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source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of a record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source;

(E) Would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law; or

(F) Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.

(ii) [Reserved]

(8) Contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions; or

(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

(b) The fact that the applicability of an exemption permits the withholding of a requested record (or portion thereof) does not necessarily mean that the record must or should be withheld. See § 2.119.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40000, Sept. 8, 1978; 53 FR 217, Jan. 5, 1988]

§ 2.119 Discretionary release of exempt documents.

(a) An EPA office may, in its discretion, release requested records despite the applicability of one or more of the exemptions listed in § 2.118 (a)(2), (a)(5), or (a)(7). Disclosure of such records is encouraged if no important purpose would be served by withholding the records.

(b) As a matter of policy, EPA will not release a requested record if EPA has determined that one or more of the exemptions listed in § 2.118(a) (1), (3), (4), (6), (8), or (9), applies to the record, except when ordered to do so by a Federal court or in exceptional circumstances under appropriate restric-

tions with the approval of the Office of General Counsel or a Regional Counsel.

§ 2.120 Fees; payment; waiver.

(a) *Fee schedule.* Requesters shall be charged the full allowable direct costs incurred by the Agency in responding to a FOIA request. However, if EPA uses a contractor to search for, reproduce or disseminate records responsive to a request, the cost to the requester shall not exceed the cost of the Agency itself performing the service.

(1) There are four categories of requests. Fees for each of the categories will be charged as follows:

(i) Commercial use requests. If the request seeks disclosure of records for a commercial use, the requester shall be charged for the time spent searching for the requested record, reviewing the record to determine whether it should be disclosed and for the cost of each page of duplication. Commercial use requesters should note that EPA also may charge fees to them for time spent searching for and/or reviewing records, even if EPA fails to locate the records or if the records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(ii) Requests from an educational or non-commercial scientific institution whose purpose is scholarly or scientific research, involving a request which is not for a commercial use and seeks disclosure of records. In the case of such a request, the requester shall be charged only for the duplication cost of the records, except that the first 100 pages of duplication shall be furnished without charge.

(iii) Requests from a representative of the news media, involving a request which is not for a commercial use and seeks disclosure of records. In the case of such a request, the requester shall be charged only for the duplication cost of the records, except that the first 100 pages of duplication shall be furnished without charge.

(iv) All other requests. If the request seeks disclosure of records other than as described in paragraphs (a)(1)(i), (ii), and (iii) of this section, the requester shall be charged the full cost of search and duplication. However, the first two hours of search time (or its cost equivalent) and the first 100 pages of duplication (or their cost equivalent) shall

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be furnished without charge. Requesters in the "all other requests" category should note that EPA also may charge fees to them for time spent searching for records, even if EPA fails to locate the records or if the records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(2) The determination of a requester's fee category will be based on the following:

(i) Commercial use requesters: The use to which the requester will put the documents requested;

(ii) Educational and non-commercial scientific institution requesters: Identity of the requester and the use to which the requester will put the documents requested;

(iii) Representatives of the news media requesters: The identity of the requester and the use to which the requester will put the documents requested.

(3) Fees will be charged to requesters, as appropriate, for search, duplication and review of requested records in accordance with the following schedule:

(i) Manual search for records.

(A) EPA Employees: For each 1/2 hour or portion thereof:

(1) GS-8 and below: \$4.00.

(2) GS-9 and above: \$10.00.

(B) Contractor employees: The requestor will be charged for actual charges up to but not exceeding the rate which would have been charged had EPA employees conducted the search.

(ii) Computer search for records charges will consist of:

(A) EPA employee operators: For each 1/2 hour or portion thereof:

(1) GS-8 and below: \$4.00.

(2) GS-9 and above: \$10.00, plus.

(B) Contractor operators: Requestors will be charged for the actual charges up to but not exceeding the rate which would have been charged had EPA employees conducted the search (see paragraph (a)(3)(i)(A) of this section), plus.

(C) Actual computer resource usage charges for this search.

(iii) Review of records. For each 1/2 hour or portion thereof (EPA employees):

(A) GS-8 and below: \$4.00.

(B) GS-9 and above: \$10.00.

(iv) Duplication or reproduction of records.

(A) Duplication or reproduction of documents by EPA employees (paper copy of paper original): \$.15 per page.

(B) Computer printouts (other than those calculated in a direct-cost billing—see paragraph (a)(3)(ii) of this section "Computer search for records") \$.15 per page.

(C) Other methods of duplication or reproduction, including, but not limited to, duplication of photographs, microfilm and magnetic tape, will be charged at the actual direct cost to EPA.

(4) Other charges.

(i) Other charges incurred in responding to a request including but not limited to, special handling or transportation of records, will be charged at the actual direct cost to EPA.

(ii) Certification or authentication of records: \$25.00 per certification or authentication.

(5) No charge shall be made—

(i) For the cost of preparing or reviewing letters of response to a request or appeal;

(ii) For time spent resolving legal or policy issues concerning the application of exemptions;

(iii) For search time and the first 100 pages of duplication for requests described in § 2.120(a)(1)(ii) and (iii) of this section;

(iv) For the first two hours of search time (or its cost equivalent) and for the first 100 pages of duplication for requests described in § 2.120(a)(1)(iv) of this section;

(v) If the total fee in connection with a request is less than \$25.00, or if the costs of collecting the fee would otherwise exceed the amount of the fee. However, when EPA reasonably believes that a requester or group of requesters is attempting to break a request down into a series of requests for the purpose of avoiding the assessment of fees, EPA will aggregate such requests to determine the total fee, and will charge accordingly;

(vi) For responding to a request by an individual for one copy of a record retrievable by the requesting individual's name or personal identifier from a Privacy Act system of records;

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(vii) For furnishing records requested by either House of Congress, or by a duly authorized committee or subcommittee of Congress, unless the records are requested for the benefit of an individual Member of Congress or for a constituent;

(viii) For furnishing records requested by and for the official use of other Federal agencies; or

(ix) For furnishing records needed by an EPA contractor, subcontractor, or grantee to perform the work required by the EPA contract or grant.

(b) *Method of payment.* All fee payments shall be in the form of a check or money order payable to the "U.S. Environmental Protection Agency" and shall be sent (accompanied by a reference to the pertinent Request Identification Number(s)) to the appropriate Headquarters or Regional Office lock box address:

(1) EPA—Washington Headquarters, P.O. Box 360277M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(2) EPA—Region 1, P.O. Box 360197M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(3) EPA—Region 2, P.O. Box 360188M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(4) EPA—Region 3, P.O. Box 360515M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(5) EPA—Region 4, P.O. Box 100142, Atlanta, GA. 30384;

(6) EPA—Region 5, P.O. Box 70753, Chicago, IL 60673;

(7) EPA—Region 6, P.O. Box 360582M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(8) EPA—Region 7, P.O. Box 360748M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(9) EPA—Region 8, P.O. Box 360859M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(10) EPA—Region 9, P.O. Box 360863M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

(11) EPA—Region 10, P.O. Box 360903M, Pittsburgh, PA 15251;

Under the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97-365), payment (except for prepayment) shall be due within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of billing. If payment is not received at the end of thirty calendar days, interest and a late payment handling charge will be assessed. In addition, under this Act, a penalty charge will be applied on any principal amount not paid within ninety (90) calendar days after the due date for payment. By the authority of the Debt Collection Act of 1982, delinquent amounts due may be collected

through administrative offset or referred to private collection agencies. Information related to delinquent accounts may also be reported to the appropriate credit agencies.

