

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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disclosure of the agency records will not be contrary to the public interest and will not affect the rights of any person, the head of the office may authorize disclosure of the agency records. If the head of the office authorizes disclosure of the agency records, the head of the office will furnish the agency records to the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer, who will notify the requester of the determination in the manner provided in §9.27.

(g) *Initial disclosure determinations on requests for records located in offices under the Executive Director for Operations, the office of the Chief Financial Officer, and the office of the Chief Information Officer.* Except as provided in paragraph (h) of this section, if, as a result of the review specified in paragraph (f) of this section, the head of the responsible office finds that agency records should be denied in whole or in part, the head of the office will submit that finding to the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer, who will, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, make an independent determination whether the agency records should be denied in whole or in part. If the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer determines that the agency records sought are exempt from disclosure and disclosure of the records is contrary to the public interest and will adversely affect the rights of any person, the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer will notify the requester of the determination in the manner provided in §9.27.

(h) *Initial disclosure determinations on requests for records located in offices other than offices under the Executive Director for Operations.* For agency records located in the office of a Commissioner or in the Office of the Secretary of the Commission, the Assistant Secretary of the Commission will make the initial determination to deny agency records in whole or in part under §9.17(a) instead of the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer. For agency records located in the Office of the General Counsel, the General Counsel will make the initial determination to deny agency records in whole or in part instead of the Free-

dom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer. For agency records located in the Office of the Inspector General, the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations will make the initial determination to deny agency records in whole or in part instead of the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer. If the Assistant Secretary of the Commission, the General Counsel, or the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations determines that the agency records sought are exempt from disclosure and that their disclosure is contrary to the public interest and will adversely affect the rights of any person, the Assistant Secretary of the Commission, the General Counsel, or the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations will furnish that determination to the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer, who will notify the requester of the determination in the manner provided in §9.27.

(i) *Records and information originated by another Federal agency.* If a requested record is located that was originated or contains information originated by another Federal Government agency, or deals with subject matter over which an agency other than the NRC has exclusive or primary responsibility, the NRC will promptly refer the record to that Federal Government agency for disposition or for guidance regarding disposition.

(j) If the NRC does not respond to a request within the 20 working-day period, or within the extended periods described in paragraph (b) of this section, the requester may treat that delay as a denial of the request and immediately appeal as provided in §9.29(a) or sue in a Federal District Court as noted in §9.29(c).

§9.27 Form and content of responses.

(a) When the NRC has located a requested agency record and has determined to disclose the agency record, the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer will promptly furnish the agency record or notify the requester where and when the agency record will be available for inspection and copying. The NRC will also advise the requester of any applicable fees

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under §§9.35 and 9.37. The NRC will routinely place copies of non-sensitive agency records disclosed in response to Freedom of Information Act requests in the NRC Public Document Room and on microfiche in Local Public Document Rooms. Records will not be routinely placed in the NRC Public Document Room and Local Public Document Rooms that contain information personal to the requester, involve matters that are not likely to be of public interest to anyone other than the requester or contain privileged or proprietary information that should only be disclosed to the requester.

(b) When the NRC denies access to a requested agency record or denies a request for expedited processing or for a waiver or reduction of fees, the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer will notify the requester in writing. The denial will include as appropriate—

- (1) The reason for the denial;
- (2) A reference to the specific exemption under the Freedom of Information Act, or other appropriate reason, and the Commission's regulations authorizing the denial;
- (3) The name and title or position of each person responsible for the denial of the request, including the head of the office recommending denial of the record;
- (4) A statement stating why the request does not meet the requirements of §9.41 if the request is for a waiver or reduction of fees; and
- (5) A statement that the denial may be appealed within 30 calendar days from the date of the denial to the Executive Director for Operations, to the Secretary of the Commission, or to the Inspector General, as appropriate.

(c) The Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Officer will maintain a copy of each letter granting or denying requested agency records, denying a request for expedited processing, or denying a request for a waiver or reduction of fees in accordance with the NRC Comprehensive Records Disposition Schedule.

§9.29 Appeal from initial determination.

(a) A requester may appeal a notice of denial of a Freedom of Information

Act request for access to agency records, denial of a request for waiver or reduction of fees, or denial of a request for expedited processing under this subpart within 30 calendar days of the date of the NRC's denial. For agency records denied by an Office Director reporting to the Executive Director for Operations, the appeal should be addressed to the Executive Director for Operations and sent using an appropriate method listed in §9.6. For agency records denied by an Office Director reporting to the Commission, the Assistant Secretary of the Commission, or the Advisory Committee Management Officer and for a denial of a request for a waiver or reduction of fees, or denial of a request for expedited processing, the appeal must be in writing and addressed to the Secretary of the Commission. For agency records denied by the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, the appeal must be in writing and addressed to the Inspector General. The appeal should be clearly marked "Appeal from Initial FOIA Decision." The NRC does not consider an appeal that is not marked as indicated in this paragraph as received until it is actually received by the Executive Director for Operations, Secretary of the Commission, or the Inspector General.

(b) The NRC will make a determination on any appeal made under this section within 20 working days after the receipt of the appeal, except an appeal of the denial of a request for expedited processing will be determined within 10 working days after receipt of the appeal.

(c)(1) If the appeal is denied in whole or in part, the Executive Director for Operations or a Deputy Director, the Secretary of the Commission, or the Inspector General, as appropriate, will notify the requester of the denial, explaining the exemptions relied upon and how the exemptions apply to the agency records withheld.

(2) If, on appeal, the denial of a request for expedited processing or for a waiver or reduction of fees for locating and reproducing agency records is upheld in whole or in part, the Secretary of the Commission will notify the person making the request of the