

Federal Election Commission

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(5) Inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters which would not be available by law to a party in litigation with the Commission.

(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 source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of a record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source;

(v) Would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law; or

(vi) Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.

(b) Whenever a request is made which involves access to records described in 11 CFR 4.5(a)(7): and

(1) The investigation or proceeding involves a possible violation of criminal law; and

(2) There is reason to believe that—

(i) The subject of the investigation or proceeding is not aware of its pendency, and

(ii) Disclosure of the existence of the records could reasonably be expected to

interfere with enforcement proceedings;

The agency may, during only such time as that circumstance continues, treat the records as not subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

(c) Any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be provided to any person requesting such record after deletion of the portions which are exempt. The amount of information deleted shall be indicated on the released portion of the record, unless including that indication would harm an interest protected by an exemption in paragraph (a) of this section under which the deletion is made. If technically feasible, the amount of the information deleted shall be indicated at the place in the record where such deletion is made.

(d) If a requested record is one of another government agency or deals with subject matter to which a government agency other than the Commission has exclusive or primary responsibility, the request for such a record shall be promptly referred by the Commission to that agency for disposition or guidance as to disposition.

(e) Nothing in this part authorizes withholding of information or limiting the availability of records to the public, except as specifically provided in this part; nor is this part authority to withhold information from Congress.

[44 FR 33368, June 8, 1979, as amended at 50 FR 50778, Dec. 12, 1985; 52 FR 23638, June 24, 1987; 52 FR 39212, Oct. 21, 1987; 65 FR 9206, Feb. 24, 2000]

§ 4.6 Discretionary release of exempt records.

The Commission may, in its discretion, release requested records despite the applicability of the exemptions in § 4.5(a), if it determines that it is in the public interest and that the rights of third parties would not be prejudiced.

§ 4.7 Requests for records.

(a) [Reserved]

(b)(1) Requests for copies of records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act shall be addressed to FOIA officer, Federal Election Commission, 999 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20463. The request shall reasonably describe

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the records sought with sufficient specificity with respect to names, dates, and subject matter, to permit the records to be located. A requester will be promptly advised if the records cannot be located on the basis of the description given and that further identifying information must be provided before the request can be satisfied.

(2) Requests for Commission records and copies thereof shall specify the preferred form or format (including electronic formats) of the response. The Commission shall accommodate requesters as to form or format if the record is readily available in that form or format. When requesters do not specify the form or format of the response, the Commission shall respond in the form or format in which the document is most accessible to the Commission.

(c) The Commission shall determine within twenty working days after receipt of a request, or twenty working days after an appeal is granted, whether to comply with such request, unless in unusual circumstances the time is extended or subject to §4.9(f)(3), which governs advance payments. In the event the time is extended, the requestor shall be notified of the reasons for the extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be made, but in no case shall the extended time exceed ten working days. An extension may be made if it is—

(1) Necessary to locate records or transfer them from physically separate facilities; or

(2) Necessary to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a large quantity of separate and distinct records which are the subject of a single request; or

(3) Necessary for consultation with another agency which has a substantial interest in the determination of the request, or with two or more components of the Commission which have a substantial subject matter interest therein.

(d) If the Commission determines that an extension of time greater than ten working days is necessary to respond to a request satisfying the “unusual circumstances” specified in paragraph (c) of this section, the Commission shall so notify the requester and

give the requester an opportunity to limit the scope of the request so that it may be processed within the time limit prescribed in paragraph (c) of this section, or arrange with the Commission an alternative time frame for processing the request or a modified request.

(e) The Commission may aggregate and process as a single request requests by the same requester, or a group of requesters acting in concert, if the Commission reasonably believes that the requests actually constitute a single request that would otherwise satisfy the unusual circumstances specified in paragraph (c) of this section, and the requests involve clearly related matters.

