

§ 105-60.405 Processing requests for confidential commercial information.

(a) *General.* The following additional procedures apply when processing requests for confidential commercial information.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) *Confidential commercial information* means records provided to the Government by a submitter that contain material arguably exempt from release under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), because disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm.

(2) *Submitter* means a person or entity which provides to the Government information which may constitute confidential commercial information. The term *submitter* includes, but is not limited to, individuals, partnerships, corporations, State governments, and foreign governments.

(c) *Designating confidential commercial information.* Since January 1, 1988, submitters have been required to designate confidential commercial information as such when it is submitted to GSA or at a reasonable time thereafter. For information submitted in connection with negotiated procurements, the requirements of Federal Acquisition Regulation 48 CFR 15.407(c)(8) and 52.215-12 also apply.

(d) *Procedural requirements—consultation with the submitter.*(1) If GSA receives a FOIA request for potentially confidential commercial information, it will notify the submitter immediately by telephone and invite an opinion whether disclosure will or will not cause substantial competitive harm.

(2) GSA will follow up the telephonic notice promptly in writing before releasing any records unless paragraph (f) of this section applies.

(3) If the submitter indicates an objection to disclosure GSA will give the submitter seven workdays from receipt of the letter to provide GSA with a detailed written explanation of how disclosure of any specified portion of the records would be competitively harmful.

(4) If the submitter verbally states that there is no objection to disclosure,

GSA will confirm this fact in writing before disclosing any records.

(5) At the same time GSA notifies the submitter, it will also advise the requester that there will be a delay in responding to the request due to the need to consult with the submitter.

(6) GSA will review the reasons for nondisclosure before independently deciding whether the information must be released or should be withheld. If GSA decides to release the requested information, it will provide the submitter with a written statement explaining why his or her objections are not sustained. The letter to the submitter will contain a copy of the material to be disclosed or will offer the submitter an opportunity to review the material in none of GSA's offices. If GSA decides not to release the material, it will notify the submitter orally or in writing.

(7) If GSA determines to disclose information over a submitter's objections, it will inform the submitter the GSA will delay disclosure for 5 workdays from the estimated date the submitter receives GSA's decision before it releases the information. The decision letter to the requester shall state that GSA will delay disclosure of material it has determined to disclose to allow for the notification of the submitter.

(e) *When notice is required.* (1) For confidential commercial information submitted prior to January 1, 1988, GSA will notify a submitter whenever it receives a FOIA request for such information:

(i) If the records are less than 10 years old and the information has been designated by the submitter as confidential commercial information; or

(ii) If GSA has reason to believe that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm.

(2) For confidential commercial information submitted on or after January 1, 1988, GSA will notify a submitter whenever it determines that the agency may be required to disclose records:

(i) That the submitter has previously designated as privileged or confidential; or

(ii) That GSA believes could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm if disclosed.

(3) GSA will provide notice to a submitter for a period of up to 10 years after the date of submission.

(f) *When notice is not required.* The notice requirements of this section will not apply if:

(1) GSA determines that the information should not be disclosed;

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

(3) Disclosure of the information is required by law other than the FOIA;

(4) Disclosure is required by an agency rule that

(i) Was adopted pursuant to notice and public comment;

(ii) specifies narrow classes of records submitted to the agency that are to be released under FOIA; and

(iii) provides in exceptional circumstances for notice when the submitter provides written justification, at the time the information is submitted for a reasonable time thereafter, that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm;

(5) The information is not designated by the submitter as exempt from disclosure under paragraph (c) of this section, unless GSA has substantial reason to believe that disclosure of the information would be competitively harmful; or

(6) The designation made by the submitter in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section appears obviously frivolous; except that, in such cases, the agency must provide the submitter with written notice of any final administrative decision five workdays prior to disclosing the information.

(g) *Lawsuits.* If a FOIA requester sues the agency to compel disclosure of confidential commercial information, GSA will notify the submitter as soon as possible. If the submitter sues GSA to enjoin disclosure of the records, GSA will notify the requester.

Subpart 105–60.5—Exemptions

§ 105–60.501 Categories of records exempt from disclosure under the FOIA.

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

(1) Specifically authorized under the 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;

(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;

(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that such statute

(i) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue; or

(ii) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;

(4) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;

(5) Interagency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;

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

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

(i) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings;

(ii) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;

(iii) Could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(iv) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential