

come within such a distance pursuant to paragraph (c)(4) of this section or permitted to come within such a distance by the cognizant Captain of the Port, his or her designated representative, or the on-scene Official Patrol.

(4) Vessels are permitted to transit through the safety and security zone in waterways that do not provide adequate navigable waters greater than 100 yards from the Tall Ships. Vessels transiting such areas must operate at the minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course while also maintaining the greatest possible distance away from the Tall Ships.

(d) *Effective period.* This rule is effective from 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, June 23, 2010 through 12:01 a.m. on Monday September 13, 2010.

(e) *Navigation Rules.* The Navigation Rules must apply at all times within a Tall Ships safety and security zone.

(f) When a Tall Ship approaches within 25 yards of any vessel that is moored or anchored, the stationary vessel must stay moored or anchored while it remains within the tall ship's safety and security zone unless ordered by or given permission from the cognizant Captain of the Port, his or her designated representative, or the on-scene official patrol to do otherwise.

Dated: May 21, 2010.

**M.N. Parks,**

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District.*

[FR Doc. 2010-14146 Filed 6-11-10; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 9110-04-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### 34 CFR Part 5

RIN 1880-AA84

[Docket ID ED-2008-OM-0011]

#### Availability of Information to the Public

**AGENCY:** Office of Management, Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Final regulations.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary amends the regulations governing the Department's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, as amended (FOIA or the Act) to reflect the changes in the FOIA over recent years.

**DATES:** These regulations are effective July 14, 2010.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Angela Arrington, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-5920. Telephone: (202) 401-8365.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed in this section.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On November 26, 2008, the Secretary published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend the Department's FOIA regulations in 34 CFR part 5 in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 71986). In the summary to the NPRM, on pages 71987 through 71993, the Secretary discussed how the proposed regulations would amend and update the Department's FOIA regulations to implement changes made to the FOIA (5 U.S.C. 552) in recent years and articulate more clearly, to the public, how the Department processes FOIA requests for publicly available records.

After the public comment period ended, there was further public guidance regarding FOIA issued by the White House and the Department of Justice<sup>1</sup> that we took into account in preparing these final regulations. Thus, there is one substantive difference between the regulations proposed in the NPRM and these final regulations. Specifically, proposed § 5.2 (General policy), which stated the Department's general policy regarding the availability of information under FOIA, has been removed and proposed § 5.3 (Definitions) has been redesignated as § 5.2 (Definitions). Upon further internal review after the publication of the NPRM, and light of the public guidance regarding FOIA, we determined that proposed § 5.2 was unnecessary and potentially confusing. Proposed § 5.2 did not add any requirements or clarification to the Department's FOIA process. Rather, the remaining proposed regulations, adopted as final through these regulations, comprehensively describe how the Department processes FOIA requests.

#### Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Secretary's invitation in the NPRM, the Department received no comments on the proposed regulations.

<sup>1</sup> The President's January 21, 2009 memorandum on FOIA may be found at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Freedom\\_of\\_Information\\_Act/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Freedom_of_Information_Act/). FOIA guidance issued by the Department of Justice may be found at <http://www.justice.gov/oip/foiapist/mainpage.htm>.

#### Executive Order 12866

Under Executive Order 12866, the Secretary must determine whether the regulatory action is "significant" and therefore subject to the requirements of the Executive order and subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a "significant regulatory action" as an action likely to result in a rule that may (1) Have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, or adversely affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local or tribal governments or communities in a material way (also referred to as an "economically significant" rule); (2) create serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) materially alter the budgetary impacts of entitlement grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or (4) raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles set forth in the Executive order. Pursuant to the terms of the Executive order, it has been determined that this regulatory action is not a significant regulatory action subject to OMB review under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866.

We have also determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

We summarized the potential costs and benefits of these final regulations in the NPRM at 73 FR 71993.

#### Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

These regulations do not contain any information collection requirements.

#### Electronic Access to This Document

You can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister>. To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site.

**Note:** The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number does not apply.)

Dated: June 7, 2010.

**Arne Duncan,**

*Secretary of Education.*

■ For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Secretary revises part 5 of title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

## **PART 5—AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

### **Subpart A—General Provisions**

Sec.

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5.32 Assessment of fees.

5.33 Requirements for waiver or reduction of fees.

### **Subpart E—Administrative Review**

5.40 Appeals of adverse determinations.

**Authority:** 5 U.S.C. 552.

### **Subpart A—General Provisions**

#### **§ 5.1 Purpose.**

This part contains the regulations that the United States Department of Education follows in processing requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 552. These regulations must be read in conjunction with the FOIA, including its exemptions to disclosure, and, when appropriate, in conjunction with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and its implementing regulations in 34 CFR part 5b.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### **§ 5.2 Definitions.**

As used in this part:

(a) *Act* or *FOIA* means the Freedom of Information Act, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 552.

(b) *Department* means the United States Department of Education.

(c) *Component* means each separate bureau, office, board, division, commission, service, administration, or other organizational entity of the Department.

(d) *FOIA request* means a written request for agency records that reasonably describes the agency records sought, made by any person, including a member of the public (U.S. or foreign citizen/entity), partnership, corporation, association, and foreign or domestic governments (excluding Federal agencies).

(e)(1) *Agency records* are documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics that—

(i) Are either created or obtained by the Department; and

(ii) Are under the Department's control at the time it receives a FOIA request.

(2) *Agency records* include—

(i) Records created, stored, and retrievable in electronic format;

(ii) Records maintained for the Department by a private entity under a records management contract with the Federal Government; and

(iii) Documentary materials preserved by the Department as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Department or because of the informational value of data contained therein.

(3) *Agency records* do not include tangible, evidentiary objects or equipment; library or museum materials made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes; extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference; stocks of publications; and personal records created for the convenience of an individual and not used to conduct Department business or incorporated into the Department's record keeping system or files.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

### **Subpart B—Agency Records Available to the Public**

#### **§ 5.10 Public reading room.**

(a) *General.* Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), the Department maintains a public reading room containing agency records that the FOIA requires to be made regularly available for public inspection and copying. Published records of the Department, whether or not available for purchase, are made available for examination. The Department's public reading room is located at the National Library of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Plaza Level (Level B), Washington, DC 20202-0008. The hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays).

(b) *Reading room records.* Agency records maintained in the public reading room include final opinions and

orders in adjudications, statements of policy and interpretations adopted by the Department and not published in the **Federal Register**, administrative staff manuals and instructions affecting the public, and copies of all agency records regardless of form or format released to the public pursuant to a FOIA request that the Department determines are likely to be the subject of future FOIA requests.

(c) *Electronic access.* The Department makes reading room records created on or after November 1, 1996, available through its electronic reading room, located on the Department's FOIA Web site at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/readingroom.html>.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### **§ 5.11 Business information.**

(a) *General.* The Department discloses business information it obtains from a submitter under the Act in accordance with this section.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section:

(1) *Business information* means commercial or financial information obtained by the Department from a submitter that may be protected from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) (Exemption 4 of the Act).

(2) *Submitter* means any person or entity (including corporations; State, local, and tribal governments; and foreign governments) from whom the Department obtains business information.

(c) *Designation of business information.*

(1) A submitter must use good faith efforts to designate, by appropriate markings, either at the time of submission or at a reasonable time thereafter, any portion of its submission that it considers to be business information protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Act.

(2) A submitter's designations are not binding on the Department and will expire 10 years after the date of the submission unless the submitter requests, and provides justification for, a longer designation period.

(3) A blanket designation on each page of a submission that all information contained on the page is protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 presumptively will not be considered a good faith effort.

