

Privacy Basics for Small Business

What you need to know to stay legal,
build trust, and protect your customers

Why Privacy Matters

Respecting customer privacy isn't just about following the law—it builds trust, protects your reputation, and keeps your business out of trouble.

In Canada, laws like CASL (Canada's Anti-Spam Law) and privacy legislation (like PIPEDA) set rules about how you collect, use, and store personal data.

● What Counts as Personal Data?

Personal data is **any info that can identify someone**, such as:

- Full name
- Email address
- Phone number
- Mailing address
- Purchase history
- IP address or device data

● What You Can Do with Customer Data

You're still allowed to:

- Collect data through forms, checkouts, or subscriptions
- Send marketing emails if the person gave clear permission
- Use data to improve service (like remembering past orders)
- Show targeted ads—if you're following platform and legal rules

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● What You Must Do

To stay compliant and respectful, you must:

- Get permission — always ask before sending marketing messages
- Be clear — tell people what you're collecting and why
- Keep it safe — use secure systems to store customer info
- Give options — let customers unsubscribe or ask to be removed

● Email Marketing & CASL Rules

Before sending promotional emails in Canada, make sure you have:

- Consent (they said "yes" to receiving emails)
- A clear sender name
- A way to unsubscribe in every message

● Tips to Build Customer Trust

- Use plain language when asking for info
- Avoid asking for unnecessary details
- Keep privacy settings and policies up to date
- Be ready to answer questions like, "Why do you need this info?"



Reminder:

Privacy isn't about saying no. It's about being clear and respectful.
When your customers trust you, they're more likely to buy from you again.