

BRIEFINGS

06 July 2007

Employment Law Watch

Ownership of Contacts Lists

A recent case has determined that where an employee creates and keeps all his contacts on his employer's computer system, that entire list of contacts belongs to his employer even though it included contacts the employee had prior to joining that employer.

Accordingly, address lists created and contained on employers' computer systems or mobile phones may be classed as property belonging to the employer. Therefore, employers may prevent departing employees from copying or using these lists.

The case highlights the importance of employers having, and communicating to employees, clear IT, telephone and email policies, which identify what the employer considers to be their property as a result of information stored on email, company mobile phones and their computer system.

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