(d) *Notice to submitters.* Except as provided in paragraph (g) of this section, the Department promptly notifies a submitter whenever a FOIA request or administrative appeal is made under the Act seeking disclosure of the information the submitter has

designated in good faith as business information protected from disclosure under paragraph (c) of this section, or the Department otherwise has reason to believe that it may be required to disclose information sought to be designated by the submitter as business information protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Act. This notice includes either a description of the business information requested or copies of the requested agency records or portions of agency records containing the requested business information as well as a time period, consistent with § 5.21(c), within which the submitter can object to the disclosure pursuant to paragraph (e) of this section.

(e) *Opportunity to object to disclosure.*

(1) If a submitter objects to disclosure, it must submit to the Department a detailed written statement specifying all grounds under Exemption 4 of the Act for denying access to the information, or a portion of the information sought.

(2) A submitter's failure to object to the disclosure by the deadline established by the Department in the notice provided under paragraph (d) of this section constitutes a waiver of the submitter's right to object to disclosure under paragraph (e) of this section.

(3) A submitter's response to a notice from the Department under paragraph (d) of this section may itself be subject to disclosure under the Act.

(f) *Notice of intent to disclose.* The Department considers a submitter's objections and submissions made in support thereof in deciding whether to disclose business information sought to be protected by the submitter. Whenever the Department decides to disclose information over a submitter's objection, the Department gives the submitter written notice, which includes:

(1) A statement of the reasons why the submitter's objections to disclosure were not sustained.

(2) A description of the information to be disclosed.

(3) A specified disclosure date that is a reasonable time subsequent to the notice.

(g) *Exceptions to notice requirements.* The notice requirements of paragraph (d) of this section do not apply if—

(1) The Department does not disclose the business information of the submitter;

(2) The Department has previously lawfully published the information;

(3) The information has been made available to the public by the requester or by third parties;

(4) Disclosure of the information is required by statute (other than the Act) or regulation issued in accordance with the requirements of Executive Order

12600 (52 FR 23781, 3 CFR, 1987 Comp., p. 235); or

(5) The designation made by the submitter under paragraph (c) of this section appears obviously frivolous, except that, in such case, the Department must provide the submitter with written notice of any final administrative disclosure determination in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(h) *Notice of FOIA lawsuit.* Whenever a requester files a lawsuit seeking to compel the disclosure of a submitter's business information, the Department promptly notifies the submitter.

(i) *Corresponding notice to requester.* The Department notifies the requester whenever it notifies a submitter of its opportunity to object to disclosure, of the Department's intent to disclose requested information designated as business information by the submitter, or of the filing of a lawsuit.

(j) *Notice of reverse FOIA lawsuit.* Whenever a submitter files a lawsuit seeking to prevent the disclosure of the submitter's information, the Department promptly notifies the requester, and advises the requester that its request will be held in abeyance until the lawsuit initiated by the submitter is resolved.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### § 5.12 Creation of agency records not required.

In response to a FOIA request, the Department produces only those agency records that are not already publicly available and that are in existence at the time it receives a request. The Department does not create new agency records in response to a FOIA request by, for example, extrapolating information from existing agency records, reformatting available information, preparing new electronic programs or databases, or creating data through calculations of ratios, proportions, percentages, trends, frequency distributions, correlations, or comparisons.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### § 5.13 Preservation of agency records.

The Department does not destroy agency records that are the subject of a pending FOIA request, appeal, or lawsuit.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

### Subpart C—Procedures for Requesting Access to Agency Records and Disclosure of Agency Records

#### § 5.20 Requirements for making FOIA requests.

(a) *Making a FOIA request.* Any FOIA request for an agency record must be in writing (via paper, facsimile, or electronic mail) and transmitted to the Department as indicated on the Department's Web site. See [http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/request\\_foia.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/request_foia.html).

(b) *Description of agency records sought.* A FOIA request must reasonably describe the agency record sought, to enable Department personnel to locate the agency record or records with a reasonable amount of effort. Whenever possible, a FOIA request should describe the type of agency record requested, the subject matter of the agency record, the date, if known, or general time period when it was created, and the person or office that created it. Requesters who have detailed information that would assist in identifying and locating the agency records sought are urged to provide this information to the Department to expedite the handling of a FOIA request.

