

# Applicant/Violator System Office System Advisory Memorandum



**SAM # 19    DATE: January 23, 1998**

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**Subject: PUBLIC ACCESS to AVS -- IMPACT of the PRIVACY ACT**

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) has established terminals in Pittsburgh, PA; Lexington, KY; and Knoxville, TN for public access to the Applicant/Violator System (AVS). In addition, AVS may be accessed by way of the Internet and with the use of modified software.

With the advent of public access to AVS came certain considerations for protecting the data and entities for whom information is maintained in the system. Of particular concern was the impact of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) on the information maintained on entities for which disclosure may be prohibited under its provisions.

In order to assure compliance with the Privacy Act, AVS access was modified on July 22, 1994, so that social security numbers and Federal employer identification numbers in the Entity File are not retrievable by any public user.

Other AVS users are not affected by this retrieval restriction. In addition, regulatory authorities are still required to enter or update existing entity information with social security numbers and Federal employer identification numbers whenever this information becomes available to them.

Questions regarding the Privacy Act, social security numbers, or Federal employer identification numbers should be directed to your AVS User Assistance Liaison at 1-800-643-9748.

Questions regarding public access to AVS can be directed to any member of the Program and Policy Support Team at 1-800-643-9748.

**Signed;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Earl D. Bandy, Jr., Chief,  
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