PART 171—AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND RECORDS TO THE PUBLIC

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Source: 69 FR 63935, Nov. 3, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Policy and Procedures

§ 171.1 Availability of information.
Records of the Department of State shall be made available to the public upon request made in compliance with the access procedures established in this part, except for any records exempt by law from disclosure. Any request for records must describe the information sought in such a way (see §171.5(c)) that an employee of the Department of State who is familiar with the subject area of the request can locate the records with a reasonable amount of effort. The sections that follow govern the response of the Department to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, Executive Order 12958, and the Ethics in Government Act. Regulations at 22 CFR 172.1—9 govern the response of the Department to subpoenas, court orders, and certain other requests for testimony of Department officials or disclosure of Department records in litigation to which the Department is not a party.

§ 171.2 Types of records maintained.
Most of the records maintained by the Department pertain to the formulation and execution of U.S. foreign policy. Certain records that pertain to individuals are also maintained such as applications for U.S. passports, applications for visas to enter the U.S.,
records on consular assistance given abroad by U.S. Foreign Service posts to U.S. citizens, and records on Department employees. Further information on the types of records maintained by the Department may be obtained by reviewing the records disposition schedules which are available through the Department's Web site: http://www.state.gov or directly at the FOIA home page: http://foia.state.gov.

§ 171.3 Public reading room.

A reading room providing public access to certain Department of State material is located in the Department of State, SA–2, 515 22nd Street, NW., Washington, DC. The reading room contains material pertaining to access to information under the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, E.O. 12958 and includes those statutes, regulations, guidelines, and other items required to be made available to the public under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3). Also available in the reading room are microfiches of records released by the Department pursuant to requests under the Freedom of Information Act and compilations of documents reviewed and released in certain special projects. The reading room is open during normal Department weekday working hours, 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. There are no fees for access by the public to this room or the material contained therein, but fees shall be assessed for the duplication of materials maintained in the reading room at the rate of 15 cents per page and $2.00 per microfiche card. Fees for copies made by other methods of reproduction or duplication, such as tapes, printouts, or CD-ROM, shall be the actual cost of producing the copies, including operator time. Persons wishing to use their own copying equipment must request approval in advance from the Department’s Information and Privacy Coordinator, U.S. Department of State, SA–2, 515 22nd Street, NW., Washington, DC 20522–6001. The use of such equipment must be consistent with security regulations of the Department and is subject to the availability of personnel to monitor such copying.

§ 171.4 Electronic reading room.

The Department has established a site on the Internet with most of the same records and reference materials that are available in the public reading room. This site also contains information on accessing records under the FOIA and the Privacy Act. The site is a valuable source that is easily accessed by the public by clicking on “FOIA” at the Department’s Web site at http://www.state.gov or directly at the FOIA home page at http://foia.state.gov. Included on the FOIA home page are links to other sites where Department information may be available. The Department’s Privacy Act systems of records and the various records disposition schedules may be found on the Department’s FOIA home page under “Reference Materials.”

§ 171.5 Requests for information—types and how made.

(a) Requests for records in accordance with this chapter may be made by mail addressed to the Information and Privacy Coordinator, U.S. Department of State, SA–2, 515 22nd Street, NW., Washington, DC 20522–6001. Facsimile requests under the FOIA only may be sent to: (202) 261–8579. E-mail requests cannot be accepted at this time. Requesters are urged to indicate clearly on their requests the provision of law under which they are requesting information. This will facilitate the processing of the request by the Department. In any case, the Department will process the request under the provision of law that provides the greatest access to the requested records.

(b) Requests may also be made by the public in person from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Department of State, SA–2, 515 22nd Street, NW., Washington, DC.

(c) Although no particular request format is required, it is essential that a request reasonably describe the Department records that are sought. The burden of adequately identifying the record requested lies with the requester. Requests should be specific and include all pertinent details about the request. For FOIA requests, the request should include the subject, time-frame, any individuals involved, and reasons why the Department is believed to have records on the subject of
the request. For Privacy Act requests, the request should state the type of records sought, the complete name and date and place of birth of the subject of the request, and the timeframe for the records. An original signature is required. See §171.12(b) for guidance regarding third party requests. Individuals may seek assistance regarding any aspect of their requests from the Chief, Requester Liaison Division, (202) 261-8484.

