

§ 1601.33

40 CFR Ch. VI (7-1-02 Edition)

(iv) If specialized use of the documents is contemplated, a statement of the requester's qualifications that are relevant to the specialized use.

(5) A requester may appeal the denial of a request for a waiver or reduction of fees in accordance with the provisions of § 1601.23.

§ 1601.33 Miscellaneous fee provisions.

(a) *Notice of anticipated fees in excess of \$25.* Where the CSB determines or estimates that the fees chargeable will amount to more than \$25, the CSB shall promptly notify the requester of the actual or estimated amount of fees or such portion thereof that can be readily estimated, unless the requester has indicated his or her willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Where a requester has been notified that the actual or estimated fees may exceed \$25, the request will be deemed not to have been received until the requester has agreed to pay the anticipated total fee. A notice to the requester pursuant to this paragraph will include the opportunity to confer with CSB personnel in order to reformulate the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost.

(b) *Aggregating requests.* A requester may not file multiple requests at the same time, each seeking portions of a record or records, solely in order to avoid the payment of fees. When the CSB reasonably believes that a requester, or a group of requesters acting in concert, is attempting to break a request into a series of requests for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, the CSB may aggregate such requests and charge accordingly. One element to be considered in determining whether a belief would be reasonable is the time period over which the requests have occurred. The CSB will presume that multiple requests of this type made within a 30-day period have been made in order to evade fees. Where requests are separated by a longer period, the CSB shall aggregate them only where there exists a solid basis for determining that such aggregation is warranted, *e.g.*, where the requests involve clearly related matters. Multiple requests regarding unrelated matters will not be aggregated.

(c) *Advance payment of fees.* (1) The CSB does not require an advance payment before work is commenced or continued, unless:

(i) The CSB estimates or determines that the fees are likely to exceed \$250. If it appears that the fees will exceed \$250, the CSB will notify the requester of the likely cost and obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment where the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees. In the case of requesters with no history of payment, the CSB may require an advance payment of fees in an amount up to the full estimated charge that will be incurred; or

(ii) The requester has previously failed to pay a fee in a timely fashion, *i.e.*, within 30 days of the date of a billing. In such cases, the CSB may require the requester to pay the full amount owed plus any applicable interest, as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, or demonstrate that the fee owed has been paid, prior to processing any further record request. Under these circumstances, the CSB may require the requester to make an advance payment of the full amount of the fees anticipated before processing a new request or finishing processing of a pending request from that requester.

(2) A request for an advance deposit shall ordinarily include an offer to the requester to confer with identified CSB personnel to attempt to reformulate the request in a manner which will meet the needs of the requester at a lower cost.

(3) When the CSB requests an advance payment of fees, the administrative time limits described in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6) begin only after the CSB has received the advance payment.

(d) *Interest.* The CSB may assess interest charges on an unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the day on which the bill was sent. Once a fee payment has been received by the CSB, even if not processed, the accrual of interest shall be stayed. Interest charges shall be assessed at the rate prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and shall accrue from the date of the billing.

(e) Whenever a total fee calculated under paragraph (d) of this section is \$14.00 or less for any request, no fee will be charged.