

## What Is Communications Privacy Law?

### Communications Privacy Law

**Communications privacy law** in the U.S. is addressed in the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) and within other federal laws, such as the Telecommunications Act. The ECPA of 1986 makes it a crime to intercept wire, voice, or electronic communications. The Act also outlines interception procedures involving law enforcement. The Stored Communications Act, which is often referred to in conjunction with ECPA, protects electronic communications' privacy and determines how government may legally access stored communications.

According to Federal Communication Commission regulations, telecommunications carriers are also required to protect the confidentiality of proprietary information as it relates to other carriers, equipment manufacturers and customers. A carrier who receives proprietary information can use that information to provide services but not for marketing purposes.

The USA Patriot Act did affect some aspects of U.S. intelligence, communications, and privacy laws, including the ECPA, in an effort to intercept terrorism.

Winston & Strawn attorneys regularly write about changes concerning communications privacy. Visit the [Privacy & Data Security Law Blog](#) for the latest developments.

### Related Capabilities

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