(c) *FOIA request deemed insufficient.* If the Department determines that a FOIA request does not reasonably describe the agency record or records sought, the FOIA request will be deemed insufficient under the Act. In that case, the Department informs the requester of the reason the FOIA request is insufficient and, at the Department's option, either administratively closes the FOIA request as insufficient without determining whether to grant the FOIA request or provides the requester an opportunity to modify the FOIA request to meet the requirements of this section.

(d) *Verification of identity.* In compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 552a, FOIA requests for agency records pertaining to the requester, a minor, or an individual who is legally incompetent must include verification of the requester's identity pursuant to 34 CFR 5b.5.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### § 5.21 Procedures for processing FOIA requests.

(a) *Acknowledgements of FOIA requests.* The Department promptly notifies the requester when it receives a FOIA request.

(b) *Consultation and referrals.* When the Department receives a FOIA request for a record or records created by or otherwise received from another agency of the Federal Government, it either responds to the FOIA request after

consultation with the other agency, or refers the FOIA request to the other agency for processing. When the Department refers a FOIA request to another agency for processing, the Department will so notify the requester.

(c) *Decisions on FOIA requests.* The Department determines whether to comply with a FOIA request within 20 working days after the appropriate component of the Department first receives the request. This time period commences on the date that the request is received by the appropriate component of the Department, but commences no later than 10 calendar days after the request is received by the component of the Department designated pursuant to § 5.20(a) to receive FOIA requests for agency records. The Department's failure to comply with these time limits constitutes exhaustion of the requester's administrative remedies for the purposes of judicial action to compel disclosure.

(d) *Requests for additional information.* The Department may make one request for additional information from the requester and toll the 20-day period while awaiting receipt of the additional information.

(e) *Extension of time period for processing a FOIA request.* The Department may extend the time period for processing a FOIA request only in unusual circumstances, as described in paragraphs (e)(1) through (e)(3) of this section, in which case the Department notifies the requester of the extension in writing. A notice of extension affords the requester the opportunity either to modify its FOIA request so that it may be processed within the 20-day time limit, or to arrange with the Department an alternative time period within which the FOIA request will be processed. For the purposes of this section, unusual circumstances include:

(1) The need to search for and collect the requested agency records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request.

(2) The need to search for, collect, and review and process voluminous agency records responsive to the FOIA request.

(3) The need to consult with another agency or two or more agency components having a substantial interest in the determination on the FOIA request.

(f) *FOIA Public Liaison and FOIA Requester Service Center.* The Department's FOIA Public Liaison assists in the resolution of disputes between the requester and the Department. The Department provides information about the status of a FOIA

request to the requester through the Department's FOIA Requester Service Center. Contact information for the Department's FOIA Public Liaison and FOIA Requester Service Center may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/contacts.html>.

(g) *Notification of determination.* Once the Department makes a determination to grant a FOIA request in whole or in part, it notifies the requester in writing of its decision.

(h) *Denials of FOIA requests.*

(1) Only Departmental officers or employees delegated the authority to deny a FOIA request may deny a FOIA request on behalf of the Department.

(2)(i) The Department notifies the requester in writing of any decision to deny a FOIA request in whole or in part. Denials under this paragraph can include the following: A determination to deny access in whole or in part to any agency record responsive to a request; a determination that a requested agency record does not exist or cannot be located in the Department's records; a determination that a requested agency record is not readily retrievable or reproducible in the form or format sought by the requester; a determination that what has been requested is not a record subject to the FOIA; a determination on any disputed fee matter, including a denial of a request for a fee waiver; and a denial of a request for expedited processing.

(ii) All determinations denying a FOIA request in whole or in part are signed by an officer or employee designated under paragraph (h)(1) of this section, and include:

(A) The name and title or position of the denying officer or employee.

(B) A brief statement of the reason or reasons for the denial, including any exemptions applicable under the Act.

