

## Federal Communications Commission

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area in which records are kept and will not be permitted to search the files.

(d) If it appears that there will be an appreciable delay in locating or producing the records (as where a large number of documents is the subject of a single request or where an extended search for a document appears to be necessary), the requester may be directed to submit or confirm the request in writing in appropriate circumstances.

(e)(1) Written requests for records routinely available for public inspection under §§0.453 and 0.455 shall be directed to the Commission's copy contractor pursuant to the procedures set forth in §0.465. Requests shall be captioned "Request For Inspection Of Records," shall be dated, shall list the mailing address, telephone number (if any) of the person making the request, and the e-mail address (if any) and for each document requested, shall set out all information known to the person making the request which would be helpful in identifying and locating the document. Written requests shall, in addition, specify the maximum search fee the person making the request is prepared to pay (see §0.467).

(2) Written requests shall be delivered or mailed directly to the Commission's copy contractor (see §0.465(a)).

(f) When a written request is received by the copy contractor, it will be date-stamped.

(g) All requests limited to records listed in §0.453 and §0.455 will be granted, subject to paragraph (k) of this section. Requests for records listed in those sections shall not be combined with requests for other records.

(h) The records will be produced for inspection at the earliest possible time.

(i) Records shall be inspected within 7 days after notice is given that they have been located and are available for inspection. After that period, they will be returned to storage and additional charges may be imposed for again producing them.

(j) In addition to the other requirements of this section, the following provisions apply to the reports filed with the Commission pursuant to 5 CFR parts 2634 and 3902.

(1) Such reports shall not be obtained or used:

- (i) For any unlawful purpose;
- (ii) For any commercial purpose, other than by news and communications media for dissemination to the general public;
- (iii) For determining or establishing the credit rating of any individual; or
- (iv) For use, directly or indirectly, in the solicitation of money for any political, charitable, or other purpose.

(2) Such reports may not be made available to any person nor may any copy thereof be provided to any person except upon a written application by such person stating:

- (i) That person's name, occupation and address;
- (ii) The name and address of any other person or organization on whose behalf the inspection or copying is requested; and
- (iii) That such person is aware of the prohibitions on the obtaining or use of the report. Further, any such application for inspection shall be made available to the public throughout the period during which the report itself is made available to the public.

(Secs. 4, 303, 307, 48 Stat., as amended, 1066, 1082, 1083; 47 U.S.C. 154, 303, 397; 18 U.S.C. 207(j))

[74 FR 14078, Mar. 30, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 24389, May 2, 2011]

### **§0.461 Requests for inspection of materials not routinely available for public inspection.**

Any person desiring to inspect Commission records that are not listed in §0.453 or §0.455 shall file a request for inspection meeting the requirements of this section. The FOIA Public Liaison is available to assist persons seeking records under this section. See §0.441(a).

(a)(1) Records include:

- (i) Any information that would be an agency record subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act when maintained by the Commission in any format, including an electronic format; and
- (ii) Any information maintained for the Commission by an entity under Government contract, for purposes of records management.

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(2) The records in question must be reasonably described by the person requesting them, so as to permit their location by staff personnel with a reasonable amount of effort. Whenever possible, a request should include specific information about each record sought, such as the title or name, author, recipient, and subject matter of the record. Requests should also specify the date or time period for the records sought. The custodian of records sought may contact the requester to obtain further information about the records sought to assist in locating them.

(3) The person requesting records under this section may specify the form or format of the records to be produced provided that the records may be made readily reproducible in the requested form or format.

(b)(1) Requests shall be captioned “Freedom of Information Act Request,” shall be dated, shall list the telephone number (if any), street address, and e-mail address (if any) of the person making the request, and should reasonably describe, for each document requested (see §0.461(a)(1)), all information known to the person making the request that would be helpful in identifying and locating the document.

(2) The request shall, in addition, specify the maximum search fee the person making the request is prepared to pay or a request for waiver or reduction of fees if the requester is eligible (see §0.470(e)). By filing a FOIA request, the requester agrees to pay all applicable fees charged under §0.467, unless the person making the request seeks a waiver of fees (see §0.470(e)), in which case the Commission will rule on the waiver request before proceeding with the search.

(c) If the records are of the kinds listed in §0.457 or if they have been withheld from inspection under §0.459, the request shall, in addition, contain a statement of the reasons for inspection and the facts in support thereof. In the case of other materials, no such statement need accompany the request, but the custodian of the records may require the submission of such a statement if he or she determines that the materials in question may lawfully be withheld from inspection.