(d) While every effort is made to guarantee the greatest possible access to all requesters regardless of the specific statute under which the information is requested, the following guidance is provided in requesting records:

(1) Freedom of Information Act. Requests for documents concerning the general activities of government and of the Department of State in particular (see subpart B of this part).

(2) E.O. 12958. Requests for mandatory review and declassification of specific Department records and requests for access to such records by historical researchers and certain former government officials (see subpart C of this part).

(3) Privacy Act. Requests from U.S. citizens or legal permanent resident aliens for records that pertain to them and that are maintained by the Department under the individual’s name or personal identifier (see subpart D of this part).

(4) Ethics in Government Act. Requests for the financial Disclosure Statements of Department Employees covered by this Act (see subpart E of this part).

(e) First-in/first-out processing. As a general matter, information access requests are processed in the order in which they are received. However, if the request is specific and the search can be narrowed, it may be processed more quickly.

(f) Cut-off date. In determining which records are responsive to a request, the Department ordinarily will include only records in its possession as of the date the search for responsive documents is initiated, unless the requester has specified an earlier time frame.

(g) Records previously withheld or in litigation. Requests shall not be processed for records that have been viewed and withheld within the past two years or whose withholding is the subject of litigation.

§171.6 Archival records.

The Department ordinarily transfers records to the National Archives when they are 25 years old. Accordingly, requests for records 25 years old or older should be addressed to: Archives II, 8601 Adelphi Road, National Archives at College Park, MD 20740-6001.


§171.10 Purpose and scope.

This subpart contains the rules that the Department follows under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552. The rules should be read together with the FOIA which provides additional information about access to records and contains the specific exemptions that are applicable to withholding information. Privacy Act records determined to be exempt from disclosure under the Privacy Act are processed as well under the FOIA and are subject to this subpart.

§171.11 Definitions.

As used in this subpart, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) Freedom of Information Act or FOIA means the statute codified at 5 U.S.C. 552, as amended.

(b) Department means the United States Department of State, including its field offices and Foreign Service posts abroad;

(c) Agency means any executive department, military department, Government corporation, Government controlled corporation, or other establishment in the executive branch of the government (including the Executive Office of the President), or any independent regulatory agency;

(d) Information and Privacy Coordinator means the Director of the Department’s Office of Information Programs and Services (IPS) who is responsible for processing requests for access to information under the FOIA, the Privacy Act, E.O. 12958, and the Ethics in Government Act;

(e) Record means all information under the control of the Department,
including information created, stored, and retrievable by electronic means, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made in or received by the Department and preserved as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Department or because of the informational value of the data contained therein. It includes records of other Government agencies that have been expressly placed under the control of the Department upon termination of those agencies. It does not include personal records created primarily for the personal convenience of an individual and not used to conduct Department business and not integrated into the Department’s record keeping system or files. It does not include records that are not already in existence and that would have to be created specifically to meet a request. However, information available in electronic form shall be searched and compiled in response to a request unless such search and compilation would significantly interfere with the operation of the Department’s automated information systems.

(f) **Control** means the Department’s legal authority over a record, taking into account the ability of the Department to use and dispose of the record as it sees fit, to legally determine the disposition of a record, the intent of the record’s creator to retain or relinquish control over the record, the extent to which Department personnel have read or relied upon the record, and the degree to which the record has been integrated into the Department’s record keeping system or files.

(g) **Direct costs** means those costs the Department incurs in searching for, duplicating, and, in the case of commercial requests, reviewing documents in response to a FOIA request. The term does not include overhead expenses.

(h) **Search costs** means those costs the Department incurs in looking for, identifying, and retrieving material, in paper or electronic form, that is responsive to a request, including page-by-page or line-by-line identification of material within documents. The Department shall attempt to ensure that searching for material is done in the most efficient and least expensive manner so as to minimize costs for both the Department and the requester.

(i) **Duplication costs** means those costs the Department incurs in copying a requested record in a form appropriate for release in response to a FOIA request. Such copies may take the form of paper copy, microfiche, audio-visual materials, or machine-readable electronic documentation (e.g., disk or CD-ROM), among others.

(j) **Review costs** means costs the Department incurs in examining a record to determine whether and to what extent the record is responsive to the FOIA request and the extent to which it may be disclosed to the requester. It does not include costs of resolving general legal or policy issues that may be raised by a request.

(k) **Unusual circumstances.** As used herein, but only to the extent reasonably necessary to the proper processing of the particular request, the term “unusual circumstances” means:

1. The need to search for and collect the requested records from Foreign Service posts or other separate and distinct Department offices;
2. The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records that are demanded in a single request; or
3. The need for consultation with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the Department that have a substantial subject matter interest therein. Such consultation shall be conducted with all practicable speed.

(l) **Commercial use request** means a request from or on behalf of one who requests information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interest of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. In determining whether a requester belongs within this category, the Department will look at the use to which the requester will put the information requested.

(m) **Educational institution** means a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate or graduate higher education, an institution of professional education, or an institution
of vocational education, that operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

(n) **Non-commercial scientific institution** means an institution that is not operated on a "commercial" basis, as that term is used in paragraph (l) of this section and that is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research, the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(o) **Representative of the news media** means any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. The term news means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. News media include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large and publishers of periodicals (but only in those instances when they can qualify as disseminators of "news") who make their products available for purchase by the general public. Freelance journalists may be regarded as working for a news organization if they can demonstrate, such as by past publication, a likelihood of publication through a representative of the news media, even though not actually employed by it.

(p) **All other** means an individual or organization not covered by a definition in paragraphs (l), (m), (n), or (o) of this section.

§ 171.12 Processing requests.

The Information and Privacy Coordinator is responsible for acting on all initial requests except for requests for records coming under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Bureau of Human Resources, the Office of Medical Services, and the Office of the Inspector General.

(a) **Third party requests.** Except for requests under the Privacy Act by a parent of a minor or by a legal guardian (§171.32(c)), requests for records pertaining to another individual shall be processed under the FOIA and must be accompanied by a written authorization for access by the individual, notarized or made under penalty of perjury, or by proof that the individual is deceased (e.g., death certificate or obituary).

(b) **Expedited processing.** Requests and appeals shall be taken out of order and given expedited treatment whenever a requester has demonstrated that a "compelling need" for the information exists. A request for expedited processing may be made at the time of the initial request for records or at any later time. The request for expedited processing shall set forth with specificity the facts on which the request is based. A notice of the determination whether to grant expedited processing shall be provided to the requester within 10 days of the date of the receipt of the request. A "compelling need" is deemed to exist where the requester can demonstrate one of the following:

1. Failure to obtain requested information on an expedited basis could reasonably be expected to: Pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; impair substantial due process rights; or harm substantial humanitarian interests.

2. The information is urgently needed by an individual primarily engaged in disseminating information in order to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity. News media requesters would normally qualify; however, other persons must demonstrate that their primary activity involves publishing or otherwise disseminating information to the public, not just a particular segment or group.

(ii) **Urgently needed.** The information has a particular value that will be lost if not disseminated quickly. Ordinarily this means a breaking news story of general public interest. Information of historical interest only, or information sought for litigation or commercial activities would not qualify, nor would a news media publication or broadcast deadline unrelated to the breaking nature of the story.

(ii) **Actual or alleged Federal Government activity.** The information concerns some actions taken, contemplated, or alleged by or about the government of the United States, or one of its components or agencies, including the Congress.
(c) Appeal of denial of expedited processing. Any denial of a request for expedited processing may be appealed in accordance with the appeal procedure set forth in §171.50.

(d) Time limits. The statutory time limit for responding to a FOIA request or to an appeal from a denial of a FOIA request is 20 days. In unusual circumstances, as defined in §171.11(k), the time limits may be extended by the Information and Privacy Coordinator for not more than 10 days, excepting Saturdays, Sundays, or legal public holidays.

(e) Multitrack processing. The Department may use two or more processing tracks by distinguishing between simple and more complex requests based on the amount of work and/or time needed to process the request. The Department may provide requesters in a slower track an opportunity to limit the scope of their request in order to qualify for faster processing.

(f) Form or format of response. The Department shall provide requested records in any form or format sought by the requester if the record is readily reproducible in that form or format through reasonable efforts.

§ 171.13 Business information.

(a) Business information obtained by the Department from a submitter will be disclosed under the FOIA only in compliance with this section.

(b) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(1) Business information means information obtained by the Department from a submitter that arguably may be exempt from disclosure as privileged or confidential under Exemption 4 of the FOIA.

(2) Submitter means any person or entity from which the Department obtains business information. The term includes corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships; State, local, and tribal governments; and foreign governments.

(c) Designation of business information. A submitter of 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 exempt 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. The Department shall provide a submitter with prompt written notice of a FOIA request or administrative appeal of a denial of such a request that seeks its information whenever required under paragraph (e) of this section, except as provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in order to give the submitter an opportunity to object to disclosure of any specified portion of that information. The notice shall either describe the information requested or include copies of the requested records or record portions containing the information.

