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OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS

MAY 26, 2016

NJOHSP Podcast *Intelligence. Unclassified.* Episode 20: PCII – What You Need to Know

Rosemary Martorana, Director of Intelligence, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness: Hello. I am Rosemary Martorana, Director of Intelligence here at the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP) and you are listening to *Intelligence. Unclassified.* This podcast is exactly what the title states: unclassified information about current trends in homeland security for the State of New Jersey, as well as education information and resources for your awareness. Although it is produced every month, we aim to stay on top of current events and will often offer additional content. If this is your first time listening, then thanks for coming! Please feel free to add this podcast to your RSS feed or iTunes. You can also follow NJOHSP on Twitter [@NJOHSP](#) and [Facebook](#). All links can be found in the show notes and on our website www.njohsp.gov.

Rosemary Martorana, Director of Intelligence, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness: Hello. This is Rosemary Martorana and today I am talking to Andy Smith, a State Critical Infrastructure Coordinator with our Infrastructure Protection and Training Bureau here at NJOHSP. Today, we are going to be discussing the US Department of Homeland Security's Protected Critical Infrastructure Information, or PCII, Program. So how about we jump right in. Andy, what is the PCII Program and how does it support infrastructure protection?

Andy Smith, State Critical Infrastructure Coordinator, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness: Hey Rosemary, the PCII Program was created under the Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002 to provide a mechanism to protect critical infrastructure information, or CII. That information is voluntarily shared with the US Department of Homeland Security. The PCII Program is an information-protection tool that enhances the ability of private industry and government to share sensitive information about the nation's critical infrastructure with the assurance that it will be protected from public disclosure.

Martorana: How does the PCII designation then, protect information?

Smith: Information authorized as PCII provides a level of protection that facilitates the Department of Homeland Security's ability to work directly with infrastructure owners and operators to identify vulnerabilities, mitigation strategies, and protective measures. Submitted information is validated by the PCII Program Manager in Washington, DC, and is protected from public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, State and local sunshine laws, use in civil litigation, and for regulatory purposes. These protections mean that homeland security partners can be confident that sharing their information with the government will not expose sensitive or proprietary information.

Martorana: Great, so what is the criteria for validating submitted information as PCII?

Smith: To qualify as PCII, submissions must contain information not customarily found in the public domain, it is going to be voluntarily submitted by the private sector or state and local critical infrastructure owner/operators, and include an express and certification statement.

Martorana: I assume that means not just anyone access PCII?

Smith: No, only government employees and contractors who have been trained, signed a non-disclosure agreement if you are not a federal government employee, have homeland security duties, and a specific need to know have access to PCII. Any entity desiring access to PCII must first become accredited by the PCII Program Office in Washington, DC.

Martorana: What is our office's role, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, with PCII?

Smith: When we go out and do a site visit, a lot of times we do collect information that is PCII. We submit that information to the federal government for inclusion as PCII, and when we get that back we store that information on a compartmentalized drive that can only be accessed by PCII certified individuals with a validated need to know. Our IT people who maintain that drive are also PCII certified. This allows NJOHSP and our critical infrastructure partners to have a secure exchange of sensitive information, increasing our ability to anticipate, adapt to, and withstand threats to critical infrastructure security.

Martorana: What other safeguards are in place to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of information?

Smith: Any federal, state, or local government employee who intentionally mishandles PCII may be subject to disciplinary action including fines, criminal and civil penalties, and loss of employment. However, there have been no unauthorized releases of PCII reported since the PCII Program stood up in 2004.

Martorana: Since 2004, has the PCII Program been updated at all?

Smith: Actually, the Department of Homeland Security is currently seeking feedback through an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, in which several potential updates to the PCII Program are outlined. Some of these include: automating the PCII submission system, sharing information with trusted foreign governments, and adding additional safeguarding measures, among other things.

Martorana: How might an organization submit a formal comment then?

Smith: The Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking can be accessed in its entirety via www.federalregister.gov. There is an option to submit a formal comment. The comment period is open through July 20, 2016. I also found if you go to www.regulations.gov, and enter PCII into the search box it will take you there as well.

Martorana: If anyone has questions about submitting PCII, or becoming accredited by the PCII Program, the comments process, or really just general inquiries, where could they go for these answers?

Smith: We have a couple options. First, anyone in the State of New Jersey with questions regarding PCII can reach out to NJOHSP through our Preparedness Bureau's generic email. That email is preparedness@njohsp.gov. Secondly, anyone with questions for the Department of Homeland Security or the PCII Program staff can contact them via email at PCII-Assist@hq.dhs.gov.

Martorana: Great. Thanks, Andy. Again that was Andy Smith, State Critical Infrastructure Coordinator here at NJOHSP. For any additional information, visit our website at www.njohsp.gov, and be sure to follow NJOHSP's *Resiliency Bulletin* for any updates on changes to the PCII Program.

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