(f) The Commission uses a multi-track system to process requests under the Freedom of Information Act that is based on the amount of work and/or time involved in processing requests. Requests for records are processed in the order they are received within each track. Upon receipt of a request for records, the Commission shall determine which track is appropriate for the request. The Commission may contact requesters whose requests do not appear to qualify for the fastest tracks and provide such requesters the opportunity to limit their requests so as to qualify for a faster track. Requesters who believe that their requests qualify for the fastest tracks and who wish to be notified if the Commission disagrees may so indicate in the request and, where appropriate and feasible, shall also be given an opportunity to limit their requests.

(g) The Commission shall consider requests for the expedited processing of requests in cases where the requester demonstrates a compelling need for such processing.

(1) The term compelling need means:

(i) That a failure to obtain requested records on an expedited basis could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or

(ii) With respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal government activity.

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(2) Requesters for expedited processing must include in their requests a statement setting forth the basis for the claim that a “compelling need” exists for the requested information, certified by the requester to be true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge and belief.

(3) The Commission shall determine whether to grant a request for expedited processing and notify the requester of such determination within ten days of receipt of the request. Denials of requests for expedited processing may be appealed as set forth in § 4.8. The Commission shall expeditiously determine any such appeal. As soon as practicable, the Commission shall process the documents responsive to a request for which expedited processing is granted.

(h) Any person denied access to records by the Commission shall be notified immediately giving reasons therefore, and notified of the right of such person to appeal such adverse determination to the Commission.

(i) The date of receipt of a request under this part shall be the date on which the FOIA Officer actually receives the request.

[44 FR 33368, June 8, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 31292, May 13, 1980; 50 FR 50778, Dec. 12, 1985; 52 FR 39213, Oct. 21, 1987; 65 FR 9206, Feb. 24, 2000]

§ 4.8 Appeal of denial.

(a) Any person who has been notified pursuant to § 4.6(d) of this part that his/her request for inspection of a record or for a copy has been denied, or who has received no response within ten working days (or within such extended period as is permitted under § 4.7(c) of this part) after the request has been received by the Commission, may appeal the adverse determination or the failure to respond by requesting the Commission to direct that the record be made available.

(b) The appeal request shall be in writing, shall clearly and prominently state on the envelope or other cover and at the top of the first page “FOIA Appeal”, and shall identify the record in the form in which it was originally requested.

(c) The appeal request should be delivered or addressed to the FOIA Offi-

cer, Federal Election Commission, 999 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20463.

(d) The requestor may state facts and cite legal or other authorities as he/she deems appropriate in support of the appeal request.

(e) For good cause shown, the Commission may disclose a record which is subject to one of the exemptions listed in § 4.5 of this part.

(f) The Commission will make a determination with respect to any appeal within twenty days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) after receipt of the appeal (or within such extended period as is permitted under § 4.7(c) of this part). If on appeal, the denial of the request for a record or a copy is in whole or in part upheld, the Commission shall advise the requestor of the denial and shall notify him/her of the provisions for judicial review of that determination as set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4).

(g) Because of the risk of misunderstanding inherent in oral communications, the Commission will not entertain any appeal from an alleged denial or failure to comply with an oral request. Any person who has orally requested a copy of a record that he/she believes to have been improperly denied should resubmit the request in writing as set forth in § 4.7.

[44 FR 33368, June 8, 1979, as amended at 50 FR 50778, Dec. 12, 1985]

§ 4.9 Fees.

(a) *Exceptions to fee charges*—(1) *General*. Except for a commercial use requester, the Commission will not charge a fee to any requester for the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication in response to any FOIA request.

(2) *Free computer search time*. For purposes of this paragraph, the term *search time* is based on the concept of a manual search. To apply this to a search conducted by a computer, the Commission will provide the equivalent dollar value of two hours of professional staff time, calculated according to paragraph (c)(4) of this section, in computer search time. Computer search time is determined by adding the cost of the computer connect time actually used for the search, calculated at the rate of \$25.00 per hour, to the