(e) When notice is required. Notice shall be given to a submitter whenever:

(1) The information has been designated in good faith by the submitter as information considered protected from disclosure under Exemption 4; or

(2) The Department has reason to believe that the information may not be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4.

(f) When notice is not required. The notice requirements of paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section shall not apply if:

(1) The Department determines that the information should not be disclosed;

(2) The information lawfully has been published or has been officially made available to the public;

(3) Disclosure of the information is required by statute (other than the FOIA) or by a regulation issued in accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 12600; or

(4) The designation made by the submitter under paragraph (c) of this section appears obviously frivolous—except that, in such a case, the Department shall, within a reasonable time prior to a specified disclosure date, give the submitter written notice of any final decision to disclose the information.

(g) Opportunity to object to disclosure. The Department will allow a submitter a reasonable time to respond to the notice described in paragraph (d) of this
section and will specify that time period in the notice. If a submitter has any objection to disclosure, a detailed written statement in support of the objection must be submitted. The statement must specify all grounds for withholding any portion of the information under any exemption of the FOIA and, in the case of Exemption 4, it must show why the information is a trade secret or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential. In the event that a submitter fails to respond to the notice within the time specified in it, the submitter will be considered to have no objection to disclosure of the information. Information provided by a submitter under this paragraph may itself be subject to disclosure under the FOIA.

(h) Notice of intent to disclose. The Department shall consider a submitter's objections and specific grounds for non-disclosure in deciding whether to disclose business information. Whenever the Department decides to disclose business information over the objection of a submitter, it shall give the submitter written notice, which shall include:

(1) A statement of the reason why each of the submitter's disclosure objections was not sustained;
(2) A description of the information to be disclosed; and
(3) A specified disclosure date, which shall be a reasonable time subsequent to the notice.

(i) Notice of lawsuit. Whenever a requester files a lawsuit seeking to compel the disclosure of information, the Department shall promptly notify the submitter.

(j) Notice to requester. Whenever the Department provides a submitter with notice and an opportunity to object to disclosure under paragraph (d) of this section, the Department shall also notify the requester. Whenever the Department notifies a submitter of its intent to disclose requested information under paragraph (h) of this section, the Department shall also notify the requester. Whenever a submitter files a lawsuit seeking to prevent the disclosure of business information, the Department shall notify the requester.

§ 171.14 Fees to be charged—general.

The Department shall seek to charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs it incurs in processing a FOIA request. It shall use the most efficient and least costly methods to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA. The Department will not charge fees to any requester, including commercial use requesters, if the cost of collecting a fee would be equal to or greater than the fee itself. With the exception of requesters seeking documents for a commercial use, the Department will provide the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication without charge. By making a FOIA request, the requester shall be considered to have agreed to pay all applicable fees up to $25.00 unless a fee waiver has been granted.

(a) Searches for responsive records. If the Department estimates that the search costs will exceed $25.00, the requester shall be so notified. Such notice shall offer the requester the opportunity to confer with Department personnel with the object of reformulating the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost. The request shall not be processed further unless the requester agrees to pay the estimated fees. For both manual and computer searches, the Department shall charge the estimated direct cost of each search based on the average current salary rates of the categories of personnel doing the searches. Further information on search fees is available by clicking on "FOIA" at the Department's Web site at http://www.state.gov or directly at the FOIA home page at http://foia.state.gov.

(1) Manual searches. The Department will charge at the salary rate (i.e., basic pay plus 16 percent of basic pay) of the employee making the search.

(2) Computer searches. The Department will charge at 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 attributable to the search.
§ 171.15 Fees to be charged—categories of requesters.

Under the FOIA, there are four categories of requesters: Commercial use requesters, educational and non-commercial scientific institutions, representatives of the news media, and all other requesters. The fees for each of these categories are:

(a) Commercial use requesters. When the Department receives a request for documents for commercial use as defined in §171.11(l), it will assess charges that recover the full direct costs of searching for, reviewing for release, and duplicating the record sought. Commercial use requesters are not entitled to two hours of free search time or 100 free pages of reproduction of documents. The Department may recover the cost of searching for and reviewing records even if there is ultimately no disclosure of records (see §171.16(b)).

