

(c) *Unusual circumstances.* (1) Where the statutory time limits for processing a request cannot be met because of "unusual circumstances," as defined in the FOIA, and the component determines to extend the time limits on that basis, the component shall as soon as practicable notify the requester in writing of the unusual circumstances and of the date by which processing of the request can be expected to be completed. Where the extension is for more than ten working days, the component shall provide the requester with an opportunity either to modify the request so that it may be processed within the time limits or to arrange an alternative time period with the component for processing the request or a modified request.

(2) Where a component reasonably believes that multiple requests submitted by a requester, or by a group of requesters acting in concert, constitute a single request that would otherwise involve unusual circumstances, and the requests involve clearly related matters, they may be aggregated. Multiple requests involving unrelated matters will not be aggregated.

(d) *Expedited processing.* (1) Requests and appeals will be taken out of order and given expedited treatment whenever it is determined that they involve:

(i) Circumstances 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;

(ii) An urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged federal government activity, if made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information;

(iii) The loss of substantial due process rights; or

(iv) A matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity which affect public confidence.

(2) A request for expedited processing may be made at the time of the initial request for records or at any later time. For a prompt determination, a request for expedited processing must be received by the proper component. Requests based on the categories in paragraphs (d)(1)(i), (ii), and (iii) of this

section must be submitted to the component that maintains the records requested. Requests based on the category in paragraph (d)(1)(iv) of this section must be submitted to the Director of Public Affairs, whose address is: Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Justice, Room 1128, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington DC 20530-0001. A component that receives a request that must be handled by the Office of Public Affairs shall forward it immediately to that office by hand-delivery or fax.

(3) A requester who seeks expedited processing must submit a statement, certified to be true and correct to the best of that person's knowledge and belief, explaining in detail the basis for requesting expedited processing. For example, a requester within the category in paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section, if not a full-time member of the news media, must establish that he or she is a person whose main professional activity or occupation is information dissemination, though it need not be his or her sole occupation. A requester within the category in paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section also must establish a particular urgency to inform the public about the government activity involved in the request, beyond the public's right to know about government activity generally. The formality of certification may be waived as a matter of administrative discretion.

(4) Within ten calendar days of its receipt of a request for expedited processing, the proper component shall decide whether to grant it and shall notify the requester of the decision. If a request for expedited treatment is granted, the request shall be given priority and shall be processed as soon as practicable. If a request for expedited processing is denied, any appeal of that decision shall be acted on expeditiously.

§ 16.6 Responses to requests.

(a) *Acknowledgements of requests.* On receipt of a request, a component ordinarily shall send an acknowledgement letter to the requester which shall confirm the requester's agreement to pay fees under § 16.3(c) and provide an assigned request number for further reference.

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(b) *Grants of requests.* Ordinarily, a component shall have twenty business days from when a request is received to determine whether to grant or deny the request. Once a component makes a determination to grant a request in whole or in part, it shall notify the requester in writing. The component shall inform the requester in the notice of any fee charged under §16.11 and shall disclose records to the requester promptly on payment of any applicable fee. Records disclosed in part shall be marked or annotated to show the amount of information deleted unless doing so would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption. The location of the information deleted also shall be indicated on the record, if technically feasible.

(c) *Adverse determinations of requests.* A component making an adverse determination denying a request in any respect shall notify the requester of that determination in writing. Adverse determinations, or denials of requests, consist of: a determination to withhold any requested record in whole or in part; a determination that a requested record does not exist or cannot be located; a determination that a record is not readily 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 treatment. The denial letter shall be signed by the head of the component, or the component head's designee, and shall include:

(1) The name and title or position of the person responsible for the denial;

(2) A brief statement of the reason(s) for the denial, including any FOIA exemption applied by the component in denying the request;

(3) An estimate of the volume of records or information withheld, in number of pages or in some other reasonable form of estimation. This estimate does not need to be provided if the volume is otherwise indicated through deletions on records disclosed in part, or if providing an estimate would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption; and

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(4) A statement that the denial may be appealed under §16.9(a) and a description of the requirements of §16.9(a).

§ 16.7 Classified information.

In processing a request for information that is classified under Executive Order 12958 (3 CFR, 1996 Comp., p. 333) or any other executive order, the originating component shall review the information to determine whether it should remain classified. Information determined to no longer require classification shall not be withheld on the basis of Exemption 1 of the FOIA. On receipt of any appeal involving classified information, the Office of Information and Privacy shall take appropriate action to ensure compliance with part 17 of this title.

§ 16.8 Business information.

(a) *In general.* Business information obtained by the Department from a submitter will be disclosed under the FOIA only under 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 Exemption 4 of the FOIA.

(2) *Submitter* means any person or entity from whom the Department obtains business information, directly or indirectly. The term includes corporations; state, local, and tribal governments; and foreign governments.

(c) *Designation of business information.* A submitter of business information will use good-faith efforts to designate, by appropriate markings, either at the time of submission or at a reasonable time thereafter, any portions of its submission that it considers to be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4. These designations will expire ten years after the date of the submission unless the submitter requests, and provides justification for, a longer designation period.

(d) *Notice to submitters.* A component shall provide a submitter with prompt written notice of a FOIA request or administrative appeal that seeks its business information wherever required