

## Panama Canal Regulations

## § 9.11

working days. The extension period may be split between the request and the appeal, but it may not exceed ten working days overall.

(c) The unusual circumstances which may reasonably require an extension of time for the proper handling of your request or appeal are:

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

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

(3) The 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 the Commission having substantial subject matter interest in the request.

### **§ 9.11 Fees for Freedom of Information Act requests.**

(a) The following are fees charged by the Commission for document search and reproduction.

(1) Search for records: \$7.10 per hour of search conducted by clerical personnel, and \$23.50 per hour of search conducted by supervisory or professional personnel.

(2) Search requiring computers: \$185.94 for the first two hours or fraction of the first two hours; \$92.97 for each additional hour.

(3) Copying: \$0.13 per page for the first copy of a record. The word "page" refers to a paper copy of a standard agency size which is 8½" x 11" or 11" x 14". For additional copies, you will be charged the official Panama Canal Commission tariff rate for reproduction.

(4) Converting microfilm to paper copy: \$0.13 per page for the first copy of a record. For additional copies, you will be charged the official Panama Canal Commission tariff rate for reproduction. Microfilm search charges will be at the clerical rate.

(5) Duplication of tape recordings: (i) *Labor costs:* \$10.65 per ½ hour for 40 channel tape recording; \$7.30 per ½

hour for basic tape recording; \$9.35 per ½ hour for video tape recording. Minimum charge for taping is ½ hour.

(ii) *Material costs:* No cost will be assessed to tapes if provided by requester. If agency furnishes tapes, the requester will be charged direct purchasing costs.

(6) Duplication of photographs: Black and white, up to 8" x 10", \$2.55 per print; color, up to 8" x 10", \$9.20 per print.

(7) Duplication of canal sounding and engineering charts, graphs, and drawings (reproducible and non-reproducible) at cost recovery rate.

(8) Other services: If there is no specific fee listed in this section for a service necessary for handling your request, you will be charged the official agency tariff for that service. If no tariff exists for that service, the Agency Records Officer is authorized to charge the direct cost to the Commission of that service.

(b) Review fees are chargeable only when a request is for a commercial use, as defined in § 9.12. Review fees will be charged in accordance with the search fee rates set forth in § 9.11(a)(1).

(c) If the Commission estimates that search charges are likely to exceed \$25.00, and the requester has not previously agreed to pay fees as high as those anticipated, the agency will notify the requester of the estimated amount of fees, and offer the requester the opportunity to revise the request.

(d) The Panama Canal Commission may require a requester to pay fees in advance only if the estimated charges are likely to exceed \$250.00, or the requester has previously failed to pay a fee in a timely fashion (i.e., within 30 days of the date of billing).

(1) If the requester has a history of prompt payment, and the estimated charges are likely to exceed \$250.00, the Commission will notify the requester of the estimated cost and obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment.

(2) If the requester has no prior payment history, and the estimated charges are likely to exceed \$250.00, the agency may require an advance payment of an amount up to the full amount of estimated charges.

(3) If the requester has a poor payment history, the agency may require advance payment of the full amount of

the estimated fees, as well as any amount currently owed, plus interest on the delinquent amount, before the agency begins to process a new or pending request from that requester.

(4) When the agency acts under this subsection, the administrative time limits prescribed in §§9.7(a) and 9.9(a) will begin only after receipt of the required fee payments.

(e) If you wish to request a waiver or reduction of fees, you must do so in writing to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, Agency Records Officer, Panama Canal Commission, Unit 2300, APO AA 34011-2300. The Agency Records Officer may waive or reduce the fees if the official decides that providing the records you request would be 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. Requests for a waiver or reduction of fees shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(1) In order to determine whether 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, the Agency Records Officer will consider the following four factors:

(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 the disclosure is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of government operations or activities.

(2) In order to determine whether disclosure of the information is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester, the Agency Records Offi-

cer will consider the following two factors:

(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.

(3) The Agency Records Officer will not consider waiver or reduction of fees for requesters (persons or organizations) from whom unpaid fees remain due to the Agency for another information access request.

(4) The Agency's decision to refuse to waive or reduce fees as requested under this section may be appealed to the Director, Office of Executive Administration, Panama Canal Commission, Unit 2300, APO AA 34011-2300. Appeals should contain as much information and documentation as possible to support the request for a waiver or reduction of fees. The requester will be notified within thirty working days from the date on which the Agency received the appeal.

(f) This agency will assess interest charges on an unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the day on which the bill was sent. Interest will be computed at the rate prescribed in Section 3717 of Title 31, United States Code, and will accrue from the date of the billing.

[52 FR 31397, Aug. 20, 1987, as amended at 53 FR 16256, May 6, 1988; 59 FR 26122, May 19, 1994]

#### §9.12 Definitions.

*Commercial use* refers to a request or a requester seeking information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made.

*Duplication* refers to the process of making a copy of document necessary to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request. Such copies can take the form of paper copy, microfilm, audio-visual materials, or machine readable