

## §2.110

to allow EPA to identify and locate the requested records, the EPA office taking action under §2.111 will notify the requestor (by telephone when practicable) that the request cannot be further processed until additional information is furnished.

(b) EPA will make every reasonable effort to assist in the identification and description of records sought and to assist the requestor in formulating his request. If a request is described in general terms (e.g., all records having to do with a certain area), the EPA office taking action under §2.111 may communicate with the requestor (by telephone when practicable) with a view toward reducing the administrative burden of processing a broad request and minimizing the fees payable by the requestor. Such attempts will not be used as a means to discourage requests, but rather as a means to help identify with more specificity the records actually sought.

### §2.110 Responsibilities of Freedom of Information Officers.

(a) Upon receipt of a written request, the Freedom of information Officer (whether at EPA Headquarters or at an EPA region) shall mark the request with the date of receipt, and shall attach to the request a control slip indicating the date of receipt, the date by which response is due, a unique Request Identification Number, and other pertinent administrative information. The request and control slip shall then be forwarded immediately to the EPA office believed to be responsible for maintaining the records requested. (If the records requested are believed to be located at two or more EPA offices, each such office shall be furnished a copy of the request and control slip, with instructions concerning which office shall serve as the lead office for coordinating the response.) The Freedom of Information Officer shall retain a file copy of the request and control slip, and shall monitor the handling of the request to ensure a timely response.

(b) The Freedom of Information Officer shall maintain a file concerning each request received, which shall contain a copy of the request, initial and

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appeal determinations, and other pertinent correspondence and records.

(c) The Freedom of Information officer shall collect and maintain the information necessary to compile the reports required by 5 U.S.C. 552(d).

### §2.111 Action by office responsible for responding to request.

(a) Whenever an EPA office becomes aware that it is responsible for responding to a request, the office shall:

(1) Take action under §2.109, if required, to obtain a better description of the records requested;

(2) Locate the records as promptly as possible, or determine that the records are not known to exist, or that they are located at another EPA office, or that they are located at another Federal agency and not possessed by EPA;

(3) When appropriate, take action under §2.120(c) to obtain payment or assurance of payment;

(4) If any located records contain business information, as defined in §2.201(c), comply with subpart B of this part;

(5) Determine which of the requested records legally must be withheld, and why (see §2.119(b));

(6) Of the requested records which are exempt from mandatory disclosure but which legally may be disclosed (see §2.119(a)), determine which records will be withheld, and why;

(7) Issue all initial determination within the allowed period (see §2.112), specifying (individually or by category) which records will be disclosed and which will be withheld, and signed by a person authorized to issue the determination under §2.113(b). Denials of requests shall comply with §2.113; and

(8) Furnish the appropriate Freedom of Information Officer a copy of the determination. If the determination denied a request for one or more existing, located records, the responding office shall also furnish the Freedom of Information officer the name, address, and telephone number of the EPA employee(s) having custody of the records, and shall maintain the records in a manner permitting their prompt forwarding to the General Counsel upon request if an appeal from the initial decision is filed. See also §2.204(f).

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(b) If it appears that some or all of the requested records are not in the possession of the EPA office which has been assigned responsibility for responding to the request but may be in the possession of some other EPA office, the Freedom of Information officer who is monitoring the request shall be so informed immediately.

(c) In determining which records are responsive to a request, the EPA office responding shall ordinarily include those records within the Agency's possession as of the date of the Agency's receipt of the request.

(d) When a request for EPA records encompasses records of another Federal agency, the EPA office shall either: (1) Respond to the request after consulting with the originating agency when appropriate or; (2) promptly transfer responsibility for responding to the request to the originating agency provided that the other agency is subject to the FOIA. Whenever the EPA office refers a request to another agency, it shall notify the requestor of the referral.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 50 FR 51659, Dec. 18, 1985]

### **§2.112 Time allowed for issuance of initial determination.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, not later than the tenth working day after the date of receipt by a Freedom of Information Office of a request for records, the EPA office responsible for responding to the request shall issue a written determination to the requestor stating which of the requested records will, and which will not, be released and the reason for any denial of a request. If the records are not known to exist or are not in EPA's possession, the EPA office shall so inform the requestor. To the extent requested records which are in EPA's possession are published by the Federal Government, the response may inform the requestor that the records are available for inspection and where copies can be obtained.

(b) The period of 10 working days shall be measured from the date the request is first received and logged in by the Headquarters or regional Freedom of Information Office.

(c) There shall be excluded from the period of 10 working days (or any extension thereof) any time which elapses between the date that a requestor is notified by EPA under §2.109 that his request does not reasonably identify the records sought, and the date that the requestor furnishes a reasonable identification.

(d) There shall be excluded from the period of 10 working days (or any extension thereof) any time which elapses between the date that a requestor is notified by EPA under §2.120 that prepayment or assurance of payment of fees is required, and the date that the requestor pays (or makes suitable arrangements to pay) such charges.

(e) The EPA office taking action under §2.111, after notifying the appropriate Freedom of Information Office, may extend the basic 10-day period established under subsection (a) of this section by a period not to exceed 10 additional working days, by furnishing written notice to the requestor within the basic 10-day period stating the reasons for such extension and the date by which the office expects to be able to issue a determination. The period may be so extended only when absolutely necessary, only for the period required, and only when one or more of the following unusual circumstances require the extension:

(1) There is a need to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request:

(2) There is a need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(3) There is a need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of EPA.

(f) Failure of EPA to issue a determination within the 10-day period or any authorized extension shall constitute final agency action which authorizes the requestor to commence an