

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Purpose: This directive provides guidance for administering and implementing the FOIA in the Bureau of Reclamation. It is to be used in conjunction with the Departmental Manual, 383 DM 15, in responding to FOIA requests.

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552, Freedom of Information Act; 43 CFR Part 2, Subparts A and B, Records and Testimony: Freedom of Information Act; 383 DM 15, Freedom of Information Act Handbook.

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1. **FOIA.** The FOIA was enacted to make Government records available to the public to the greatest extent possible. Any request from a member of the public must be treated as a FOIA if the request specifically cites the FOIA. Even though a request does not specifically cite the FOIA, it should be treated as one if it benefits the requester.
2. **Responsibilities of Reclamation's FOIA Officer.** Reclamation's FOIA officer is located in the Directives and Paperwork Management Team. The FOIA officer will:
 - A. Ensure compliance with all requirements of the FOIA;
 - B. Coordinate Reclamation-wide and multi-region/office responses;
 - C. Research unusual or complicated issues related to the FOIA;
 - D. Provide assistance and training to the FOIA coordinators;
 - E. Provide training and guidance to program offices responding to FOIA requests and those offices having signatory authority;
 - F. Prepare and consolidate the Reclamation-wide annual FOIA report and other Departmental requests;
 - G. Interpret and disseminate Interior, Department of Justice, and Executive Office of the President FOIA guidelines/directives;
 - H. Disseminate FOIA requests referred from Interior;
 - I. Coordinate denials with the Office of the Solicitor; and

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- J. Monitor or coordinate replies to all appeals.
3. **Responsibilities of Reclamation's FOIA Coordinators.** A FOIA coordinator is designated for Washington/Denver and in each regional office. FOIA coordinators will:
- A. Ensure compliance with all criteria of the FOIA;
 - B. Coordinate local FOIA responses;
 - C. Provide input for Reclamation-wide responses;
 - D. Provide training and guidance to program offices responding to FOIA requests and those offices having signatory authority;
 - E. Coordinate denials with the Office of the Solicitor; and
 - F. Provide input to the annual FOIA report and other reports as requested.
4. **Signatory Authority.** Directors in Washington, Denver, and the regional offices have the authority to sign FOIA responses and may, at their discretion, delegate the signatory authority for all FOIA responses to lower levels.