

Freedom of Information Act Officer may aggregate any such requests and charge accordingly.

(d) *Certification or authentication.* The fee for certification or authentication shall be \$3 per document.

(e) *Fees likely to exceed \$25.* If copying or search charges are likely to exceed \$25, the Freedom of Information Act Officer shall notify the requester of the estimated amount of the charges, unless the requester has indicated in advance a willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. The notification shall offer the requester an opportunity to confer with the Freedom of Information Act Officer to reformulate the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost.

(f) *Advance payments.* Advance payment of fees will generally not be required. If, however, charges are likely to exceed \$250, the Freedom of Information Act Officer shall notify the requester of the likely cost and: if the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA charges, obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment; or if the requester has no history of payment, require an advance payment of an amount up to the full estimated charge. If the requester has previously failed to pay a fee within 30 days of the date of billing, the Freedom of Information Act Officer may request the requester to pay the full amount owed plus any interest owed as provided in paragraph (g) of this section or demonstrate that he has, in fact, paid the fee, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated charges before the Freedom of Information Act Officer begins to process the new request or a pending request from that requester.

(g) *Interest on unpaid bills.* The Freedom of Information Act Officer shall begin assessing interest charges on unpaid bills starting on the thirty-first day after the date the bill was sent. The accrual of interest will be stayed when the Freedom of Information Act Officer receives a check in payment. Interest will be at the rate described in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and will accrue from the date of billing.

(h) *Debt collection procedures.* If bills are unpaid 60 days after the mailing of a written notice to the requester, the

Freedom of Information Act Officer may resort to the debt collection procedures set out in the Debt Collection Act of 1982, Pub. L. 97-365, including disclosure to consumer credit reporting agencies (see 26 U.S.C. 6103) and use of collection agencies to encourage payment. See 31 U.S.C. 3718 and 3302.

[53 FR 17930, May 19, 1988, as amended at 61 FR 14025, Mar. 29, 1996]

§ 2201.9 Waiver of fees.

(a) *General.* The Freedom of Information Act Officer shall waive part or all of the fees assessed under § 2201.8(b) if two conditions are satisfied: Disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government; and disclosure is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. The Freedom of Information Act Officer shall afford the requester the opportunity to show that he comes within these two conditions. The following factors may be considered in determining whether the two conditions are satisfied:

(1) Whether the subject of the requested records concerns the operations or activities of the government;

(2) Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of government operations or activities;

(3) Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and, if so, whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(b) *Partial waiver of fees.* If the two conditions stated in paragraph (a) of this section are met, the Freedom of Information Act Officer will ordinarily waive all fees. In exceptional cases, however, only a partial waiver may be granted if the request for records would impose an exceptional burden or require an exceptional expenditure of Commission resources, and the request for a waiver minimally satisfies the "public interest" requirement in paragraph (a) of this section.