(C) An estimate of the volume of agency records or information denied, by number of pages or other reasonable estimate (except where the volume of agency records or information denied is apparent from deletions made on agency records disclosed in part, or providing an estimate would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption under the Act).

(D) Where an agency record has been disclosed only in part, an indication of the exemption under the Act justifying the redaction in the agency record (unless providing this information would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption under the Act).

(E) A statement of appeal rights and a list of requirements for filing an appeal under § 5.40.

(i) *Timing of responses to FOIA requests.*

(1) *Multitrack processing.*

The Department may use two or more processing tracks to distinguish between simple and more complex FOIA requests based on one or more of the following: the time and work necessary to process the FOIA request, the volume of agency records responsive to the FOIA request, and whether the FOIA request qualifies for expedited processing as described in paragraph (i)(2) of this section.

(2) *Expedited processing.*

(i) The Department gives expedited treatment to FOIA requests and appeals whenever the Department determines that a FOIA request involves one or more of the following:

(A) A circumstance in which the lack of expedited treatment could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual.

(B) The urgent need of a person primarily engaged in disseminating information to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal Government activity; or

(C) Other circumstances that the Department determines demonstrate a compelling need for expedited processing.

(ii) A requester may ask for expedited processing at the time of the initial FOIA request or at any time thereafter.

(iii) A request for expedited processing must contain a detailed explanation of the basis for the request, and must be accompanied by a statement certifying the truth of the circumstances alleged or other evidence of the requester's compelling need acceptable to the Department.

(iv) The Department makes a determination whether to grant or deny a request for expedited processing within 10 calendar days of its receipt by the component of the Department designated pursuant to § 5.20(a) to receive FOIA requests for agency records, and processes FOIA requests accepted for expedited processing as soon as practicable and on a priority basis.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

## Subpart D—Fees

### § 5.30 Fees generally.

The Department assesses fees for processing FOIA requests in accordance with § 5.32(a), except where fees are limited under § 5.32(b) or where a waiver or reduction of fees is granted under § 5.33. Requesters must pay fees by check or money order made payable to the U.S. Department of Education, and must include the FOIA request number on the check or money order.

The Department retains full discretion to limit or adjust fees.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### § 5.31 Fee definitions.

(a) *Commercial use request* means a request from or on behalf of a FOIA requester seeking information for a use or purpose that furthers the requester's commercial, trade, or profit interests, which can include furthering those interests through litigation. For the purpose of assessing fees under the Act, the Department determines, whenever reasonably possible, the use to which a requester will put the requested agency records.

(b) *Direct costs* mean those expenses that an agency actually incurs in searching for and duplicating (and, in the case of commercial use FOIA requests, reviewing) agency records to respond to a FOIA request. Direct costs include, for example, the pro rata salary of the employee(s) performing the work (*i.e.*, basic rate of pay plus 16 percent) and the cost of operating duplication machinery. The Department's other overhead expenses are not included in direct costs.

(c) *Duplication* means making a copy of the agency record, or of the information in it, as necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Copies can be made in several forms and formats, including paper and electronic records. The Department honors a requester's specified preference as to form or format of disclosure, provided that the agency record is readily reproducible with reasonable effort in the requested form or format.

(d) *Educational institution* means a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate higher education, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of professional education, or an institution of vocational education, that operates a program of scholarly research. To qualify as an educational institution under this part, a requester must demonstrate that an educational institution authorized the request and that the agency records are not sought for individual or commercial use, but are instead sought to further scholarly research. A request for agency records for the purpose of affecting a requester's application for, or prospect of obtaining, new or additional grants, contracts, or similar funding is presumptively a commercial use request.

(e) *Noncommercial scientific institution* means an institution that is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research, the

results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry. A noncommercial scientific institution does not operate for a "commercial use", as the term is defined in paragraph (a) of this section. To qualify as a noncommercial scientific institution under this part, a requester must demonstrate that a noncommercial scientific institution authorized the request and that the agency records are sought to further scientific research and not for a commercial use. A request for agency records for the purpose of affecting a requester's application for, or prospect of obtaining, new or additional grants, contracts, or similar funding is presumptively a commercial use request.