(d)(1) Requests shall be

(i) Delivered or mailed to the Managing Director, FCC, 445–12th Street, SW., Room 1–A836, Washington, DC 20554;

(ii) Sent by e-mail to [foia@fcc.gov](mailto:foia@fcc.gov);

(iii) Filed electronically through the Internet at <http://www.fcc.gov/foia/#reqform>; or

(iv) Sent by facsimile to (202) 418–2826 or (202) 418–0521. If the request is filed by mail or facsimile, an original and two copies of the request shall be submitted. If the request is enclosed in an envelope, the envelope shall be marked, “Freedom of Information Act Request.”

(2) For purposes of this section, the custodian of the records is the Chief of the Bureau or Office where the records are located. The Chief of the Bureau or Office may designate an appropriate person to act on a FOIA request.

(3) If the request is for materials submitted to the Commission by third parties and not open to routine public inspection under §0.457(d), §0.459, or another Commission rule or order, or if a request for confidentiality is pending pursuant to §0.459, or if the custodian of records has reason to believe that the information may contain confidential commercial information, one copy of the request will be provided by the custodian of the records (see §0.461(e)) to the person who originally submitted the materials to the Commission. If there are many persons who originally submitted the records and are entitled to notice under this paragraph, the custodian of records may use a public notice to notify the submitters of the request for inspection. The submitter or submitters will be given ten calendar days to respond to the FOIA request. See §0.459(d)(1). If a submitter has any objection to disclosure, he or she is required to submit a detailed written statement specifying all grounds for withholding any portion of the information (see §0.459). This response shall be served on the party seeking to inspect the records. The requester may submit a reply within ten calendar days unless a different period is specified by the custodian of records. The reply shall be served on all parties that filed a response. In the event that a submitter fails to respond within the

time specified, the submitter will be considered to have no objection to disclosure of the information.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (d)(3): Under the *ex parte* rules, §1.1206(a)(7) of this chapter, a proceeding involving a FOIA request is a permit-but-disclose proceeding, but is subject to the special service rules in this paragraph. We also note that while the FOIA request itself is a permit-but-disclose proceeding, a pleading in a FOIA proceeding may also constitute a presentation in another proceeding if it addresses the merits of that proceeding.

(e)(1) When the request is received by the Managing Director, it will be assigned to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Control Office, where it will be date-stamped and assigned to the appropriate custodian of the records. A FOIA request is then considered properly received. This will occur no later than ten calendar days after the request is first received by the agency.

(2)(i) Except for the purpose of making a determination regarding expedited processing under paragraph (h) of this section, the time for processing a request for inspection of records will be tolled

(A) While the custodian of records seeks reasonable clarification of the request;

(B) Until clarification with the requester of issues regarding fee assessment occurs, including:

(1) While there is an unresolved fee waiver issue pending under §0.470(e), unless the requester has provided a written statement agreeing to pay some or all of the fees pending the outcome of the waiver question;

(2) Following the denial of a fee waiver, unless the requester had provided a written statement agreeing to pay the fees if the fee waiver was denied;

(3) Where advance payment is required pursuant to §0.469 and has not been made.

(ii) Only one Commission request for information shall be deemed to toll the time for processing a request for inspection of records under §0.461(e)(2)(i)(A). Such request must be made no later than ten calendar days after a request is properly received by the custodian of records under §0.461(e)(1).

(3) The FOIA Control Office will send an acknowledgement to the requester

notifying the requester of the control number assigned to the request, the due date of the response, and the telephone contact number (202-418-0440) to be used by the requester to obtain the status of the request. Requesters may also obtain the status of an FOIA request via e-mail at [foia@fcc.gov](mailto:foia@fcc.gov).

(4) Multiple FOIA requests by the same or different FOIA requesters may be consolidated for disposition. See also §0.470(b)(2).

(f) Requests for inspection of records will be acted on as follows by the custodian of the records.

(1) If the Commission is prohibited from disclosing the records in question, the request for inspection will be denied with a statement setting forth the specific grounds for denial.

(2)(i) If records in the possession of the Commission are the property of another agency, the request will be referred to that agency and the person who submitted the request will be so advised, with the reasons for referral.

(ii) If it is determined that the FOIA request seeks only records of another agency or department, the FOIA requester will be so informed by the FOIA Control Officer and will be directed to the correct agency or department.

(3) If it is determined that the Commission does not have authority to withhold the records from public inspection, the request will be granted.

(4) If it is determined that the Commission does have authority to withhold the records from public inspection, the considerations favoring disclosure and non-disclosure will be weighed in light of the facts presented, and the request will be granted, either conditionally or unconditionally, or denied.

(5) If there is a statutory basis for withholding part of a document from inspection, that part will be deleted and the remainder will be made available for inspection. Records disclosed in part shall be marked or annotated to show the amount of information deleted unless doing so would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption. The location of the information deleted and the exemption under which the deletion is made also shall

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be indicated on the record, if technically feasible.

(6) In locating and recovering records responsive to an FOIA request, only those records within the Commission's possession and control as of the date of its receipt of the request shall be considered.

(g)(1) The custodian of the records will make every effort to act on the request within twenty business days after it is received and date-stamped by the FOIA Control Office. However, if a request for clarification has been made under §0.461(e)(2)(i)(A) or an issue is outstanding regarding the payment of fees for processing the FOIA request is pending under §0.461(e)(2)(i)(B), the counting of time will start upon resolution of these requests. If it is not possible to locate the records and to determine whether they should be made available for inspection within twenty business days, the custodian may, in any of the following circumstances, extend the time for action by up to ten business days:

(i) It is necessary to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request.

(ii) It is necessary to search for, collect and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(iii) It is necessary to consult with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request, or among two or more components of the Commission having substantial subject matter interest therein.

(2) The custodian of the records will notify the requester in writing of any extension of time exercised pursuant to paragraph (g) of this section. The custodian of the records may also call the requester to extend the time provided a subsequent written confirmation is provided. If it is not possible to locate the records and make the determination within the extended period, the person or persons who made the request will be provided an opportunity to limit the scope of the request so that it may be processed within the extended time limit, or an opportunity to

arrange an alternative time frame for processing the request or a modified request, and asked to consent to an extension or further extension. If the requester agrees to an extension, the custodian of the records will confirm the agreement in a letter or e-mail specifying the length of the agreed-upon extension. If he or she does not agree to an extension, the request will be denied, on the grounds that the custodian has not been able to locate the records and/or to make the determination within the period for a ruling mandated by the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552. In that event, the custodian will continue to search for and/or assess the records and will advise the person who made the request of further developments; but that person may file an application for review by the Commission. When action is taken by the custodian of the records, written notice of the action will be given. Records will be made available with the written notice of action or as soon thereafter as is feasible.

(3) If the custodian of the records grants a request for inspection of records submitted to the Commission in confidence under §0.457(d), §0.459, or some other Commission rule or order, the custodian of the records will give the submitter written notice of the decision and of the submitter's right to seek review pursuant to §0.461(i).

(h)(1) Requesters who seek expedited processing of FOIA requests shall submit such requests, along with their FOIA requests, to the Managing Director, as described in §0.461(d). If the request is enclosed in an envelope, the envelope shall be marked "Request for Expedited Proceeding—FOIA Request." An original and two copies of the request for expedition shall be submitted, but only one copy is necessary if submitted by e-mail or by the Internet. When the request is received by the Managing Director, it, and the accompanying FOIA request, will be assigned to the FOIA Control Office, where it will be date-stamped and assigned to the custodian of records.

(2) Expedited processing shall be granted to a requester demonstrating a compelling need that is certified by the requester to be true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge and belief.

(3) For purposes of this section, *compelling need* means—

(i) That failure to obtain requested records on an expedited basis could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or

(ii) With respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, there is an urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity.

(4)(i) Notice of the determination whether to grant expedited processing shall be provided to the requester by the custodian of records within ten calendar days after receipt of the request by the FOIA Control Office. Once the determination has been made to grant expedited processing, the custodian shall process the FOIA request as soon as practicable.

(ii) If a request for expedited processing is denied, the person seeking expedited processing may file an application for review within five business days after the date of the written denial. The application for review and the envelope containing it (if any) shall be captioned “Review of FOIA Expedited Proceeding Request.” The application for review shall be delivered or mailed to the General Counsel. (For general procedures relating to applications for review, see §1.115 of this chapter.) The Commission shall act expeditiously on the application for review, and shall notify the custodian of records and the requester of the disposition of such an application for review.

