	10%	10%	11%
Procurement and vendor lists	6%	5%	7%
Strategic documents (including information about mergers and acquisitions)	8%	10%	8%
Details about new product designs or services	11%	11%	10%
Minutes of executive board meetings	4%	5%	3%
Other (please specify)	5%	6%	4%
Total	239%	244%	230%

Part 2. Privacy and security practices to protect paper documents and electronic devices in the workplace

Q4a. Who within your organization is most responsible for the protection of confidential information ? Please select only one choice.	Pct%	FS	HC
Business owner	10%	11%	9%
Chief information officer (CIO)	6%	5%	7%
Chief technology officer (CTO)	5%	6%	6%
Chief information security officer (CISO)	21%	19%	19%
Chief risk officer (CRO)	9%	8%	9%
Chief security officer (CSO)	18%	17%	14%
Chief privacy officer (CPO)	0%	0%	0%
Line of business leadership (CEO/CFO)	10%	11%	12%
Human resources department	5%	6%	4%
No one function has overall responsibility	15%	18%	17%
Other (please specify)	1%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q4b. Who within your organization is most responsible for granting access to paper documents or electronic devices containing sensitive or confidential information? Please select only one choice.	Pct%	FS	HC
Business owner	13%	11%	11%
Chief information officer (CIO)	12%	11%	13%
Chief technology officer (CTO)	6%	5%	6%
Chief information security officer (CISO)	8%	8%	9%
Chief risk officer (CRO)	7%	8%	9%
Chief security officer (CSO)	5%	6%	6%
Chief privacy officer (CPO)	3%	3%	2%
Line of business leadership (CEO/CFO)	12%	13%	8%
Human resource department	12%	14%	14%
No one function has overall responsibility	20%	20%	22%
Other (please specify)	2%	2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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Q5. Are you confident that your organization is able to govern the use, protection and disposal of paper documents?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes, I am confident	33%	40%	31%
No, I am not confident	65%	56%	67%
Unsure	2%	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q6. Are you confident that your organization has visibility into all users of sensitive or confidential information contained in paper documents?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes, I am confident	26%	27%	21%
No, I am not confident	72%	73%	75%
Unsure	2%	0%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q7. In your organization, what type of information do you think your employees consider the most sensitive or confidential AND the most at risk of a data breach, theft or accidental loss? Please select your top two choices.	Pct%	FS	HC
Employee records, including salaries and employee benefits	38%	39%	40%
Customer/consumer information	46%	43%	44%
Financial statements and information	13%	13%	13%
Internal communications and emails	22%	25%	21%
Management accounting reports and budgets	8%	7%	6%
Marketing & sales reports	9%	10%	9%
Pre-released financial information and forecasts	6%	6%	6%
Legal and/or audit documents	12%	14%	13%
Intellectual property such as trade secrets, source code and formulae	10%	10%	9%
Procurement and vendor lists	9%	5%	8%
Strategic documents (including information about mergers and acquisitions)	9%	9%	10%
Details about new product designs or services	11%	10%	12%
Minutes of executive board meetings	4%	5%	3%
Other (please specify)	3%	4%	5%
Total	200%	200%	200%

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Q8. In your organization, what data elements do you think your employees consider the most sensitive or confidential? Please select your top two choices.	Pct%	FS	HC
Home address	0%	0%	0%
Social media sites	4%	4%	4%
Salary/compensation	11%	8%	12%
Email/text messages	6%	7%	5%
Financial reports	9%	9%	8%
Personal phone number	1%	1%	1%
Email address	5%	5%	5%
Credit and debit account number	15%	12%	15%
Health status	30%	29%	33%
Passwords	50%	53%	54%
Driver's license	16%	16%	19%
Customer data	30%	31%	26%
Strategic documents (including information about mergers and acquisitions)	7%	8%	6%
Details about new product designs or services	9%	9%	10%
Minutes of executive board meetings	5%	4%	6%
Meeting Notes	0%	0%	0%
Travel Itinerary	2%	4%	2%
Draft reports	0%	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	0%
Total	200%	200%	206%

Q9a. In your organization, what privacy laws and regulations are you required to comply with? Please select all that apply.	Pct%	FS	HC
California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)	39%	44%	46%
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	53%	66%	66%
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)	13%	13%	16%
Personal Information Protection & Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)	13%	13%	12%
Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)	24%	19%	28%
Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX)	36%	36%	31%
Gramm Leach Bliley (GLBA)	28%	27%	32%
New York Department of Financial Services regulation (NYDFS)	18%	16%	14%
Other (please specify)	3%	2%	4%
Don't know (skip to Q10)	33%	38%	35%
Total	260%	273%	283%

