

§ 402.45

- (a) Title 20, parts 400–499 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- (b) FEDERAL REGISTER issues.
- (c) Compilation of the Social Security Laws.
- (d) Social Security Rulings.
- (e) Social Security Handbook. The information in the Handbook is not of precedent or interpretative force.
- (f) Social Security Bulletin.
- (g) Social Security Acquiescence Rulings.
- (h) SSA Publications on CD-ROM.

[62 FR 4154, Jan. 29, 1997, as amended at 63 FR 35132, June 29, 1998]

§ 402.45 Availability of records.

(a) *What records are available.* 5 U.S.C. 552, also known as the FOIA, permits any person to see, and get a copy of, any Federal agency's records unless the material is exempt from mandatory disclosure as described in § 402.70 of this part.

(b) *FOIA.* Under the FOIA, we are also required to make available to the public the instructional manuals issued to our employees, general statements of policy, and other materials which are used in processing claims and which are not published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, and an index of these manuals and materials.

(c) *Record citation as precedent.* We will not use or cite any record described in paragraph (b) of this section as a precedent for an action against a person unless we have indexed the record and published it or made it available, or unless the person has timely notice of the record.

(d) *Electronic Reading Room.* We will prepare an index of records which have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests. The index, and, to the extent practicable, the records will be made available on the Internet or by other computer telecommunications means.

[62 FR 4154, Jan. 29, 1997, as amended at 63 FR 35132, June 29, 1998]

§ 402.50 Availability of administrative staff manuals.

All administrative staff manuals of the Social Security Administration and instructions to staff personnel which contain policies, procedures, or interpretations that affect the public

20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–04 Edition)

are available for inspection and copying. A complete listing of such materials is published in the Index of Administrative Staff Manuals and Instructions. These manuals are generally not printed in a sufficient quantity to permit sale or other general distribution to the public. Selected material is maintained at district offices and field offices and may be inspected there. See §§ 402.55 and 402.60 for a listing of this material.

§ 402.55 Materials available at district offices and branch offices.

(a) *Materials available for inspection.* The following are available or will be made available for inspection at the district offices and branch offices:

(1) Compilation of the Social Security Laws.

(2) Social Security Administration regulations under the retirement, survivors, disability, and supplemental security income programs, i.e., 20 CFR parts 401, 402, 404, 416, and 422; and the Social Security Administration's regulations under part B of title IV (Black Lung Benefits) of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, 20 CFR part 410.

(3) Social Security Rulings.

(4) Social Security Handbook.

(5) Social Security Acquiescence Rulings.

(b) *Materials available for inspection and copying.* The following materials are available or will be made available for inspection and copying at the district offices and branch offices (fees may be applicable per §§ 402.155 through 402.185):

(1) SSA Program Operations Manual System.

(2) SSA Organization Manual.

(3) Handbook for State Social Security Administrators.

(4) Indexes to the materials listed in paragraph (a) of this section and in this paragraph (b) and an index to the Hearings, Appeals and Litigation Law (HALLEX) manual.

(5) Index of Administrative Staff Manuals and Instructions.

§ 402.60 Materials in field offices of the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

(a) *Materials available for inspection.* The following materials are available

Social Security Administration

§ 402.85

for inspection in the field offices of the Office of Hearings and Appeals:

(1) Regulations of the Social Security Administration (see § 402.55(a)(2)).

(2) Title 5, United States Code.

(3) Compilation of the Social Security Laws.

(4) Social Security Rulings.

(5) Social Security Handbook.

(6) Social Security Acquiescence Rulings.

(b) The Hearings, Appeals and Litigation Law (HALLEX) manual is available for inspection and copying in the field offices of the Office of Hearings and Appeals (fees may be applicable per §§ 402.155 through 402.185).

§ 402.65 Health care information.

We have some information about health care programs under titles XVIII and XIX (Medicare and Medicaid) of the Social Security Act. We follow the rules in 42 CFR part 401 in determining whether to provide any portion of it to a requester.

§ 402.70 Reasons for withholding some records.

Section 552(b) of the Freedom of Information Act contains nine exemptions to the mandatory disclosure of records. We describe these exemptions in §§ 402.75 through 402.110 of this part and explain how we apply them to disclosure determinations. (In some cases more than one exemption may apply to the same document.) Information obtained by the agency from any individual or organization, furnished in reliance on a provision for confidentiality authorized by applicable statute or regulation, will not be disclosed, to the extent it can be withheld under one of these exemptions. This section does not itself authorize the giving of any pledge of confidentiality by any officer or employee of the agency.

§ 402.75 Exemption one for withholding records: National defense and foreign policy.

We are not required to release records that, as provided by FOIA, 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 (b)

are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order." Executive Order No. 12958 (1995) (3 CFR, 1987 Comp., p. 235) provides for such classification. When the release of certain records may adversely affect U.S. relations with foreign countries, we usually consult with officials of those countries or officials of the Department of State. Also, we may on occasion have in our possession records classified by some other agency. We may refer your request for such records to the agency that classified them and notify you that we have done so.

§ 402.80 Exemption two for withholding records: Internal personnel rules and practices.

We are not required to release records that are "related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency." Under this exemption, we may withhold routine internal agency practices and procedures. For example, we may withhold guard schedules and rules governing parking facilities or lunch periods. Also under this exemption, we may withhold internal records whose release would help some persons circumvent the law or agency regulations. For example, we ordinarily do not disclose manuals that instruct our investigators or auditors how to investigate possible violations of law, to the extent that this release would help some persons circumvent the law.

§ 402.85 Exemption three for withholding records: Records exempted by other statutes.

We are not required to release records if another statute specifically allows or requires us to withhold them. We may use another statute to justify withholding only if it absolutely prohibits disclosure or if it sets forth criteria to guide our decision on releasing or identifies particular types of material to be withheld. We often use this exemption to withhold information regarding a worker's earnings which is tax return information under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code.