(i)(1) If a request for inspection of records submitted to the Commission in confidence under §0.457(d), §0.459, or another Commission rule or order is granted in whole or in part, an application for review may be filed by the person who submitted the records to the Commission, by a third party owner of the records or by a person with a personal privacy interest in the records, or by the person who filed the request for inspection of records within the ten business days after the date of the written ruling. The application for review and the envelope containing it (if any) shall be captioned “Review of Freedom of Information Action.” The application for review shall be filed

within ten business days after the date of the written ruling, shall be delivered or mailed to the General Counsel, and shall be served on the person who filed the request for inspection of records and any other parties to the proceeding. The person who filed the request for inspection of records may respond to the application for review within ten business days after it is filed.

(2) The first day to be counted in computing the time period for filing the application for review is the day after the date of the written ruling. If an application for review is not filed within this period, the records will be produced for inspection.

(3) If an application for review is denied, the person filing the application for review will be notified in writing and advised of his or her rights.

(4) If an application for review filed by the person who submitted, owns, or has a personal privacy interest in the records to the Commission is denied, or if the records are made available on review which were not initially made available, the person will be afforded ten business days from the date of the written ruling in which to move for a judicial stay of the Commission’s action. The first day to be counted in computing the time period for seeking a judicial stay is the day after the date of the written ruling. If a motion for stay is not made within this period, the records will be produced for inspection.

(j) Except as provided in paragraph (i) of this section, an application for review of an initial action on a request for inspection of records, a fee determination (see §0.467 through §0.470), or a fee reduction or waiver decision (see §0.470(e)) may be filed only by the person who made the request. The application shall be filed within 30 calendar days after the date of the written ruling by the custodian of records. The application for review and the envelope (if any) shall be captioned, “Review of Freedom of Information Action.” The application shall be delivered or mailed to the General Counsel. If the proceeding involves records subject to confidential treatment under §0.457 or §0.459, or involves a person with an interest as described in §0.461(i), the application for review shall be served on

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such persons. That person may file a response within ten business days after the application for review is filed. If the records are made available for review, the person who submitted them to the Commission will be afforded ten business days after the date of the written ruling to seek a judicial stay. See paragraph (i) of this section. The first day to be counted in computing the time period for filing the application for review or seeking a judicial stay is the day after the date of the written ruling.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPHS (i) AND (j): The General Counsel may review applications for review with the custodian of records and attempt to informally resolve outstanding issues with the consent of the requester. For general procedures relating to applications for review, see §1.115 of this chapter.

(k)(1)(i) The Commission will make every effort to act on an application for review of an action on a request for inspection of records within twenty business days after it is filed. In the following circumstances and to the extent time has not been extended under paragraphs (g)(1)(i), (ii), or (iii) of §0.461(g) of this section, the Commission may extend the time for acting on the application for review up to ten business days. (The total period of extensions taken under this paragraph and under paragraph (g) of this section without the consent of the person who submitted the request shall not exceed ten business days.):

(A) It is necessary to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request;

(B) It is necessary to search for, collect and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(C) It is necessary to consult with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the Commission having substantial subject matter interest therein.

(ii) If these circumstances are not present, the person who made the request may be asked to consent to an extension or further extension. If the

requester or person who made the request agrees to an extension, the General Counsel will confirm the agreement in a letter specifying the length of the agreed-upon extension. If the requestor or person who made the request does not agree to an extension, the Commission will continue to search for and/or assess the records and will advise the person who made the request of further developments; but that person may file a complaint in an appropriate United States district court.

(2) The Commission may at its discretion or upon request consolidate for consideration related applications for review filed under §0.461(i) or §0.461(j).

(1)(1) Subject to the application for review and judicial stay provisions of paragraphs (i) and (j) of this section, if the request is granted, the records will be produced for inspection at the earliest possible time.

(2) If a request for inspection of records becomes the subject of an action for judicial review before the custodian of records has acted on the request, or before the Commission has acted on an application for review, the Commission may continue to consider the request for production of records.

(m) Staff orders and letters ruling on requests for inspection are signed by the official (or officials) who give final approval of their contents. Decisions of the Commission ruling on applications for review will set forth the names of the Commissioners participating in the decision.

(n) Records shall be inspected within seven days after notice is given that they have been located and are available for inspection. After that period, they will be returned to storage, and additional charges may be imposed for again producing them.

[74 FR 14078, Mar. 30, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 24389, May 2, 2011]

#### **§0.463 Disclosure of Commission records and information in legal proceedings in which the Commission is a non-party.**

(a) This section sets forth procedures to be followed with respect to the production or disclosure of any material within the custody and control of the Commission, any information relating to such material, or any information