

WAC 192-15-040 Procedures for obtaining public records—Designation of departmental employees responsible for public records. (1) The public records of the employment security department shall be in the custody of the administrator, office of general administration, who will be responsible for implementing departmental regulations regarding the release of public records and for insuring compliance by departmental employees with chapters 50.13 and 42.17 RCW and chapter 192-15 WAC.

(2) The department shall appoint a responsible employee or employees in each job service center and tax office to handle requests for public records. In the central office, the records officer, and such agents as he appoints, shall handle such requests.

(a) The responsible departmental employees shall familiarize themselves with chapters 50.13 and 42.17 RCW, and chapter 192-15 WAC.

(b) All identifiable requests for public records shall be referred to these employees, except in cases of subpoenas which shall be handled as specified by WAC 192-15-070.

(3) Requests for public records may be made orally, except in the case of governmental agency requests for individual or employing unit records under RCW 50.13.060 which shall be handled as specified by WAC 192-15-060.

(a) If the responsible departmental employee is reasonably satisfied that the public record may be released under the provisions of chapters 42.17 and 50.13 RCW and these regulations, he may release it or provide access to the individual requesting it. If the employee is not satisfied that the requested information should be released, he shall refuse access to the public record.

(b) The departmental employee may consult with the department's records officer, or his agents, and/or any assistant attorney general for the department if he is unsure whether the public record should be released.

(4) Anyone refused access to public records held by the department who feels this refusal was improper may complete a request for public records form provided by the department at one of its offices.

(a) This form shall be published by the department's records officer and shall include a space for description of the records requested and for specification of reasons why the refusal of access was improper.

(b) The responsible departmental employee shall send the completed form to the department's records officer for consideration of the refusal.

(i) If the records officer, or his agents, decides that the public records may be disclosed under chapters 50.13 and 42.17 RCW and these regulations, he shall send the requested records to the appropriate departmental office or advise the date and place where the records will be available.

(ii) If the records officer, or his agents, decides that the public record cannot be disclosed or can only be partly disclosed under chapters 50.13 or 42.17 RCW and these regulations, he shall prepare a statement briefly explaining the reason that the record cannot be disclosed, including a statement of the specific statute prohibiting disclosure and an explanation of how the statute applies to the withheld record. This statement shall be forwarded to the proper job service center or tax office or to the person or agency requesting the records.

(iii) The records officer, or his agents, shall act as promptly as circumstances allow.

(5) In the event that the responsible departmental employee refuses access to records or information requested pursuant to RCW 50.13.050(1), the request form shall be sent to the appeal tribunal for handling by the examiner who is to hear the case in question. The examiner shall authorize the disclosure of the information or records if he deems them material to the proceeding. If the examiner does not deem the information or records material, he shall notify the interested party that they will not be disclosed and include an explanation of his action in his decision in the proceeding. After the decision of the appeal examiner and within the time limit provided in RCW 50.32.070, the interested party may petition the commissioner for a new hearing or the reopening of a hearing if the refusal to disclose was improper and prejudiced the presentation of the party's case. This procedure for review by the commissioner shall be in lieu of the procedure provided in WAC 192-15-050.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 50.13.030. WSR 78-09-027 (Order 1-78), § 192-15-040, filed 8/14/78.]