(c) *Assurance of payment.* (1) If an EPA office estimates that the fees for processing a request (or aggregated requests as described in § 2.120(a)(5)(vi) of this section) will exceed \$25.00, that office need not search for, duplicate or disclose records in response to the request(s) until the requester assures payment of the total amount of fees estimated to become due under this section. In such cases, the EPA office will promptly inform the requester (by telephone if practicable) of the need to make assurance of payment.

(2) An EPA office may not require a requester to make an advance payment, i.e. payment before work is commenced or continued on a request, unless:

(i) A requester has previously failed to pay a fee charged in a timely fashion (i.e., within 30 days after the date of the billing), or

(ii) The EPA office estimates or determines that the allowable charges that a requester may be required to pay are likely to exceed \$250.00. Then the EPA office will notify the requester of the likely cost and obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment where the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees, or require an advance payment of an amount up to the full estimated charges in the case of requesters with no history of payment. If such advance payment is not received within 30 days after EPA's billing, the request will not be processed and the request will be closed. See also § 2.112(d).

(d) *Reduction or waiver of fee.* (1) The fee chargeable under this section shall be reduced or waived by EPA if the Agency determines that disclosure of the information:

(i) Is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government; and

(ii) Is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requestor.

(2) Both of these requirements must be satisfied before fees properly assessable can be waived or reduced.

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(3) The Agency will employ the following four factors in determining whether the first requirement has been met:

(i) The subject of the request: Whether the subject of the requested records concerns "the operations or activities of the government";

(ii) The informative value of the information to be disclosed: Whether the disclosure is "likely to contribute to an understanding of government operations or activities";

(iii) The contribution to an understanding of the subject by the general public likely to result from disclosure: Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to "public understanding"; and

(iv) The significance of the contribution to public understanding: Whether disclosure is likely to contribute "significantly" to public understanding of government operations or activities.

(4) The Agency will employ the following factors in determining whether the second requirement has been met:

(i) The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest: Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and, if so

(ii) The primary interest in disclosure: Whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is "primarily in the commercial interest of the requester."

(5) In all cases, the burden shall be on the requester to present information in support of a request for a waiver of fees. A request for reduction or waiver of fees should include:

(i) A clear statement of the requester's interest in the requested documents;

(ii) The use proposed for the documents and whether the requester will derive income or other benefit from such use;

(iii) A statement of how the public will benefit from such use and from the release of the requested documents; and

(iv) If specialized use of the documents or information is contemplated, a statement of the requester's quali-

fications that are relevant to the specialized use.

(6) A request for reduction or waiver of fees shall be addressed to the appropriate Freedom of Information Officer. The requester shall be informed in writing of the Agency's decision whether to grant or deny the fee waiver or fee reduction request. This decision may be appealed by letter addressed to the EPA Freedom of Information Officer. The General Counsel shall decide such appeals. The General Counsel may redelegate this authority only to the Deputy General Counsel or the Associate General Counsel for Grants, Contracts and General Law.

(e) The Financial Management Office shall maintain a record of all fees charged requesters for searching for, reviewing and reproducing requested records under this section. If after the end of 60 calendar days from the date on which request for payment was made the requester has not submitted payment to the appropriate EPA billing address (as listed in §2.120(b)), the Financial Management Division shall place the requester's name on a delinquent list which is sent to the EPA Freedom of Information Officer. If a requester whose name appears on the delinquent list makes a request under this part, the EPA Freedom of Information Officer shall inform the requester that EPA will not process the request until the requester submits payment of the overdue fee from the earlier request. Any request made by an individual who specifies an affiliation with or representation of a corporation, association, law firm, or other organization shall be deemed to be a request by the corporation, association, law firm, or other organization. If an organization placed on the delinquent list can show that the person who made the request for which payment was overdue did not make the request on behalf of the organization the organization will be removed from the delinquent list but the name of the individual shall remain on the list. A requester shall not be placed on the delinquent list if a request for a reduction or for a waiver is pending under paragraph (d) of this section.

[53 FR 217, Jan. 5, 1988]