

the records sought and in reformulating the request to reduce the burden on the agency in complying with the Act. DA officials will reply to unclear requests by letter. The letter will—

(1) Describe the defects in the request.

(2) Explain the types of information in paragraph (b) of this section, and ask the requester for such information.

(3) Explain that no action will be taken on the request until the requester replies to the letter.

(b) The following guidelines are provided to deal with “fishing expedition” requests and are based on the principle of reasonable effort. Descriptive information about a record may be divided into two broad categories.

(1) Category I is file-related and includes information such as type of record (for example, memorandum), title, index citation, subject area, date the record was created, and originator.

(2) Category II is event-related and includes the circumstances that resulted in the record being created or the date and circumstances surrounding the event the record covers.

(c) Generally, a record is not reasonably described unless the description contains sufficient Category I information to permit the conduct of an organized, nonrandom search based on the Component’s filing arrangements and existing retrieval systems, or unless the record contains sufficient Category II information to permit inference of the Category I elements needed to conduct such a search.

(d) The following guidelines deal with requests for personal records. Ordinarily, when personal identifiers are provided only in connection with a request for records concerning the requester, only records retrievable by personal identifiers need be searched. Search for such records may be conducted under Privacy Act procedures. No record may be denied that is releasable under the FOIA.

(e) The above guidelines notwithstanding, the decision of the DoD Component concerning reasonableness of description must be based on knowledge of its files. If the description enables DoD Component personnel with reasonable effort, the description is adequate.

§ 518.26 Referrals.

(a) A request received by a DoD Component having no records responsive to a request shall be referred routinely to another DoD Component, if the other Component confirms that it has the requested record, and this belief can be confirmed by the other DoD Component. In cases where the Component receiving the request has reason to believe that the existence or nonexistence of the record may in itself be classified, that Component will consult the DoD Component having cognizance over the record in question before referring the request. If the DoD Component that is consulted determines that the existence or nonexistence of the record is in itself classified, the requester shall be so notified by the DoD Component originally receiving the request, and no referral shall take place. Otherwise, the request shall be referred to the other DoD Component, and the requester shall be notified of any such referral. Any DoD Component receiving a request that has been misaddressed shall refer the request to the proper address and advise the requester. Within the Army, referrals will be made directly to offices that may have custody of requested records. If the office receiving the FOIA request does not know where the requested records are located, the request and an explanatory cover letter will be forwarded to The Army Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Division, Information Systems Command, Attn: ASQNS-OP-F, room 1146, Hoffman Building I, Alexandria, VA 22331-0301.

(b) Whenever a record or a portion of a record is, after prior consultation, referred to another DoD Component or to a Government agency outside of the Department of Defense for a release determination and direct response, the requester shall be informed of the referral. Referred records shall only be identified to the extent consistent with security requirements.

(c) A DoD Component shall refer an FOIA request for a classified record that it holds to another DoD Component or agency outside the Department of Defense, if the record originated in the other DoD Component or outside agency or if the classification is derivative. In this situation, provide the

record and a release recommendation on the record with the referral action.

(d) A DoD Component may also refer a request for a record that it originated to another DoD Component or agency when the record was created for the use of the other DoD Component or agency. The DoD Component or agency for which the record was created may have an equally valid interest in withholding the record as the DoD Component that created the record. In such situations, provide the record and a release recommendation on the record with the referral action. An example of such a situation is a request for audit reports prepared by the Defense Contract Audit Agency. These advisory reports are prepared for the use of contracting officers and their release to the audited contractor shall be at the discretion of the contracting officer. Any FOIA request shall be referred to the appropriate contracting officer and the requester shall be notified of the referral.

(e) Within the Department of Defense, a Component shall ordinarily refer an FOIA request for a record that it holds, but that was originated by another DoD Component or that contains substantial information obtained from another DoD Component, to that Component for direct response, after direct coordination and obtaining concurrence from the Component. The requester then shall be notified of such referral. DoD Components shall not, in any case, release or deny such records without prior consultation with the other DoD Component.

(f) DoD Components that receive referred requests shall answer them in accordance with the time limits established by the FOIA and this Regulation. Those time limits shall begin to run upon receipt of the referral by the official designated to respond.

(g) Agencies outside the Department of Defense that are subject to the FOIA:

(1) A Component may refer as FOIA request for any record that originated in an agency outside the DoD or that is based on information obtained from an outside agency to the agency for direct response to the requester after coordination with the outside agency, if that agency is subject to FOIA. Otherwise,

the Component must respond to the request.

