Association of Surgical Technologists
Privacy Policy

Purpose and Background

The Association of Surgical Technologists (AST) Internet Privacy Protection Plan discloses how AST protects its members' and customers' privacy by controlling the use of information AST collects from them. AST has created this Internet Privacy Protection Plan to demonstrate its commitment to its members' right to privacy. The following information discloses AST's information gathering and dissemination practices for the website located at www.ast.org. Through its interaction with you, AST has various sources for acquiring member/customer information, for example, membership forms, conference registration, purchases, and Internet interaction. AST stores all the information it collects in its central database, and does not handle the information from one source differently from another source. Although the following provisions constitute AST's Internet Privacy Protection Plan, they apply in principle to all customer/member information held by AST.

AST respects the privacy of its members and other visitors to its Web site. AST strongly believes that if electronic commerce and online activities are to flourish, consumers must be assured that information provided online is used responsibly and appropriately. To protect online privacy, AST has implemented the following policy.

Availability

AST will post this plan on its website at www.ast.org and it will be linked from the front page and from any page where member information is collected.

Information Collected by AST

AST forms collect only the information for which they ask you explicitly and which you enter in them. AST does not collect any information beyond form information except through log files and discussion forums. AST collects information through the following pages:

- Continuing Education Contact Hour History
- Sign up for an AST Discussion Server
- Sign up for ASA Discussion Server
- Sign up for Government Affairs Alerts
- Change Your Login Name/Password
- Specialty Group Sign Up
- AST Password Retrieval
- Your Comments
- Press/Media Contact Information

- Exhibits and Sales Contact Information
- Scholarship Applications
- Membership/Associate Membership Application
- Meeting Registrations

AST also keeps Internet log files of the IP addresses and click sequences, and session variables such as browser type, of visitors to Www.ast.org. AST will modify this section as necessary as it adds new features to Www.ast.org.

Personal Information from Children and Adults

AST does not intentionally or knowingly collect information from children. AST neither identifies information as originating from children nor does AST market its goods and services to children. AST restricts its collection of personal information to demographic characteristics which help it understand its members/customers and their needs (see below), and to information used in authorized transactions (for example: address and credit card number for online purchases.)

AST's Use of the Collected Information

AST uses the information it collects in three ways: (1) some information is used internally and for AST marketing purposes; (2) some information is used in the sale of mailing lists; and (3) some information remains in computer files, which are the basis of statistical reports, with no member/customer detail extracted.

Each of these uses is discussed below.

(1) Information Used Internally and for AST marketing purposes: Name, address, fax, email, affiliation, industry, job title, race, gender, age and other similar information is used by AST to understand its audiences and to offer member benefits and products to members/customers who are likely to be interested in them.

(2) Information Used in the Sale of Mailing Lists: AST rents addresses collected from members and nonmembers. Prior to renting an address, the requesting renter must provide AST with their exact intended use of the address and a sample of the mailing that will be sent out. AST's decision on whether or not to rent an address is based on the educational nature of the mailing piece and whether it furthers the overall interests of AST. AST does not rent lists based on purchase of specific products or services, or other demographic information. AST never gives the list to the parties utilizing the list, but requires that the party sending the materials coordinate with AST’s mailing services, such that they never have access to the actual information. Under no circumstances does AST rent telephone or fax numbers, or email addresses.

(3) Information Used for AST Statistical Reports: AST collects IP addresses for information about the geographic spread of internet users. AST may record type and version of browser, sequence of pages viewed, and length of session for use

in improving site navigation and usefulness. This information is for statistical analysis and is not correlated with any specific user.

Information Not Currently Used

AST does not use the names and email addresses of forum participants.

Information Collected by Third Parties

Users of AST's website may have occasion to enter the sites of third parties under contract with AST for provision of specific website features. AST's agreements prohibit these organizations' use of information gathered.

Opting Out

AST recognizes that members/customers may wish to limit AST's use of personal information, and that this decision may occur after information is provided. If desired, AST will mark a member's/customer's records in its central database to exclude their address in various ways. To accomplish this, members/customers should call 800-637-7433, option 3. AST is able to modify records in the following ways:

- Exclude from vendor mail - keeps address off mailing lists or labels rented/sold by AST to providers of products and services.
- Exclude from email - cuts off all AST email, except specific lists for which the member/customer has registered.
- Opt-out from Newsletter lists or discussion server lists that the members has registered for separately.
- Requesting that AST modify a record in one or more of these ways could deprive the member/customer of some of the many benefits of their association with AST.

Data Security

AST uses several methods to transmit information submitted by customers. Increasingly, transactions are protected using SSL encryption software. This means that your credit card information, name, address, and email cannot be read as they travel across the Internet. SSL encryption is the standard for transactional security and it is used by virtually all other e-commerce systems on the web. AST joins the Internet community's concern for data safety. Some AST systems use unencrypted posting, in which your data is sent like email from your browser to AST's server. The server retransmits this information to AST's Association Member Services Representatives by email. AST's web servers and

association management systems are protected by advanced security measures. AST uses firewalls, vulnerability scans and secure server encryption technology to protect personally identifiable information. AST also employs internal physical and technologic security measures to detect and block unauthorized intrusions to its computer systems.

Credit Card Account Information.

AST does not disclose credit card account information provided by its members and customers. When members and customers choose to pay using their credit cards, AST submits the information needed to obtain payment to the appropriate clearinghouse.

Guarantee

EXCEPT AS EXPRESSLY PROVIDED IN THIS PARAGRAPH, AST HEREBY DISCLAIMS ANY GUARANTEE AND ALL EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND WHATSOEVER. AST MAKES NO GUARANTEE OR WARRANTY REGARDING THE OPERATION OR PERFORMANCE OF ANY SECURITY MEASURE OR DEVICE INSTALLED ON ITS WEBSITE OR USED IN PROCESSING ONLINE TRANSACTIONS. THE FOREGOING STATES THE ENTIRE LIABILITY OF AST WITH RESPECT TO DATA THEFT OR CORRUPTION.

What Privacy Issues Arise With Links To Other Sites?

This web site contains links to other web sites. AST has no control over and is not responsible for the privacy policies or content of such sites.

Your Permission

By using AST's website, you consent to the collection and use of the information by AST unless you have OPTED OUT (see above). If we change our privacy or security policies in the future, those changes will be posted here so you always know what information we collect, how we use it, and how we protect it.

Further Explanations

We would be happy to explain any of our privacy and security policies to you in person. Questions regarding information privacy may be directed to the AST Member Services Department at 800-637-7433, option 3.