

Implementation of Multitrack Processing in DOI

Effective January 8, 2007, all bureaus/offices in the Department of the Interior (DOI) are required to use multitrack processing (see 43 CFR 2.26). This means that bureaus/offices will be using three tracks to process their FOIA requests. The availability of multitrack processing does not affect expedited processing in accordance with 43 CFR 2.14. Bureaus/offices will ensure that requests are processed fairly by treating similarly situated requests in a like manner.

- FOIA requests will be placed in one of three tracks based on the amount of time needed to process the request:
 1. Simple: 1-5 workdays
 2. Normal: 20 workdays
 3. Complex: over 20 workdays

Please note: the time limits for all of the tracks above begin to run when a request, complying with the procedures in 43 CFR 2.8 and 2.10, is received by the FOIA Contact at the bureau/office that has the requested records, except when a request is misdirected to the wrong DOI FOIA office. When a request is sent to a DOI FOIA office that is designated by regulation to receive FOIA requests but that would not have the records described in the request, the 20-workday time period for DOI response will begin on the date the request is first received by the proper DOI FOIA office, but not later than ten days after the initial (wrong) DOI FOIA office received it.

In considering which track to place a request in, bureaus/offices should also consider whether the request potentially involves a voluminous amount of records, lengthy consultations with other entities, and whether the request may involve sensitive records.

- Requesters should assume, unless notified by the bureau/office that their request is in the "Normal" track.
- The bureau/office will notify the requester as soon as possible if it has placed the request in the "Complex" track. The bureau/office should provide a requester filing a "Complex" request with an opportunity to limit the scope of the request. If the requester limits the scope of his/her request, it may result in faster processing (43 CFR 2.26(b)). The bureau/office will contact the requester by telephone or in writing, whichever is more efficient in each case. In the event the requester is contacted by telephone, the bureau/office will confirm in writing.
- In the event the Department determines that a single consolidated response to a request seeking documents from multiple bureaus/offices is appropriate, the request will be considered "Complex."
- Bureaus/offices will exercise due diligence in processing requests in accordance with the requirements of the FOIA.

- Each bureau/office will provide notification to the public via its FOIA website that it is using multitrack processing (see <http://www.doi.gov/foia/burindx.html>).