(2) A DoD Component shall refer to the agency that provided the record any FOIA request for investigative, intelligence, or any other type of records that are on loan to the Department of Defense for a specific purpose, if the records are restricted from further release and so marked. However, if for investigative or intelligence purposes, the outside agency desires anonymity, a Component may only respond directly to the requester after coordination with the outside agency.

(3) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in § 518.26, a Component shall notify requesters seeking National Security Council (NSC) or White House documents that they should write directly to the NSC or White House for such documents. DoD documents in which the NSC or White House has a concurrent reviewing interest shall be forwarded to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (OASD(PA)), Attn: Directorate For Freedom of Information and Security Review (DFOISR), which shall effect coordination with the NSC or White House, and return the documents to the originating agency after NSC review and determination. NSC or White House documents discovered in Components' files which are responsive to the FOIA request shall be forwarded to OASD(PA), Attn: DFOISR, for subsequent coordination with the NSC or White House, and returned to the Component with a release determination.

(h) To the extent referrals are consistent with the policies expressed by this paragraph, referrals between offices of the same DoD Component are authorized.

(i) On occasion, the Department of Defense receives FOIA requests for General Accounting Office (GAO) documents containing DoD information. Even though the GAO is outside the Executive Branch, and not subject to the FOIA, all FOIA requests for GAO documents containing DoD information received either from the public, or on referral from the GAO, will be processed under the provisions of the FOIA.

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In DA, requests received for GAO documents that contain classified Army information will be handled by the Army Inspector General's Office.

§ 518.27 Authentication.

Records provided under this part shall be authenticated with an appropriate seal, whenever necessary, to fulfill an official Government or other legal function. This service, however, is in addition to that required under the FOIA and is not included in the FOIA fee schedule. DoD Components may charge for the service at a rate of \$5.20 for each authentication.

§ 518.28 Unified and specified commands.

(a) The Unified Commands are placed under the jurisdiction of the OSD, instead of the administering Military Department, only for the purpose of administering the DoD FOIA Program. This policy represents an exception to the policies directed in DoD Directive 5100.3 (reference (f)); it authorizes and requires the Unified Commands to process Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in accordance with DoD Directive 5400.7 (reference (b)) and this Regulation. The Unified Commands shall forward directly to the OASD(PA), all correspondence associated with the appeal of an initial denial for records under the provisions of the FOIA. Procedures to effect this administrative requirement are outlined in appendix A. For Army components of unified commands, if the requested records are joint documents, process the FOIA request through unified command channels. If the requested documents are Army-unique, process the FOIA request through Army channels.

(b) The Specified Commands remain under the jurisdiction of the administering Military Department. The Commands shall designate IDAs within their headquarters; however, the appellate authority shall reside with the Military Department.

§ 518.29 Relationship between the FOIA and the Privacy Act (PA).

Not all requesters are knowledgeable of the appropriate statutory authority to cite when requesting records. In

some instances, they may cite neither Act, but will imply one or both Acts. For these reasons, the following guidelines are provided to ensure that requesters receive the greatest amount of access rights under both Acts:

(a) Requesters who seek records about themselves contained in a PA system of records and who cite or imply the PA, will have their requests processed under the provisions of the PA.

(b) Requesters who seek records about themselves which are not contained in a PA system of records and who cite or imply the PA, will have their requests processed under the provisions of the FOIA, since they have no access under the PA.

(c) Requesters who seek records about themselves which are contained in a PA system of records and who cite or imply the FOIA or both Acts will have their requests processed under the time limits of the FOIA and the exemptions and fees of the PA. This is appropriate since greater access will be received under the PA.

(d) Requesters who seek access to agency records and who cite or imply the PA and FOIA, will have their requests processed under the FOIA.

(e) Requesters who seek access to agency records and who cite or imply the FOIA, will have their requests processed under the FOIA.

(f) Requesters should be advised in final responses why their request was processed under a particular Act.

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§ 518.30 Records management.

FOIA records shall be maintained and disposed of in accordance with DoD Component Disposition instructions and schedules. See AR 25-400-2. AR 25-1 contains Army policy for records management requirements in the life cycle management of information. Information access and release, to include potential electronic access by the public, will be considered during information systems design.