

§ 518.20 Avoidance of procedural obstacles.

DoD Components shall ensure that procedural matters do not unnecessarily impede a requester from obtaining DoD records promptly. Components shall provide assistance to requesters to help them understand and comply with procedures established by this regulation and any supplemental regulations published by the DoD Components.

§ 518.21 Prompt action on requests.

When a member of the public complies with the procedures established in this part for obtaining DoD records, the request shall receive prompt attention; a reply shall be dispatched within 10 working days, unless a delay is authorized. When a Component has a significant number of requests, e.g., 10 or more, the requests shall be processed in order of receipt. However, this does not preclude a Component from completing action on a request which can be easily answered, regardless of its ranking within the order of receipt. A DoD Component may expedite action on a request regardless of its ranking within the order of receipt upon a showing of exceptional need or urgency. Exceptional need or urgency is determined at the discretion of the complement processing the request.

(a) The 10-day period prescribed for review of initial requests under the FOIA (5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)) starts only when the request—

- (1) Is in writing.
- (2) Reasonably describes the record requested.
- (3) Is received by the proper official designated to answer the request (see appendix B to this part).
- (4) Meets the procedural requirements of this part (see § 518.85(b)(9)).

(b) All requests shall refer explicitly or implicitly to the Freedom of Information Act, to ensure their prompt recognition as FOIA actions.

(c) Members of the public who make FOIA requests should carefully follow the guidance in this part. They should send requests to the office that has the desired record or to a specific agency FOIA official for referral. The Army Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Division, Information Systems

Command, Attn: ASQNS-OF-F, room 1146, Hoffman Building I, Alexandria, VA 22331-0301 can supply correct addresses.

(d) See Army Regulation 340-21 for Privacy Act procedures.

[56 FR 48932, Sept. 26, 1991, as amended at 56 FR 56010, Oct. 31, 1991]

§ 518.22 Use of exemptions.

(a) It is the DoD policy to make records publicly available, unless they qualify for exemption under one or more of the nine exemptions. Components (IDA) may elect to make a discretionary release, however, a discretionary release is generally not appropriate for records exempt under exemptions 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7(c). Exemptions 4, 6, and 7(c) cannot be claimed when the requester is the submitter of the information.

(b) Parts of a requested record may be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA. The proper DA official may delete exempt information and release the remainder to the requester. The proper official also has the discretion under the FOIA to release exempt information; he or she must exercise this discretion in a reasonable manner, within regulations. The excised copies shall reflect the denied information by means of Blackened areas, which are Sufficiently Blackened as to reveal no information. The best means to ensure illegibility is to cut out the information from a copy of the document and reproduce the appropriate pages. If the document is classified, all classification markings shall be lined through with a single black line, which still allows the marking to be read. The document shall then be stamped "Unclassified".

[56 FR 48932, Sept. 26, 1991, as amended at 56 FR 56010, Oct. 31, 1991]

§ 518.23 Public domain.

Nonexempt records released under the authority of this part are considered to be in the public domain. Such records may also be made available in Components' reading rooms to facilitate public access. Exempt records released pursuant to this part or other statutory or regulatory authority, however, may be considered to be in