(b) Educational and non-commercial scientific institution requesters. The Department shall provide documents to requesters in this category for the cost of reproduction alone, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, a requester must show that the request is being made as authorized by and under the auspices of a qualifying institution, as defined in §171.11(m) and (n), and that the records are not sought for a commercial use, but are sought in furtherance of scholarly (if the request is from an educational institution) or scientific (if the request is from a non-commercial scientific institution) research.

(c) Representatives of the news media. The Department shall provide documents to requesters in this category for the cost of reproduction alone, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, a requester must meet the criteria in §171.11(o), and the request must not be made for a commercial use. A request for records supporting the news dissemination function of the requester shall not be considered to be a commercial use request.

(d) All other requesters. The Department shall charge requesters who do not fit into any of the categories above fees that recover the full reasonable direct cost of searching for and reproducing records that are responsive to the request, except that the first 100 pages of reproduction and the first two hours of search time shall be furnished without charge.
§ 171.16 Miscellaneous fee provisions.

(a) Charging interest. The Department shall begin assessing interest charges on an unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the day on which the bill was sent. The fact that the fee has been received by the Department within the thirty-day grace period, even if not processed, shall stay the accrual of interest. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and shall accrue from the date of the billing.

(b) Charges for unsuccessful search or if records are withheld. The Department may assess charges for time spent searching, even if it fails to locate the records or if the records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(c) Advance payment. The Department may not require a requester to make an advance payment, i.e., payment before work is commenced or continued on a request, unless:

(1) It estimates or determines that allowable charges that a requester may be required to pay are likely to exceed $250. In such a case, the Department shall notify the requester of the likely cost and obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment where the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees, or shall require an advance payment of an amount up to the full estimated charges in the case of requesters with no history of payment; or

(2) A requester has previously failed to pay within 30 days of the date of the billing a fee charged. In such a case, the Department shall require the requester to pay the full amount previously owed plus any applicable interest and to make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before the Department begins to process a new or pending request from that requester. If a requester has failed to pay a fee charged by another U.S. Government agency in an information access case, the Department may require proof that such fee has been paid before processing a new or pending request from that requester.

(3) When the Department acts under paragraph (c)(1) or (2) of this section, the administrative time limits prescribed in the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6) (i.e., 20 working days from receipt of initial requests and 20 working days from receipt of appeals from initial denial, plus permissible extensions of these time limits), will begin only after the Department has received fee payments described in paragraphs (c)(1) and (2) of this section.

(d) Aggregating requests. When the Department reasonably believes that a requester, or a group of requesters acting in concert, has submitted multiple requests involving related matters solely to avoid payment of fees, the Department may aggregate those requests for purposes of assessing processing fees.

(e) Effect of the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97–365). The Department shall comply with provisions of the Debt Collection Act, including disclosure to consumer reporting agencies and use of collection agencies, where appropriate, to effect repayment.

§ 171.17 Waiver or reduction of fees.

(a) Fees otherwise chargeable in connection with a request for disclosure of a record shall be waived or reduced where it is determined that disclosure 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.

(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 Department will consider the following four factors:

(i) The subject of the request, i.e., 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, i.e., 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, i.e., whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to public understanding, including whether the requester has expertise in the subject
area as well as the intention and ability to disseminate the information to the public; and

(iv) The significance of the contribution to public understanding, i.e., 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 Department will consider the following two factors:

(i) The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest, i.e., whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and, if so,

(ii) The primary interest in disclosure, i.e., 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.

(b) The Department may refuse to consider waiver or reduction of fees for requesters (persons or organizations) from whom unpaid fees remain owed to the Department for another information access request.

(c) Where only some of the records to be released satisfy the requirements for a waiver or reduction of fees, a waiver or reduction shall be granted for only those records.

(d) The Department's decision to refuse to waive or reduce fees may be appealed in accordance with §171.51.

Subpart C—Executive Order 12958 Provisions

§171.20 Definitions.

As used in this subpart, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) Agency means any executive branch agency, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, any military department, as defined by 5 U.S.C. 102, and any other entity within the executive branch that comes into possession of classified information.

(b) Classified information means information that has been determined pursuant to E.O. 12958 or any predecessor order on national security information to require protection against unauthorized disclosure and is marked to indicate its classified status when in documentary form.

(c) Declassification means the authorized change in the status of information from classified information to unclassified information.

(d) Department means the U.S. Department of State, including its field offices and Foreign Service posts abroad.

