

**§ 5.60 Schedule of fees.**

(a) Fees and charges are charged under this part as follows:

(1) *Search for records*—(i) *General*. Full search fees are charged for records requested by commercial use requesters. For records requested by representatives of the news media or educational or noncommercial scientific institutions whose purpose is scholarly or scientific research, no search fee is charged if the records requested are not for commercial use. For other requesters, if the records requested are not for commercial use, the first two hours of search time are provided without charge, except as limited in paragraph (a)(1)(iii) of this section. Search fees are recorded and assessed to the nearest quarter hour.

(ii) *Manual search*. The charge for a manual search is calculated by determining the search time to the nearest quarter hour and multiplying that figure by the sum of the basic rate of pay per hour of the employee conducting the search plus 16 percent of that rate.

(iii) *Computer search*. The charge for a computer search is calculated by determining the search time to the nearest quarter hour and multiplying that figure by the sum of the basic rate of pay per hour of the computer operator plus 16 percent of that rate plus \$287 per hour for computer operation. Two hours of search time on a computer search is deemed to have been spent if the cost of the search equals the equivalent of two hours of the computer operator's basic rate of pay per hour plus 16 percent of that rate.

(2) *Review of records*. Review fees are charged only for commercial use requests and only for the initial review. The review rate is calculated by determining the review time to the nearest quarter hour and multiplying that figure by the sum of the basic rate of pay per hour of the employee conducting the review plus 16 percent of that rate. If records requested under this part are stored elsewhere than the headquarters of the Department at Washington, DC, the mailing and handling costs of returning those records to the headquarters for review is added to the review costs.

(3) *Duplication of records*. No duplication fee is charged for the first 100

pages, except for commercial use requests. Duplication charges for paper copy reproduction of documents on photocopy machines is \$0.10 per page.

(4) *Certification of records*. The charge for certifying records is \$5 per record certified.

(5) *Other*. If no specific fee has been established for a service, or the request for a service does not fall under one of the categories in paragraphs (a)(1)–(4) of this section due to the amount or type of service, the Secretary is authorized to establish an appropriate fee, based on direct costs on a case-by-case basis as provided in the FOIA.

(b) If the Secretary awards a contract for a search or duplication of records for a FOI request, the fees charged are the actual costs under the contract.

(c) Fees are not charged if the total amount of the fee is less than \$5. If the total amount of the fee is \$5, or more, applicable search and review costs are charged even if no records are located or disclosed. The Secretary does not refund fees paid for services actually rendered.

(d) If the FOI Officer reasonably believes that a requester or group of requesters acting in concert is attempting to break down a request into multiple requests for the purpose of avoiding fee assessment, those requests and fees are aggregated and charged accordingly.

**§ 5.61 Notification of estimated fees.**

If the estimated fees under this section total more than \$25, or more than the maximum amount specified in the request if that amount exceeds \$25, the requester is:

(a) Notified promptly of the amount of the estimated fee or that portion of the fee as can readily be estimated; and

(b) Offered the opportunity to reformulate the request.

**§ 5.62 Advance payment of fees.**

(a) If the estimated fee for processing a request exceeds \$250, the FOI Officer:

(1) Notifies the requester of the anticipated cost and obtains satisfactory assurance of full payment if the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees; or