(f) *Representative of the news media, or news media requester*, means any person or entity that gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience. For the purposes of this section, the term "news" means information about current events or information that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news media entities include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large and publishers of periodicals that qualify as disseminators of news and make their products available for purchase by, subscription by, or free distribution to the general public. To be regarded as a representative of the news media, a "freelance" journalist must demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication, such as a publication contract or a past publication record. For inclusion in this category, a requester must not be seeking the requested agency records for a commercial use.

(g) *Review* means the examination of an agency record located in response to a FOIA request to determine whether any portion of the record is exempt from disclosure under the Act. Reviewing the record includes processing the agency record for disclosure and making redactions and other preparations for disclosure. Review costs are recoverable even if an agency record ultimately is not disclosed. Review time includes time spent considering any formal objection to disclosure but does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions under the Act.

(h) *Search* means the process of looking for and retrieving agency records or information responsive to a FOIA request. Searching includes page-by-page or line-by-line identification of

information within agency records and reasonable efforts to locate and retrieve information from agency records maintained in electronic form or format, provided that such efforts do not significantly interfere with the operation of the Department's automated information systems.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

#### § 5.32 Assessment of fees.

(a) *Fees*. In responding to FOIA requests, the Department charges the following fees (in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Uniform FOIA Fee Schedule and Guidelines," 52 FR 10012 (March 27, 1987)), unless it has granted a waiver or reduction of fees under § 5.33 and subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph (b) of this section:

(1) *Search*. The Department charges search fees, subject to the limitations of paragraph (b) of this section. Search time includes time spent searching, regardless of whether the search results in the location of responsive agency records and, if so, whether such agency records are released to the requester under the Act. The requester will be charged the direct costs, as defined in § 5.31(b), of the search. In the case of computer searches for agency records, the Department charges the requester for the direct cost of conducting the search, subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) *Review*. (i) The Department charges fees for initial agency record review at the same rate as for searches, subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.

(ii) No fees are charged for review at the administrative appeal level except in connection with—

(A) The review of agency records other than agency records identified as responsive to the FOIA request in the initial decision; and

(B) The Department's decision regarding whether to assert that an exemption exists under the Act that was not cited in the decision on the initial FOIA request.

(iii) Review fees are not assessed for FOIA requests other than those made for a "commercial use," as the term is defined in § 5.31(a).

(3) *Duplication*. The Department charges duplication fees at the rate of \$0.20 per page for paper photocopies of agency records, \$3.00 per CD for documents recorded on CD, and at the direct cost for duplication for electronic copies and other forms of duplication, subject to the limitations of paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Limitations on fees*.

(1) Fees are limited to charges for document duplication when agency records are not sought for commercial use and the request is made by—

- (i) An educational or noncommercial scientific institution, whose purpose is scholarly or scientific research; or
- (ii) A representative of the news media.

(2) For FOIA requests other than commercial use FOIA requests, the Department provides the first 100 pages of agency records released (or the cost equivalent) and the first two hours of search (or the cost equivalent) without charge, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A)(iv)(II).

(3) Whenever the Department calculates that the fees assessable for a FOIA request under paragraph (a) of this section total \$25.00 or less, the Department processes the FOIA request without charge to the requester.

(c) *Notice of anticipated fees in excess of \$25.* When the Department estimates or determines that the fees for processing a FOIA request will total more than \$25 and the requester has not stated a willingness to pay such fees, the Department notifies the requester of the anticipated amount of fees before processing the FOIA request. If the Department can readily anticipate fees for processing only a portion of a request, the Department advises the requester that the anticipated fee is for processing only a portion of the request. When the Department has notified a requester of anticipated fees greater than \$25, the Department does not further process the request until the requester agrees in writing to pay the anticipated total fee.