(e) FOIA means the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

(f) Foreign government information means:

(1) Information provided to the United States Government by a foreign government or governments, an international organization of governments, or any element thereof, with the expectation that the information, the source of the information, or both, are to be held in confidence;

(2) Information produced by the United States pursuant to or as a result of a joint arrangement with a foreign government or governments, or an international organization of governments, or any element thereof, requiring that the information, the arrangement, or both, are to be held in confidence; or

(3) Information received and treated as foreign government information under the terms of a predecessor executive order.

(g) Information means any knowledge that can be communicated or documentary material, regardless of its physical form or characteristics that is owned by, produced by or for, or is under the control of the United States Government.

(h) Mandatory declassification review means the process by which specific classified information is reviewed for declassification pursuant to a request under §171.21.

(i) National Security means the national defense or foreign relations of the United States.

(j) Certain former government personnel includes former officials of the Department of State or other U.S. Government agencies who previously have occupied policy-making positions to which they were appointed by the President under 3 U.S.C. 105(a)(2)(A) or
§ 171.21 Declassification review.

(a) Scope. All information classified under E.O. 12958 or predecessor orders shall be subject to declassification review upon request by a member of the public or a U.S. government employee or agency with the following exceptions:

(1) Information originated by the incumbent President or, in the performance of executive duties, the incumbent Vice President; the incumbent President’s White House staff or, in the performance of executive duties, the incumbent Vice President’s staff; committees, commissions, or boards appointed by the incumbent President; other entities within the Executive Office of the President that solely advise and assist the incumbent President;

(2) Information that is the subject of litigation;

(3) Information that has been reviewed for declassification within the past two years; and

(4) Information exempted from search and review under the Central Intelligence Agency Information Act.

(b) Requests. Requests for mandatory declassification review should be addressed to the Information and Privacy Coordinator at the address given in Sec. 171.5. E-mail requests are not accepted at this time.

(c) Mandatory declassification review and the FOIA. A mandatory declassification review request is separate and distinct from a request for records under the FOIA. When a requester submits a request under both mandatory declassification review and the FOIA, the Department shall require the requester to elect review under one process or the other. If the requester fails to make such election, the request will be under the process that would result in the greatest disclosure unless the information requested is subject to only mandatory declassification review.

(d) Description of information sought. In order to be processed, a request for declassification review must describe the document or the material containing the information sought with sufficient specificity to enable the Department to locate the document or material with a reasonable amount of effort. Whenever a request does not sufficiently describe the material, the Department shall notify the requester that no further action will be taken unless additional description of the information sought is provided.

(e) Refusal to confirm or deny existence of information. The Department may refuse to confirm or deny the existence or nonexistence of requested information whenever the fact of existence or nonexistence is itself classified.

(f) Processing. In responding to mandatory declassification review requests, the Department shall make a review determination as promptly as possible and notify the requester accordingly. When the requested information cannot be declassified in its entirety, the Department shall release all meaningful portions that can be declassified and that are not exempt from disclosure on other grounds (see § 171.25).

(g) Other agency information. When the Department receives a request for information in its possession that was originally classified by another agency, it shall refer the request and the pertinent information to the other agency for processing unless that agency has agreed that the Department may review such information for declassification on behalf of that agency. The Department may, after consultation with the other agency, inform the requester of the referral unless association of the other agency with the information is itself classified.

(h) Foreign government information. In the case of a request for material containing foreign government information, the Department, if it is also the agency that initially received the foreign government information, shall determine whether the information may be declassified and may, if appropriate,
consult with the relevant foreign government on that issue. If the Department is not the agency that initially received the foreign government information, it shall refer the request to the original receiving agency for direct response to the requester.

(i) Cryptologic and intelligence information. Mandatory declassification review requests for cryptologic information shall be processed in accordance with special procedures established by the Secretary of Defense, and such requests for information concerning intelligence activities or intelligence sources and methods shall be processed in accordance with special procedures established by the Director of Central Intelligence.

§ 171.22 Appeals.

Any denial of a mandatory declassification review request may be appealed to the Department’s Appeals Review Panel in accordance with §171.52. A denial by the Appeals Review Panel of a mandatory declassification review appeal may be further appealed to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel.

§ 171.23 Declassification in the public interest.