Q9b. If your organization is subject to these regulations, are you knowledgeable about the potential fines and penalties as a result of non-compliance?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	37%	35%	33%
No	50%	55%	52%
Unsure	13%	9%	15%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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Q10. In your opinion, at what stage of a paper document's life cycle is confidential data most at risk for a data breach, theft or accidental loss? Please select only one response	Pct%	FS	HC
Before the document is printed	3%	3%	3%
When initially printed and in a communal printing tray	23%	28%	18%
At an office desk	9%	10%	11%
In a filing cabinet	0%	0%	0%
In a trash bin	17%	18%	14%
In the process of being circulated internally or mailed	12%	10%	12%
Awaiting disposal or shredding	23%	19%	27%
In a document archive or final (permanent) storage	5%	3%	6%
On a shared drive/ on the corporate server	8%	9%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q11. At what stage of a paper document's life cycle do you think your employees and contractors believe confidential data is most at risk for a data breach, theft or accidental loss? Please select one.	Pct%	FS	HC
Before the document is printed	5%	6%	7%
When initially printed and in a communal printing tray	18%	14%	18%
At an office desk	14%	17%	14%
In a filing cabinet	2%	2%	0%
In a trash bin	23%	20%	21%
In the process of being circulated internally or mailed	13%	14%	15%
Awaiting disposal or shredding	17%	16%	15%
In a document archive or final (permanent) storage	3%	5%	4%
On a shared drive/ on the corporate server	5%	7%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q12. Do you shred paper documents after you have reviewed them?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes, I shred it	33%	34%	36%
No, I recycle it	16%	13%	16%
No, I keep it	30%	29%	30%
No, I throw it in the garbage	21%	23%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q13. In your organization, which action best describes how your organization restricts employee or contractor access to physical paper documents? Please select all that apply.	Pct%	FS	HC
Physical security to prevent unauthorized access to document storage facilities	33%	34%	22%
Filing cabinets are locked	38%	34%	38%
Enforcement of clean desk policy	31%	39%	39%
Desks are locked	38%	34%	42%
We do not take any of these steps	50%	55%	53%
Other (please specify)	2%	0%	2%
Total	192%	197%	195%

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Q14a. Does your organization have a process for disposing of paper documents containing sensitive or confidential information after they are no longer needed?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	45%	47%	44%
No (skip to Q15a)	51%	49%	52%
Unsure (skip to Q15a)	4%	3%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q14b. If yes, which of the following best describes how your organization safely disposes of paper documents within your organization? Please select all that apply.	Pct%	FS	HC
Training of employees about secure disposal	46%	51%	55%
Enforcing a policy on secure disposal	40%	44%	43%
Shredding documents in each office area	45%	41%	45%
Collecting paper documents from outside vendors for safe disposal	51%	47%	51%
Automated print restriction on specific devices	29%	30%	34%
Automated print restrictions on specific files	27%	22%	28%
Other (please specify)	2%	2%	2%
None of the above	23%	25%	21%
Total	263%	261%	279%

Q15a. Does your organization use an outside shredding service?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	34%	40%	37%
No (skip to Q15c)	66%	60%	63%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q15b. If yes, which of the following best describes why your organization uses an outside shredding service? Please select only one.	Pct%	FS	HC
It is more convenient to outsource shredding	21%	21%	21%
It is more economical to outsource shredding	25%	25%	25%
Security procedures are followed consistently	7%	7%	8%
It is more secure than relying upon in-house shredding	23%	25%	22%
Not enough paper to justify using an outside shredding service	6%	7%	4%
There is too much paper to shred in-house	18%	16%	20%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q15c. If no, which of the following best describes why your organization doesn't use an outside shredding service? Please select only one.	Pct%	FS	HC
It is more convenient to keep shredding in-house	13%	11%	13%
It is more economical to keep shredding in-house	15%	10%	12%
Our security procedures for document shredding are followed consistently	25%	26%	24%
It is more secure than relying upon an outside shredding vendor	16%	19%	15%
Not enough paper to justify using an outside shredding service	30%	33%	36%
Other (please specify)	1%	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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Part 3. Attributions: Please rate the following statements using the agreement scale below each item. Strongly Agree and Agree responses combined	Pct%	FS	HC
Q16. In our organization, the protection of paper documents is just as important as the protection of electronic records	39%	38%	49%
Q17. Employees and contractors recognize what types of information are sensitive or confidential.	41%	41%	45%
Q18. Our organization makes it convenient for employees and contractors to destroy paper documents with sensitive and confidential information.	37%	37%	42%
Q19. Employees, temporary employees and contractors have access to paper documents that are not pertinent to their role or responsibility	60%	58%	61%

