

records or if records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(b) *Computer searches for records.* FEMA will charge the actual direct cost of providing the service. This will include the cost of operating the central processing unit (CPU) for that portion of operating time that is directly attributable to searching for records responsive to a FOIA request and operator/programmer salary apportionable to the search. FEMA may assess charges for time spent searching, even if FEMA fails to locate the records or if records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(c) *Duplication costs.* (1) For copies of documents reproduced on a standard office copying machine in sizes up to 8½x14 inches, the charge will be \$.15 per page.

(2) The fee for reproducing copies of records over 8½x14 inches or whose physical characteristics do not permit reproduction by routine electrostatic copying shall be the direct cost of reproducing the records through government or commercial sources. If FEMA estimates that the allowable duplication charges are likely to exceed \$25, it shall notify the requester of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance his/her willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such a notice shall offer a requester the opportunity to confer with agency personnel with the objective of reformulating the request to meet his/her needs at a lower cost.

(3) For copies prepared by computer, such as tapes or printouts, FEMA shall charge the actual cost, including operator time, of production of the tape or printout. If FEMA estimates that the allowable duplication charges are likely to exceed \$25, it shall notify the requester of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance his/her willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such a notice shall offer a requester the opportunity to confer with agency personnel with the objective of reformulating the request to meet his/her needs at a lower cost.

(4) For other methods of reproduction or duplication, FEMA shall charge the actual direct costs of producing the document(s). If FEMA estimates that

the allowable duplication charges are likely to exceed \$25, it shall notify the requester of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance his/her willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such a notice shall offer a requester the opportunity to confer with agency personnel with the objective of reformulating the request to meet his/her needs at a lower cost.

(d) Interest may be charged to those requesters who fail to pay fees charged. FEMA may begin assessing interest charges on the amount billed starting on the 31st day following the day on which the billing was sent. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in section 3717 of Title 31 U.S.C. and will accrue from the date of the billing.

(e) FEMA shall use the most efficient and least costly methods to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA. FEMA may choose to contract with private sector services to locate, reproduce and disseminate records in response to FOIA requests when that is the most efficient and least costly method. When documents responsive to a request are maintained for distribution by agencies operating statutory-based fee schedule programs, such as but not limited to the Government Printing Office or the National Technical Information Service, FEMA will inform requesters of the steps necessary to obtain records from those sources.

[52 FR 13678, Apr.24, 1987, as amended at 52 FR 33410, Sept. 3, 1987]

§ 5.47 Appeals regarding fees.

A requestor whose application for a fee waiver or a fee reduction is denied may appeal that decision to the Deputy Director in the manner prescribed in subpart D.

Subpart D—Described Records

§ 5.50 General.

(a) Except for records made available pursuant to subpart B, FEMA shall promptly make records available to a requestor pursuant to a request which