It is presumed that information that continues to meet classification requirements requires continued protection. In exceptional cases, however, the need to protect such information may be outweighed by the public interest in disclosure of the information, and in these cases the information should be declassified. When such questions arise, they shall be referred to the senior Department official with Top Secret authority having primary jurisdiction over the information in question. That official, after consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, will determine whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the damage to national security that reasonably could be expected from disclosure. If the determination is made that the information should be declassified and disclosed, that official will make such a recommendation to the Secretary or the senior agency official who shall make the decision on declassification and disclosure. This provision does not amplify or modify the substantive criteria or procedures for classification or create any substantive or procedural right subject to judicial review.

§ 171.24 Access by historical researchers and certain former government personnel.

(a) The restriction in E.O. 12958 and predecessor orders on limiting access to classified information to individuals who have a need-to-know the information may be waived, under the conditions set forth below, for persons who:

1. Are engaged in historical research projects;
2. Have served as Presidential or Vice Presidential appointees as defined in §171.20(j); or
3. Served as President or Vice President.

(b) Requests by such persons must be submitted in writing to the Information and Privacy Coordinator at the address set forth in §171.5 and must include a general description of the records sought, the time period covered by the request, and an explanation why access is sought. Requests for access by such requesters may be granted if:

1. The Secretary or the Senior Agency Official determines in writing that access is consistent with the interests of national security;
2. The requester agrees in writing to safeguard the information from unauthorized disclosure or compromise;
3. The requester submits a statement in writing authorizing the Department to review any notes and manuscripts created as a result of access;
4. The requester submits a statement in writing that any information obtained from review of the records will not be disseminated without the express written permission of the Department;
5. The requester is a citizen of the United States.
6. The requester is a citizen of a country with which the United States has a treaty providing for the exchange of information.

(c) If a requester uses a research assistant, the requester and the research assistant must both submit a statement in writing acknowledging that the same access conditions set forth in paragraph (b)(4) of this section apply to the research assistant. Such a research assistant must be working for the applicant and not gathering information for publication on his or her own behalf.
(d) Access granted under this section shall be limited to items the appointee originated, reviewed, signed, or received while serving as a Presidential or Vice Presidential appointee or as President or Vice President.

(e) Such requesters may seek declassification and release of material to which they have been granted access under this section through either the FOIA or the mandatory declassification review provisions of E.O. 12958. Such requests shall be processed in the order received, along with other FOIA and mandatory declassification review requests, and shall be subject to the fees applicable to FOIA requests.

§ 171.25 Applicability of other laws.

Exemptions from disclosure set forth in the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and other statutes or privileges protecting information from disclosure recognized in discovery or other such litigation-related procedures may be applied to withhold information declassified under the provisions of this subpart.

Subpart D—Privacy Act Provisions

§ 171.30 Purpose and scope.

This subpart contains the rules that the Department follows under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a. These rules should be read together with the Privacy Act, which provides additional information about records maintained on individuals. The rules in this subpart apply to all records in systems of records maintained by the Department that are retrieved by an individual’s name or personal identifier. They describe the procedures by which individuals may request access to records about themselves, request amendment or correction of those records, and request an accounting of disclosures of those records by the Department. If any records retrieved pursuant to an access request under the Privacy Act are found to be exempt from disclosure under that Act, they will be processed for possible disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552. No fees shall be charged for access to or amendment of Privacy Act records.

§ 171.31 Definitions.

As used in this subpart, the following definitions shall apply:

(a) Department means the United States Department of State, including its field offices and Foreign Service posts abroad.
(b) Individual means a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.
(c) Maintain includes maintain, collect, use, or disseminate.
(d) Record means any item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by the Department, including, but not limited to, education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history, that contains the individual’s name or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or photograph.
(e) System of Records means a group of any records under the control of the Department from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to an individual.
(f) Control has the meaning set forth in §171.11(f)
(g) Information and Privacy Coordinator has the meaning set forth in §171.11(d).
(h) DS is the abbreviation for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security of the U.S. Department of State.
(i) OIG is the abbreviation for the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of State.

§ 171.32 Request for access to records.

(a) Description of records sought. All requests for access to a record must reasonably describe the System of Records and the individual’s record within the system in sufficient detail to permit identification of the requested record. At a minimum, requests should include the individual’s full name (including maiden name, if appropriate) and any other names used, present mailing address and ZIP Code, date and place of birth, and any other information that might help in identifying the record. Helpful data includes the approximate time period of the
§ 171.33 Request to amend or correct records.

(a) An individual has the right to request that the Department amend a record pertaining to the individual that the individual believes is not accurate, relevant, timely, or complete.