Q20. Are you concerned that employees or contractors have printed and left behind a document that could lead to a data breach?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	65%	67%	63%
No	28%	27%	30%
Unsure	7%	6%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q21. I have picked up or seen a paper document in a public space that contained sensitive or confidential information.	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	71%	69%	70%
No	23%	25%	25%
Unsure	6%	6%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Part 4. Other workplace security issues

Q22a. Have you ever been targeted by a phishing email or social engineering scam at work?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	54%	51%	55%
No (skip to Q23)	38%	42%	39%
Unsure (skip to Q23)	8%	7%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q22b. If yes, did you contact your supervisor?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	39%	40%	32%
No	61%	60%	68%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q23. Have you accidentally sent an email containing sensitive or confidential information to the wrong person?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	77%	71%	78%
No	20%	25%	20%
Unsure	3%	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q24. Have you ever received an email containing sensitive or confidential information from someone within or outside your organization you were not intended to receive?	Pct%	FS	HC
Yes	88%	88%	84%
No	12%	13%	16%
Unsure	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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Part 5. Budgets and investments

Q25. How familiar are you with your organization's IT and physical information security budget for 2019?	Pct%	FS	HC
Very familiar	18%	16%	14%
Familiar	23%	18%	24%
Somewhat familiar	15%	17%	16%
Slightly familiar (skip to Part 6)	14%	15%	13%
Not familiar (skip to Part 6)	10%	10%	12%
Our organization does not have an IT and physical information security budget (go Part 6)	20%	23%	21%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q26. Approximately, what is the dollar range that best describes your organization's IT and physical information security budget for 2019?	Pct%	FS	HC
Less than \$250,000	20%	18%	19%
\$250,00 to \$500,000	15%	16%	14%
\$501,000 to \$1 million	17%	19%	17%
\$1.1 million to \$2.5 million	13%	10%	12%
\$2.6 million to \$5 million	20%	22%	23%
\$5.1 million to \$10 million	8%	9%	7%
More than \$10 million	7%	6%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Extrapolated value (US\$ Millions)	\$ 2.63	\$ 2.60	\$ 2.72

Q27. How does your organization allocate its IT and physical information security budget?	Pct%	FS	HC
More money is allocated to IT security	51%	51%	46%
More money is allocated to physical security	22%	23%	25%
An equal amount is allocated to IT security and physical security	23%	24%	25%
Unsure how the budget is allocated	4%	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Part 6. Your role and organization

D1. Check the Primary Person you report to within the organization.	Pct%	FS	HC
CEO/COO	9%	9%	7%
Business owner	13%	12%	11%
Chief financial officer (CFO)	4%	5%	6%
General counsel	1%	0%	0%
Chief information officer (CIO)	15%	13%	13%
Chief technology officer (CTO)	5%	4%	6%
Chief risk officer (CRO)	5%	5%	6%
Chief information security officer (CISO)	13%	12%	14%
Compliance officer/internal audit	3%	4%	5%
Human resources VP	5%	6%	4%
Chief security officer (CSO)	11%	13%	14%
Line of business (LOB) management	13%	14%	11%
SOC/data center management	3%	5%	3%
Other (please specify)	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

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D2. What range best defines the worldwide revenue of your organization?	Pct%	FS	HC
Less than \$500,000	4%	3%	5%
\$501,000 to \$1 million	5%	7%	6%
\$1.1 million to \$2.5 million	8%	6%	7%
\$2.6 million to \$5 million	12%	16%	12%
\$5.1 million to \$10 million	14%	15%	17%
\$10.1 million to \$25 million	27%	22%	23%
More than \$25 million	30%	31%	30%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Extrapolated value (US\$ Millions)	\$ 21.41	\$ 21.03	\$ 20.56

D4. How many employees are in your organization?	Pct%	FS	HC
10 or less	12%	13%	12%
11 to 50	28%	25%	27%
51 to 100	20%	18%	16%
101 to 250	21%	20%	19%
251 to 500	11%	11%	14%
501 to 1,000	5%	5%	7%
More than 1,000	3%	3%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Extrapolated value (FTEs)	173	163	182