

§5.21

Records means any handwritten, typed, or printed documents (such as memoranda, books, brochures, studies, writings, drafts, letters, transcripts, and minutes) and documentary material in other forms (such as punchcards; magnetic tapes, cards, or discs; paper tapes; audio or video recordings; maps; photographs; slides; microfilm; and motion pictures). It does not include objects or articles such as exhibits, models, equipment, and duplication machines or audiovisual processing materials. Nor does it include books, magazines, pamphlets, or other reference material in formally organized and officially designated HHS libraries, where such materials are available under the rules of the particular library.

Representative of the news media means a person actively gathering information for an entity organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. News media entities include television and radio broadcasters, publishers of periodicals who distribute their products to the general public or who make their products available for purchase or subscription by the general public, and entities that may disseminate news through other media (e.g., electronic dissemination of text). We will treat freelance journalists as representatives of a new media entity if they can show a likelihood of publication through such an entity. A publication contract is such a basis, and the requester's past publication record may show such a basis.

Request means asking for records, whether or not you refer specifically to the Freedom of Information Act. Requests from Federal agencies and court orders for documents are not included within this definition. Subpoenas are requests only to the extent provided by Part 2 of this title.

Review means, when used in connection with processing records for a commercial use request, examining the records to determine what portions, if any, may be withheld, and any other processing that is necessary to prepare the records for release. It includes only the examining and processing that are done the first time we analyze whether a specific exemption applies to a particular record or portion of a record. It

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does not include examination done in the appeal stage with respect to an exemption that was applied at the initial request stage. However, if we initially withhold a record under one exemption, and on appeal we determine that that exemption does not apply, then examining the record in the appeal stage for the purpose of determining whether a different exemption applies is included in *review*. It does not include the process of researching or resolving general legal or policy issues regarding exemptions.

Search means looking for records or portions of records responsive to a request. It includes reading and interpreting a request, and also page-by-page and line-by-line examination to identify responsive portions of a document. However, it does not include line-by-line examination where merely duplicating the entire page would be a less expensive and quicker way to comply with the request.

Subpart B—Obtaining a Record

§5.21 How to request records.

(a) *General*. Our policy is to answer all requests, both oral and written, for records. However, in order to have the rights given you by the FOIA and by this regulation (for example, the right to appeal if we deny your request and the right to have our decisions reviewed in court), you must either make your request in writing or make it orally to a Freedom of Information Officer. Freedom of Information Officers and their staffs may put in writing any oral requests they receive directly.

(b) *Addressing requests*. It will help us to handle your request sooner if you address it to the Freedom of Information Officer in the HHS unit that is most likely to have the records you want. (See §5.31 of this Part for a list of Freedom of Information Officers.) If you cannot determine this, send the request to: HHS Freedom of Information Officer, 645-F, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20201. Write the words "Freedom of Information Act Request" on the envelope and letter.

(c) *Details in the letter.* You should provide details that will help us identify and find the records you are requesting. If there is insufficient information, we will ask you for more. Include your telephone number(s) to help us reach you if we have questions. If you are not sure how to write your request or what details to include, communicate with a Freedom of Information Officer.

§ 5.22 Requests not handled under the FOIA.

(a) We will not handle your request under the FOIA and this regulation to the extent it asks for records that are currently available, either from HHS or from another part of the Federal Government, under a statute that provides for charging fees for those records. For example, we will not handle your request under the FOIA and this regulation to the extent it asks for detailed earnings statements under the Social Security program, or records currently available from the Government Printing Office of the National Technical Information Service.

(b) We will not handle your request under the FOIA and this regulation to the extent it asks for records that are distributed by an HHS program office as part of its regular program activity, for example, health education brochures distributed by the Public Health Service or public information leaflets distributed by the Social Security Administration.

§ 5.23 Referral of requests outside the Department.

If you request records that were created by, or provided to us by, another Federal agency, and if that agency asserts control over the records, we may refer the records and your request to that agency. We may likewise refer requests for classified records to the agency that classified them. In these cases, the other agency will process and respond to your request, to the extent it concerns those records, under that agency's regulation, and you need not make a separate request to that agency. We will notify you when we refer your request to another agency.

§ 5.24 Responding to your request.

(a) *Retrieving records.* The Department is required to furnish copies of records only when they are in our possession or we can retrieve them from storage. If we have stored the records you want in the National Archives or another storage center, we will retrieve and review them for possible disclosure. However, the Federal Government destroys many old records, so sometimes it is impossible to fill requests. Various laws, regulations, and manuals give the time periods for keeping records before they may be destroyed. For example, there is information about retention of records in the Records Disposal Act of 1944, 44 U.S.C. 3301 through 3314; the Federal Property Management Regulations, 41 CFR 101-11.4; the General Records Schedules of the National Archives and Records Administration; and in the HHS Handbook: *Files Maintenance and Records Disposition*.

(b) *Furnishing records.* The requirement is that we furnish copies only of records that we have or can retrieve. We are not compelled to create new records. For example, we are not required to write a new program so that a computer will print information in the format you prefer. However, if the requested information is maintained in computerized form, but we can, with minimal computer instructions, produce the information on paper, we will do this if it is the only way to respond to a request. Nor are we required to perform research for you. On the other hand, we may decide to conserve government resources and at the same time supply the records you need by consolidating information from various records rather than copying them all. Moreover, we are required to furnish only one copy of a record and usually impose that limit. If information exists in different forms, we will provide the record in the form that best conserves government resources. For example, if it requires less time and expense to provide a computer record as a paper printout rather than in an electronic medium, we will provide the printout.