

WAC 220-120-050 Processing requests for public records. (1) **Order of processing public records requests.** The public records officer will process requests in the order allowing the greatest number of requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.

(2) **Acknowledging receipt of request.** Within five business days of receipt of the request, the public records officer will do one or more of the following:

(a) Provide the records or provide a web link to the records;

(b) Send the copies to the requestor if copies are requested and payment of a deposit for the copies, if any, is made or terms of payment are agreed upon;

(c) Acknowledge that the department has received the request, ask for clarification if the request is unclear, and provide a reasonable estimate of time required to respond to the request; or

(d) Deny the request.

(3) **If no response is received.** If the public records officer does not respond in writing within five business days of receipt of the request for disclosure, the requestor should contact the public records officer to ensure that the department received the request.

(4) **Protecting the rights of others.** In the event that the requested public records contain information that may affect rights of others and may, therefore, be exempt from disclosure, the public records officer may, prior to providing the records, give notice to such others whose rights may be affected by the disclosure. Such notice should be given so as to make it possible for those other persons to seek a court order to prevent or limit the disclosure. The notice to the affected persons may include a copy of the request.

(5) **Records exemption from disclosure.** Some records are exempt from disclosure, in whole or in part, as provided in chapter 42.56 RCW and in other statutes. If the department believes that a record is exempt from disclosure and should be withheld, the public records officer will state the specific exemption and provide a brief explanation of why the records or a portion of the record is being withheld. If only a portion of a record is exempt from disclosure, but the remainder is not exempt, the public records officer will redact the exempt portions, provide the nonexempt portions, and indicate to the requestor why portions of the record are being redacted.

(6) **Inspections of records.**

(a) Consistent with other demands, the department will promptly provide space to inspect public records it has assembled in response to a properly submitted public records request. No member of the public may remove a document from the viewing area or disassemble or alter any document. If, after inspecting a record or records, the requestor wishes to receive a copy of a particular record or records, he or she should so indicate to the public records officer. Copies will be provided pursuant to subsection (7) of this section.

(b) The requestor must inspect the assembled records within fourteen days of the department's notification to him or her that the records are available for inspection or copying. The department will notify the requestor in writing of this requirement and inform the requestor that he or she should contact the department to make arrangements to inspect the records. If the requestor fails to inspect the records within the fourteen-day period or make other arrangements, the department may close the request and refile the assembled records. If the requestor subsequently files the same or a substantially similar request, that subsequent request will be considered a new request and

will be processed in the order allowing the greatest number of requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.

(7) **Providing copies of records.**

(a) Upon request, the department will provide copies of requested records. Copies may be provided in either hard copy or electronic format, as requested. The cost for copies is set forth in WAC 220-120-060. If a requestor wishes to obtain a copy of a particular record or records after inspecting records, he or she should so indicate to the public records officer, who will make the requested copies or arrange for copying.

(b) Copies may be mailed or emailed to the requestor, or made available for pickup at the department's offices. If the copies are available for pickup at the department's offices, the requestor must pay for the copies within fourteen days of the department's notification to him or her that the copies are available for pickup. The department will notify the requestor in writing of this requirement and inform the requestor that he or she should contact the department to make arrangements to pay for and pick up the copies. If the requestor fails to pay for or pick up the copies within the fourteen-day period, or fails to make other arrangements, the department may close the request. If the requestor subsequently files the same or a substantially similar request, that subsequent request will be considered a new request and will be processed in the order allowing the greatest number of requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.

(8) **Electronic records.** The process for requesting electronic public records is the same as for requesting paper public records. When a person requests records in an electronic format, the public records officer will provide the nonexempt records, or portions of such records that are reasonably locatable, in an electronic format that is used by the agency and is generally commercially available, or in a format that is reasonably translatable from the format in which the agency keeps the record.

(9) **Providing records in installments.** When the request is for a large number of records, the public records officer may make the records available for inspection, or provide copies of the records in installments if he or she reasonably determines it would be practical to provide the records in that manner.

(10) **Closing a withdrawn or abandoned request.** If the requestor either withdraws the request or fails to fulfill his or her obligations to inspect the records or pay the deposit or final payment for the requested copies, then the public records officer may close the request.

(11) **Completion of inspection.** When the inspection of the requested records is complete and all requested copies are provided, the public records officer will indicate that the department has completed a diligent search for the requested records and has made any located, nonexempt records available for inspection. Thereafter, the public records officer may close the request.

(12) **Later discovered documents.** If, after the department informs the requestor that it has provided all available records, the public records officer becomes aware of additional responsive documents within one year that existed at the time of the request, the public records officer will promptly inform the requestor of the additional documents and make them available for inspection or provide copies on an expedited basis.

(13) **Failure to clarify or claim records.** The department may ask the requestor to clarify what information that the requestor is seek-

ing. If a requestor fails to respond to a request for clarification within a fourteen-day period, the public records officer may close the request. If a requestor fails to claim records that have been produced within a fourteen-day period, the public records officer may close the request.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.090 and 77.04.130. WSR 18-07-080, § 220-120-050, filed 3/19/18, effective 4/19/18. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.020, 77.04.055, and 77.12.047. WSR 17-05-112 (Order 17-04), amended and recodified as § 220-120-050, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17. Statutory Authority: Chapter 42.56 RCW, RCW 42.56.040, 77.04.013, and 77.12.047. WSR 12-15-001 (Order 12-139), § 220-80-080, filed 7/6/12, effective 8/6/12; Order 1104, § 220-80-080, filed 11/26/73.]