

Federal Emergency Management Agency

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supported by a statement or certification by an officer or authorized representative of the company that the information in question is in fact confidential commercial or financial information and has not been disclosed to the public.

(d) *Opportunity to object to disclosure.*

(1) Through the notice described in paragraph (b) of this section, FEMA shall afford a submitter 7 working days within which to provide FEMA with a detailed statement of any objection to disclosure. Such statement shall specify all grounds for withholding any of the information under any exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act and, in the case of Exemption 4, shall demonstrate why the information is contended to be a trade secret or commercial or financial information which is considered privileged or confidential. Information provided by a submitter pursuant to this paragraph may itself be subject to disclosure under the FOIA.

(2) When notice is given to a submitter under this section, FEMA shall notify the requester that such notice has been given to the submitter. The requester will be further advised that a delay in responding to the request, i.e., 10 working days after receipt of the request by FEMA or 20 working days after receipt of the request by FEMA if the time limits are extended under unusual circumstances permitted by the FOIA, may be considered a denial of access to records and the requester may proceed with an administrative appeal or seek judicial review, if appropriate.

(e) *Notice of intent to disclose.* FEMA shall consider carefully a submitter's objections and specific grounds for non-disclosure prior to determining whether to disclose business information. Whenever FEMA decides to disclose business information over the objection of a submitter, FEMA shall forward to the submitter a written notice which shall include:

(1) A statement of the reasons for which the submitter's disclosure objections were not sustained;

(2) A description of the business information to be disclosed; and

(3) A specified disclosure date, which is 7 working days after the notice of the final decision to release the re-

quested information has been mailed to the submitter. FEMA shall inform the submitter that disclosure will be made by the specified disclosure date, unless the submitter seeks a court injunction to prevent its release by the date. When notice is given to a submitter under this section, FEMA shall notify the requester that such notice has been given to the submitter and the proposed date for disclosure.

(f) *Notice of lawsuit.* (1) Whenever a requester brings legal action seeking to compel disclosure of business information covered by paragraph (c) of this section, FEMA shall promptly notify the submitter.

(2) Whenever a submitter brings legal action seeking to prevent disclosure of business information covered by paragraph (c) of this section, FEMA shall promptly notify the requester.

(g) *Exception to notice requirement.* The notice requirements of this section shall not apply if:

(1) FEMA determines that the information shall not be disclosed;

(2) The information has been published or otherwise officially made available to the public;

(3) Disclosure of the information is required by law (other than 5 U.S.C. 552); or

(4) The information was required in the course of a lawful investigation of a possible violation of criminal law.

[53 FR 2740, Feb. 1, 1988]

§ 5.58 Exhaustion of administrative remedies.

Any person making a request to FEMA for records under this part shall be deemed to have exhausted his administrative remedies with respect to the request if the agency fails to comply with the applicable time limit provisions set forth in §§ 5.52 and 5.55.

[44 FR 50287, Aug. 27, 1979. Redesignated at 53 FR 2740, Feb. 1, 1988]

§ 5.59 Judicial relief available to the public.

Upon denial of a requestor's appeal by the Deputy Director the requester may file a complaint in a district court of the United States in the district in which the complainant resides, or has his principal place of business, or in

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which the agency records are situated, or in the District of Columbia, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(B).

[44 FR 50287, Aug. 27, 1979. Redesignated at 53 FR 2740, Feb. 1, 1988]

§ 5.60 Disciplinary action against employees for “arbitrary or capricious” denial.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(F), whenever the district court, described in § 5.59 orders the production of any FEMA records improperly withheld from the complainant and assesses against the United States reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs, and the court additionally issues a written finding that the circumstances surrounding the withholding raise questions whether FEMA personnel acted arbitrarily or capriciously with respect to the withholding, the Special Counsel in the Merit Systems Protection Board is required to initiate a proceeding to determine whether disciplinary action is warranted against the officer or employee who primarily was responsible for the withholding. The Special Counsel after investigation and consideration of the evidence submitted, submits findings and recommendations to the Director of FEMA and sends copies of the findings and recommendations to the officer or employee or his or her representative. The law requires the Director to take any corrective action which the Special Counsel recommends.

[44 FR 50287, Aug. 27, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 1422, Jan. 7, 1980. Redesignated and amended at 53 FR 2740, Feb. 1, 1988]

§ 5.61 Contempt for noncompliance.

In the event of noncompliance by FEMA with an order of a district court pursuant to § 5.60, the district court may punish for contempt the FEMA employee responsible for the noncompliance, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(G).

[44 FR 50287, Aug. 27, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 1422, Jan. 7, 1980; 50 FR 40006, Oct. 1, 1985. Redesignated and amended at 53 FR 2740, Feb. 1, 1988]

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Subpart E—Exemptions

§ 5.70 General.

The exemptions enumerated in 5 U.S.C. 552(b), under which the provisions for availability of records and informational materials will not apply, are general in nature. FEMA will decide each case on its merits in accordance with the FEMA policy expressed in subpart A.

§ 5.71 Categories of records exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552.

5 U.S.C. 552(b) provides that the requirements of the statute do not apply to matters that are:

(a) Specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and are, in fact, properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order.

(b) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.

(c) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute other than section 552(b) of title 5, provided that such statute (1) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue or (2) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matter to be withheld.

(d) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential.

(e) Inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency.

(f) Personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(g) Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information:

(1) Could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings;

(2) Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;