(d) *Charges for other services.* When the Department chooses as a matter of administrative discretion to provide a special service, such as certification of agency records, it charges the requester the direct cost of providing the service.

(e) *Charging interest.* The Department charges interest on any unpaid bill assessed at the rate provided in 31 U.S.C. 3717. In charging interest, the Department follows the provisions of the Debt Collection Act of 1982, as amended (Pub. L. 97–365), and its administrative procedures, including the use of consumer reporting agencies, collection agencies, and offset.

(f) *Aggregating FOIA requests.* When the Department reasonably believes that a requester, or a group of requesters acting together, is attempting to divide a FOIA request into a series of FOIA requests for the purpose of avoiding or reducing otherwise applicable fees, the Department may aggregate such FOIA requests for the purpose of assessing fees. The Department does not aggregate

multiple FOIA requests involving unrelated matters.

(g) *Advance payments.*

(1) For FOIA requests other than those described in paragraphs (g)(2) and (g)(3) of this section, the Department does not require the requester to pay fees in advance.

(2) Where the Department estimates or determines that fees for processing a FOIA request will total more than \$250, it may require the requester to pay the fees in advance, except where the Department receives a satisfactory assurance of full payment from a requester with a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees.

(3) The Department may require a requester who has previously failed to pay a properly assessed FOIA fee within 30 calendar days of the billing date to pay in advance the full amount of estimated or actual fees before it further processes a new or pending FOIA request from that requester.

(4) When the Department requires advance payment of estimated or assessed fees, it does not consider the FOIA request received and does not further process the FOIA request until payment is received.

(h) *Tolling.* When necessary for the Department to clarify issues regarding fee assessment with the FOIA requester, the time limit for responding to the FOIA request is tolled until the Department resolves such issues with the requester.

(i) *Other statutory requirements.* The fee schedule of this section does not apply to fees charged under any statute that specifically requires an agency to set and collect fees for producing particular types of agency records.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

### **§ 5.33 Requirements for waiver or reduction of fees.**

(a) The Department processes a FOIA request for agency records without charge or at a charge less than that established under § 5.32(a) when the Department determines that—

(1) Disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government; and

(2) Disclosure of the information is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(b) To determine whether a FOIA request is eligible for waiver or reduction of fees pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the Department considers the following factors:

(1) Whether the subject of the request specifically concerns identifiable operations or activities of the government.

(2) Whether the disclosable portions of the requested information will be meaningfully informative in relation to the subject matter of the request.

(3) The disclosure's contribution to public understanding of government operations, *i.e.*, the understanding of the public at large, as opposed to an individual or a narrow segment of interested persons (including whether the requester has expertise in the subject area of the FOIA request as well as the intention and demonstrated ability to disseminate the information to the public).

(4) The significance of the disclosure's contribution to public understanding of government operations or activities, *i.e.*, the public's understanding of the subject matter existing prior to the disclosure must be likely to be enhanced significantly by the disclosure.

(c) To determine whether a FOIA request is eligible for waiver or reduction of fees pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section, the Department considers the following factors:

(1) The existence of the requester's commercial interest, *i.e.*, whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure.

(2) If a commercial interest is identified, whether the 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.

(d) When the fee waiver requirements are met only with respect to a portion of a FOIA request, the Department waives or reduces fees only for that portion of the request.

(e) A requester seeking a waiver or reduction of fees must submit evidence demonstrating that the FOIA request meets all the criteria listed in paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section.

(f) A requester must seek a fee waiver for each FOIA request for which a waiver is sought. The Department does not grant standing fee waivers but considers each fee waiver request independently on its merits.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

### **Subpart E—Administrative Review**

#### **§ 5.40 Appeals of adverse determinations.**

(a) *In general.* A requester may seek an administrative review of an adverse

determination on the FOIA request made by the requester by submitting an appeal of the determination to the Department. Adverse determinations include denials of access to agency records, in whole or in part; "no agency records" responses; and adverse fee decisions, including denials of requests for fee waivers, and all aspects of fee assessments.

