

PART 1204—AVAILABILITY OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552 and 1204, Pub. L. 99-570, Pub. L. 104-231, and E.O. 12600.

SOURCE: 64 FR 51039, Sept. 21, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Purpose and Scope

§ 1204.1 Purpose.

This part implements the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, as amended, by stating the procedures to follow when requesting information from the Board, and by stating the fees that will be charged for that information.

§ 1204.2 Scope.

(a) For the purpose of this part, the term *record* and any other term used in reference to information includes any information that would be a Board record subject to the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552 when maintained by the Board in any format including an electronic format. All written requests for information that are not processed under part 1205 of this chapter will be processed under this part. The Board may continue, without complying with this part, to furnish the public with the information it has furnished in the regular course of performing its official duties, unless furnishing the information would violate the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, or another law.

(b) When the subject of the record, or the subject's representative, requests a

record from a Privacy Act system of records, as that term is defined by 5 U.S.C. 552a(a)(5), and the Board retrieves the record by the subject's name or other personal identifier, the Board will handle the request under the procedures and fees shown in part 1205 of this chapter. When a third party requests access to those records, without the written consent of the subject of the record, the Board will handle the request under this part.

(c) When a party to an appeal requests a copy of a tape recording, video tape, or transcript (if one has been prepared) of a hearing that the Board or a judge held under part 1201 or part 1209 of this chapter, the Board will handle the request under § 1201.53 of this chapter. When someone other than a party to the appeal makes this request, the Board will handle the request under this part.

(d) In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), the Board's final opinions and orders (including concurring and dissenting opinions), those statements of policy and interpretations adopted by the Board and that are not published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public, and agency records processed and disclosed in response to a FOIA request that the Board determines have been or are likely to become the subject of additional requests for basically the same records and a general index of those records, are available for public review and copying in the Board's Headquarters' Library, 1615 M Street, NW., Washington, DC 20419-0001, and on the Board's World Wide Web site at <http://www.mspb.gov>.

[64 FR 51039, Sept. 21, 1999, as amended at 65 FR 48885, Aug. 10, 2000]

Subpart B—Procedures for Obtaining Records Under the Freedom of Information Act

§ 1204.11 Request for access to Board records.

(a) *Sending a request.* A person may request a Board record under this part by writing to the office that has the record. If the requester believes that the records are located in a regional or

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field office, the request must be sent to that office. A list of the addresses of the Board's regional and field offices are in appendix II of part 1201 of this chapter and on the Board's World Wide Web site at <http://www.mspb.gov>. Other requests must be sent to the Clerk of the Board, 1615 M Street, NW., Washington, DC 20419-0001. Requests sent under this part must be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Request" on both the envelope and the request.

(b) *Description.* A request must describe the records wanted in enough detail for Board employees to locate the records with no more than a reasonable effort. Wherever possible, a request must include specific information about each record, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, and subject matter of the record. In addition, if the request asks for records on cases decided by the Board, it must show the title of the case, the MSPB docket number, and the date of the decision.

(c) *Time limits and decisions.* If a request is not properly labeled or is sent to the wrong office, the time for processing the request will begin when the proper office receives it. Requests to the Board's headquarters will be decided by the Clerk of the Board. Requests to one of the regional or field offices will be decided by the Regional Director or Chief Administrative Judge. The Board will decide a request within 20 workdays after the appropriate office receives it, except under the conditions that follow.

(1) *Extension of time.* If "unusual circumstances" exist, the Board may extend the time for deciding the request by no more than 10 additional workdays. An example of unusual circumstances could be the need to find and retrieve records from regional or field offices or from federal records centers or the need to search, collect and or examine a large number of records which are demanded in a single request, or the need to talk to another agency with a substantial interest in the determination of the request. When the Board extends the time to decide the request, it will inform the requester in writing and describe the "unusual circumstances", and it will state a date on which a decision on the

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request will be made. If the "unusual circumstances" are such that the Board cannot comply with the request within the time limit, the Board will offer the requester an opportunity:

(i) To limit the request so that it may be processed within the time limit, or

(ii) To arrange with the Board a different time frame for processing the request or a changed request.

(2) *Expedited processing.* Where a requester shows a "compelling need" and in other cases determined by the Board, a decision whether to provide expedited processing of a request and notification of that decision to the requester will be made within 10 workdays of the date of the request. An example of a compelling need could be that a failure to obtain the records expeditiously could reasonably be expected to be a threat to the life or physical safety of a person or that there is urgency to inform the public about actual or alleged Federal Government activity by a person primarily engaged in distributing information. Where the Board approves expeditious processing, the Board will process the request within 5 workdays from the date of the decision to grant the expeditious processing. If, in order to fully satisfy the request, the Board requires the standard or additional processing time, or if it decides that good cause for expedited processing has not been made, it will provide written notice of its decision to the requester and will inform the requester of the right to administrative and court review of the decision. A showing of a compelling need must be made by a statement certified to be true to the best of the requester's knowledge and belief.

[64 FR 51039, Sept. 21, 1999, as amended at 65 FR 48886, Aug. 10, 2000]

§ 1204.12 Fees.

(a) *General.* The Board will charge the requester fees for services provided in processing requests for information. Those fees will be charged according to the schedule in paragraph (d) of this section, and will recover the full allowable direct costs that the Board incurs. Fees may be charged for time spent searching for information, even if the Board fails to locate responsive