

§ 1250.26 How quickly will NARA respond to my FOIA request?

(a) NARA will make an initial response to all FOIA requests within 20 working days. The initial response will inform requesters of any complexity in processing their request, which may lengthen the time required to reach a final decision on the release of the records.

(b) In most cases, NARA will make a decision on the release of the records you requested within the 20 working days. If unusual circumstances prevent us from making a decision within 20 working days, we will inform you in writing how long it will take us to complete your request. Unusual circumstances are the need to:

(1) Search for and collect the records from field facilities;

(2) Search for, collect, and review a voluminous amount of records which are part of a single request; or

(3) Consult with another agency before releasing records.

(c) If we are extending the deadline for more than an additional 10 working days, we will ask you if you wish to modify your request so that we can meet the deadline. If you do not agree to modify your request, we will work with you to arrange an alternative time schedule for review and release.

(d) If you have requested records that we do not have the authority to release without consulting another agency (e.g. security-classified records), we will refer copies of the documents to the appropriate agency. NARA will send you an initial response to your FOIA requests within 20 working days informing you of this referral. However, the final response to your FOIA can only be made when the agency to which we have referred the documents responds to us.

(e) If you have requested Presidential records and NARA decides to grant you access, NARA must inform the incumbent and former Presidents of our intention to disclose information from those records. After receiving the notice, the incumbent and former Presidents have 30 days in which to decide whether or not to invoke Executive privilege to deny access to the information. NARA will send you an initial response to your FOIA request within

20 working days informing you of the status of your request. However, the final response to your FOIA can only be made at the end of the 30-day Presidential notification period.

(f) If you have requested records containing confidential commercial information that is less than 10 years old, we will contact the submitter of the requested information. NARA will send you an initial response to your FOIA request within 20 working days informing you of our actions. See §1250.82 for the time allowed the submitter to object to the release of confidential commercial information. If the records contain confidential commercial information that is 10 years old or older, NARA staff will not contact the submitter, but will process the request under normal FOIA procedures.

§ 1250.28 Will NARA ever expedite the review of the records I requested?

(a) In certain cases NARA will move your FOIA request or appeal to the head of our FOIA queue. We will do this for any of the following reasons:

(1) A reasonable expectation of an imminent threat to an individual's life or physical safety;

(2) A reasonable expectation of an imminent loss of a substantial due process right; or

(3) An urgent need to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal government activity (this last criterion applies only to those requests made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information to the public).

(b) NARA can expedite requests, or segments of requests, only for records over which we have control. If NARA must refer a request to another agency, we will so inform you and suggest that you seek expedited review from that agency. We cannot expedite requests for Presidential records or shorten the 30-day Presidential notification period.

§ 1250.30 How do I request expedited processing?

You must submit a statement, certified to be true and correct to the best of your knowledge, explaining the basis of your need for expedited processing. All such requests must be sent to the

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appropriate official at the address listed in §1250.22. You may request expedited processing when you first request records or at any time during our processing of your request.

§ 1250.32 How quickly will NARA process an expedited request?

We will respond to you within 10 days of our receipt of your request for expedited processing. If we grant your request, the NARA office responsible for the review of the requested records will process your request as quickly as possible. If we deny your request for expedited processing and you decide to appeal our denial, we will also expedite our review of your appeal.

§ 1250.34 How will I know if NARA is going to release the records I requested?

Once NARA decides to release the requested records, in whole or in part, we will inform you in writing. Our response will tell you how much responsive material we found, where you may review the records, and the copying or other charges due. If the records you

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sought were released only in part, we will estimate, if possible, the amount of the withheld information. Also, if we deny any part of your request, our response will explain the reasons for the denial, which FOIA exemptions apply, and your right to appeal our decisions.

§ 1250.36 When will NARA deny a FOIA request?

The FOIA contains nine exemptions under which information may be exempted from release. Given the age and nature of archival records, many of these exemptions apply to only a few of the records in our custody. We will only withhold information where we must (such as information which remains classified, or information which is specifically closed by statute) or we reasonably foresee that disclosure would cause a harm. In addition if only part of a record must be withheld, NARA will provide access to the rest of the information in the record. Categories of information that may be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA are as follows:

SECTION OF THE FOIA:	REASON FOR EXEMPTION:
5 U.S.C. 552(b)(1)	Specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and are in fact properly classified under the Executive order.
5 U.S.C. 552(b)(2)	Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.
5 U.S.C. 552(b)(3)	Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that the statute: (A) Requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue; or (B) Establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld.
5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4)	Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person that are privileged or confidential.
5 U.S.C. 552(b)(5)	Inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency.
5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6)	Personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.