

(e) When paragraph (d)(1) of this section applies, the requester shall be notified of the likely cost and, where he or she has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees, requested to furnish satisfactory assurance of full payment. Where no history of payment exists, the requester may be required to make advance payment of any amount up to the full estimated charges.

(f) When paragraph (d)(2) of this section applies, the requester shall be required to demonstrate that the fee has, in fact, been paid or to pay the full amount owed, including any applicable interest, late handling charges and penalty charges as discussed below. The requester shall also be required to make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before processing of a new request or continuation of a pending request is begun.

(g) The Department will assess interest on an unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the day on which the notice of the amount due is first mailed to the requester. Interest will accrue from the date of the notice of amount due and will be at the rate prescribed in section 3717 of title 31, U.S.C. Receipt by the Department of a payment for the full amount of the fees owed within 30 calendar days after the date of the initial billing will stay the accrual of interest, even if the payment has not been processed.

(h) If payment of fees charged is not received within 30 calendar days after the date the initial notice of the amount due is first mailed to the requester, an administrative charge will be assessed by the Department to cover the cost of processing and handling the delinquent claim. In addition, a penalty charge will be applied with respect to any principal amount of a debt that is more than 90 days past due. Where appropriate, other steps permitted by federal debt collection statutes, including disclosure to consumer reporting agencies and use of collection agencies, will be utilized by the Department to encourage payment of amounts overdue.

(i) In any instance where the Department reasonably believes that a requester or a group of requesters acting in concert is attempting to break down a single FOIA request into a series of

requests for the sole purpose of evading the payment of otherwise applicable fees, the Department will aggregate the requests and determine the applicable fees on the basis of the aggregation.

(j) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subpart, when the total amount of fees that could be charged for a particular request (or aggregation of requests) under subpart F, after taking into account all services which must be provided at no charge or at a reduced charge, is less than \$10.00 the Department will not make any charge for fees.

§ 7.95 Fee schedule.

(a) The standard fee for a manual search to locate a record requested under subpart F of this part, including making it available for inspection, will be determined by multiplying each searcher's hourly rate plus 16 percent by the time spent conducting the search.

(b) The standard fee for a computer search for a record requested under subpart F of this part is the actual cost. This includes the cost of operating the central processing unit (CPU) for the time directly attributable to searching for records responsive to a FOIA request and the operator/programmer salary (hourly rate plus 16 percent) costs apportionable to the search.

(c) The standard fee for review of records requested under subpart F of this part is the reviewer's hourly rate plus 16 percent multiplied by the time he or she spent determining whether the requested records are exempt from mandatory disclosure.

(d) The standard fee for duplication of a record requested under subpart F of this part is determined as follows:

(1) Per copy of each page (not larger than 8½×14 inches) reproduced by photocopy or similar methods (includes costs of personnel and equipment), \$0.10.

(2) Per copy prepared by computer, such as tapes or printout, Actual costs, including operator time.

(3) Per copy prepared by any other method of duplication, Actual direct cost of production.

(e) Depending upon the category of requester, and the use for which the

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records are requested, in some cases the fees computed in accordance with the above standard fee schedule must either be reduced or not charged, as prescribed by other provisions of this subpart.

(f) The following special services not required by the FOIA may be made available upon request, at the stated fees:

Certified copies of documents, with Department of Transportation or operating element seal (where authorized), \$4.00, or true copy, without seal, \$2.00.

§ 7.97 Services performed without charge or at a reduced charge.

(a) No fee is to be charged to any requester making a request under subpart F for the first two hours of search time unless the records are requested for commercial use. For purposes of this subpart, when a computer search is required two hours of search time will be considered spent when the hourly costs of operating the central processing unit used to perform the search added to the computer operator's salary cost (hourly rate plus 16 per cent) equals two hours of the computer operator's salary costs (hourly rate plus 16 percent).

(b) No fee is to be charged for any time spent searching for a record requested under subpart F if the records are not for commercial use and the requester is a representative of the news media, an educational institution whose purpose is scholarly research, or a non-commercial scientific institution whose purpose is scientific research.

(c) No fee is to be charged for duplication of the first 100 pages (standard paper, not larger than 8½×14 inches) of records provided to any requester in response to a request under subpart F unless the records are requested for commercial use.

(d) No fee is to be charged to any requester for review of a record requested under subpart F to determine whether it is exempt from disclosure unless the records are requested for commercial use. A review charge may not be charged except with respect to an initial review to determine the applicability of a particular exemption to a particular record or portion of a record. A review charge may not be assessed for

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review at the administrative appeal level. When records or portions of records withheld in full under an exemption which is subsequently determined not to apply are reviewed again to determine the applicability of other exemptions not previously considered, this is considered an initial review for purposes of assessing a review charge.

(e) Documents will be furnished without charge or at a reduced charge if the Assistant General Counsel for Environmental, Civil Rights, and General Law, or his or her designee, or official(s) having initial denial authority, as the case may be, determine that disclosure of the 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 is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(f) Factors to be considered by officials of the Department authorized to determine whether a waiver or reduction of fees will be granted include:

(1) Whether the subject matter of the requested records concerns the operations or activities of the Federal government;

(2) Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute to an understanding of Federal government operations or activities;

(3) Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to the understanding of the public at large, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester or a narrow segment of interested persons;

(4) Whether the contribution to public understanding of Federal government operations or activities will be significant;

(5) Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and

(6) Whether the magnitude of any 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.

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