

3717 for interest rates and coordinate with your accounting and finance office.

(2) Pay estimated fees in advance.

(h) If a requester has no payment history, or has not paid on time in the past, FOIA managers may ask the requester to pay after processing the request but before sending the records.

(i) When employees with different hourly rates search for information for an "Other" (Category 3) requester, waive the cost of the most expensive 2 hours of search. Requesters receive the first 2 hours search (Category 3 requesters only) and the first 100 pages of duplication (Categories 2 and 3) free only once per request. If you complete your work and refer the request to another FOI office for action, tell that FOI office how much time you spent searching and how many pages you copied for the requester.

§ 806.19 Aggregating requests.

A requester may make many requests at once, each seeking parts of a document or documents, just to avoid paying fees. When a requester or a group of requesters breaks a request into many requests to avoid paying, the FOIA manager may combine the requests and charge accordingly. Before combining requests, be sure you have solid evidence that the requesters are trying to avoid fees. Do not combine one requester's multiple requests on unrelated subjects. Contact SAF/AAIQ before taking action.

§ 806.20 Fee waivers.

(a) Waive fees for requesters of all categories when:

(1) FOIA costs total \$15 or less.

(2) A record is created voluntarily to save the cost of supplying many records.

(3) A record previously withheld is released at small cost (e.g., \$15 to \$30).

(4) Releasing the information is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the DoD and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(b) A waiver in the public interest establishes the two basic requirements below. Both must be met before you waive or reduce fees. Use the following

six factors. Begin with the first four factors to determine "public interest" and then use the two remaining factors to decide if release "is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester."

(1) *Requirement 1.* Is releasing the information in the public interest business it will probably contribute significantly to public understanding of the government's operations or activities?

(i) *Factor 1—Subject of the Request.* Analyze whether the subject matter will significantly contribute to the public understanding of DoD operations or activities. Requests made for records in DoD's possession originated by nongovernment organizations for their intrinsic content rather than informative value will likely not contribute to public understanding of DoD operations or activities. Press clippings, magazine articles, or records expressing an opinion or concern from a member of the public regarding a DoD activity are such records. Releasing older records may be relevant to current DoD activities, so do not discount it under this factor simply because it is old. For example, a requester might want historical records to study how a certain current DoD policy evolved. Review these requests closely, comparing the requester's stated purpose for the records and the potential for public understanding of DoD operations and activities.

(ii) *Factor 2—Informative Value.* Closely analyze a record's substantive contents to determine whether disclosure is meaningful, and will inform the public on DoD operations or activities. While the subject of a request may contain information concerning DoD operations or activities it may not always help people understand these operations or activities. One example is a heavily edited record, containing only random words, fragmented sentences, or paragraph headings. Another example is information already in the public domain.

(iii) *Factor 3—General Public Will Understand the Subject Better.* Will the records' release inform, or have the potential to inform, the public or just the requester or a few interested persons? Knowing the requester's identity is essential to determine whether he or she