(b) *Appeal requirements.* A requester must submit an appeal within 35 calendar days of the date on the adverse determination letter issued by the Department or, where the requester has received no determination, at any time after the due date for such determination. An appeal must be in writing and must include a detailed statement of all legal and factual bases for the appeal. The requester's failure to comply with time limits set forth in this section constitutes exhaustion of the requester's administrative remedies for the purposes of initiating judicial action to compel disclosure.

(c) *Determination on appeal.* (1) The Department makes a written determination on an administrative appeal within 20 working days after receiving the appeal. The time limit may be extended in accordance with § 5.21(c) through (e). The Department's failure to comply with time limits set forth in this section constitutes exhaustion of the requester's administrative remedies for the purposes of initiating judicial action to compel disclosure.

(2) The Department's determination on an appeal constitutes the Department's final action on the FOIA request. Any Department determination denying an appeal in whole or in part includes the reasons for the denial, including any exemptions asserted under the Act, and notice of the requester's right to seek judicial review of the determination in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4). Where the Department makes a determination to grant an appeal in whole or in part, it processes the FOIA request subject to the appeal in accordance with the determination on appeal.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a), 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6), 20 U.S.C. 3474)

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

#### 49 CFR Part 571

[Docket No. NHTSA-2010-0021]

RIN 2127-AK05

### Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Electric-Powered Vehicles; Electrolyte Spillage and Electrical Shock Protection

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** In response to a petition for rulemaking from the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, NHTSA is issuing this final rule to facilitate the development and introduction of fuel cell vehicles, a type of electric-powered vehicle, and the next generation of hybrid and battery electric powered vehicles. It does so by revising the agency's standard regulating electrolyte spillage and electrical shock protection for electric-powered vehicles to align it more closely with the April 2005 version of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Recommended Practice for Electric and Hybrid Electric Vehicle Battery Systems Crash Integrity Testing (SAE J1766).

The standard currently requires manufacturers to design their vehicles so that, in the event of a crash, a vehicle's propulsion battery system will be electrically isolated from the vehicle's electricity-conducting structure. As amended, this rule provides greater flexibility, requiring manufacturers to design their electrically powered vehicles so that, in the event of a crash, the electrical energy storage, conversion, and traction systems are either electrically isolated from the vehicle's chassis or their voltage is below specified levels considered safe from electric shock hazards.

Since the physiological impacts of direct current (DC) are less than those of alternating current (AC), this rule specifies lower electrical isolation requirements for certain DC components than for AC components. The current standard does not recognize the difference in safety risk between DC and AC components, requiring both types of components to meet the same requirements. As requested by the petitioners, this final rule specifies the following electrical isolation requirements: 500 ohms/volt for AC and

DC high voltage sources and 100 ohms/volt for DC high voltage sources with continuous monitoring of electrical isolation.

**DATES:** *Effective Date:* This rule is effective September 1, 2011, with optional early compliance.

**ADDRESSES:** *Petitions:* Petitions for reconsideration should refer to the docket number above and be submitted to: Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For technical issues, you may contact Mr. Charles Hott, Office of Rulemaking, by telephone at (202) 366-0247, or by fax at (202) 493-2990. For legal issues, you may contact Ms. Rebecca Yoon, Office of Chief Counsel, by telephone at (202) 366-2992, or by fax at (202) 366-3820. You may send mail to these officials at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background
  - A. Standard No. 305 and the Alliance Petition for Rulemaking To Upgrade It
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  - C. Summary of Public Comments Received
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- II. Public Comments on the NPRM and Agency Responses
  - A. Multiple Options for Providing Electrical Safety in Electric-Powered Vehicles
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  - F. Effective Date
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  - H. Preemption
- III. Rulemaking Analyses and Notices
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#### I. Background

*A. Standard No. 305 and the Alliance Petition for Rulemaking To Upgrade It*

The purpose of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 305, *Electric-Powered Vehicles: Electrolyte Spillage and Electrical Shock Protection*, is to reduce deaths and