

G.D.P.R. and Your Visitor Book



Maintaining visitor information for the duration of their visit is necessary in order to promote the health and safety of the visitor and others as identified in Health and Safety legislation including fire regulations. This has usually been collected through the use of a visitor book which is in many cases open to anyone to see who has been into the workplace. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) now puts a question mark against the use of standard visitor books, here are some of the factors you should consider in relation to your visitor book.

Can visitors see information about earlier visitors when they sign in or, could anybody walk off with your visitor book?

Either of these could be defined as a data breach if the visitor can be identified by the information you have collected. Just two pieces of information may identify a person such as name and workplace or car registration or occupation. If the person has an unusual name, they may be able to be identified just by name.

If a visitor asks to be forgotten either verbally or in writing, which is a right under GDPR you must be able to erase/delete their personal information.

This may involve having to rip out a whole page from your visitor book. How would this work if they asked for it to be removed as they left the building and other visitors who are still in the building are on that same page.

How long does your visitor book last, how is it stored and what do you do with it when it's full?

GDPR states that information should only be kept as long as necessary. Once they have left the building their information is no longer needed for the purpose of health and safety fire regulations.

Are you keeping the information collected through the visitor book for other purposes?

If so, do you explain to each visitor how their information will be used and ask for their permission as required under GDPR's 'Data consent and storage' requirements, before visitors sign your book? Can you prove that each visitor has given their consent before they signed? This usually means providing them with your policy; showing the purposes that you will use their information for and asking them for instance to tick a box to say they have read and understood it.

Do you need all the information that is stored in your visitor book, if so are there other ways you can collect the information?

GDPR stipulates that you can only collect information that is required for the purposes you have stated you will use it for. Does the information you need about each person vary according to visitor type or does it hold the same information about each person who visits your premises?

By addressing the above you're ensuring that the way you collect visitor information is compliant. Consider other alternatives to the traditional visitor book, such as those where the name is concealed or where carbon copy is used and name badges are created. For some organisations it may be appropriate to have a visitor management system.