(b) Requests to amend records must be in writing and mailed or delivered to the Information and Privacy Coordinator, at the address given in §171.5, who will coordinate the review of the request with the appropriate offices of the Department. The Department will require verification of personal identity as provided in §171.32(b) before it will initiate action to amend a record. Amendment requests should contain, as a minimum, identifying information needed to locate the record in question, a description of the specific correction requested, and an explanation of why the existing record is not accurate, relevant, timely, or complete. The requester should submit as much pertinent documentation, other information, and explanation as possible to support the request for amendment.

(c) All requests for amendments to records will be acknowledged within 10
§ 171.36 Exemptions.

Systems of records maintained by the Department are authorized to be exempted from certain provisions of the Privacy Act under both general and specific exemptions set forth in the Act. In utilizing these exemptions, the Department is exempting only those portions of systems that are necessary for the proper functioning of the Department and that are consistent with the Privacy Act. Where compliance would not appear to interfere with or adversely affect the law enforcement process, and/or where it may be appropriate to permit individuals to contest the accuracy of the information collected, e.g., public source materials, the applicable exemption may be waived, either partially or totally, by the Department or the OIG, in the sole discretion of the Department or the OIG, as appropriate.

(a) General exemptions.

(1) Individuals may not have access to records maintained by the Department that were provided by another agency that has determined by regulation that such information is subject to general exemption under 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(1). If such exempt records are the subject of an access request, the Department will advise the requester of their existence and of the name and address of the source agency, unless that information is itself exempt from disclosure.

(2) The systems of records maintained by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (STATE-36), the Office of the Inspector General (STATE-53), and the
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Information Access Program Records system (STATE–35) are subject to general exemption under 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2). All records contained in record system STATE–36, Security Records, are exempt from all provisions of the Privacy Act except sections (b), (c)(1) and (2), (e)(4)(A) through (F), (e)(6), (7), (9), (10), and (11), and (i) to the extent to which they meet the criteria of section (j)(2). These exemptions are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the investigative, judicial, and protective processes. All records contained in STATE–53, records of the Inspector General and Automated Individual Cross-Reference System, are exempt from all of the provisions of the Privacy Act except sections (b), (c)(1) and (2), (e)(4)(A) through (F), (e)(6), (7), (9), (10), and (11), and (i) to the extent to which they meet the criteria of section (j)(2). These exemptions are necessary to ensure the proper functions of the law enforcement activity, to protect confidential sources of information, to fulfill promises of confidentiality, to prevent interference with the enforcement of criminal laws, to avoid the disclosure of investigative techniques, to avoid the endangering of the life and safety of any individual, to avoid premature disclosure of the knowledge of potential criminal activity and the evidentiary bases of possible enforcement actions, and to maintain the integrity of the law enforcement process. All records contained in the Information Access Program Records system (STATE–35) are exempt from all of the provisions of the Privacy Act except sections (b), (c)(1) and (2), (e)(4)(A) through (F), (e)(6), (7), (9), (10), and (11), and (i) to the extent to which they meet the criteria of section (j)(2). These exemptions are necessary to ensure the protection of law enforcement information retrieved from various sources in response to information access requests.

(b) Specific exemptions. Portions of the following systems of records are exempt from 5 U.S.C. 552a (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), and (4), (G), (H), and (I), and (f).

(1) Exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(1). The reason for invoking this exemption is to protect material required to be kept secret in the interest of national defense and foreign policy.

Board of Appellate Review Records. STATE–02.

Congressional Correspondence. STATE–43.

Coordinators for the Combating Terrorism Records. STATE–06.


Extradition Records. STATE–11.


Information Access Programs Records. STATE–35.

Intelligence and Research Records. STATE–15.

International Organizations Records. STATE–17.


Legal Case Management Records. STATE–21.

Munitions Control Records. STATE–42.

Overseas Citizens Services Records. STATE–05.

Overseas Records. STATE–25.


Personality Cross-Reference Index to the Secretariat Automated Data Index Records. STATE–28.

Personality Index to the Central Foreign Policy Records. STATE–29.


Rover Records. STATE–41.

Records of Domestic Accounts Receivable. STATE–23.

Records of the Office of White House Liaison. STATE–34.

Board of Appellate Review Records. STATE–02.


Refugee Data Center Processing Records. STATE–60.


(2) Exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(k)(2). The reasons for invoking this exemption are to prevent individuals that are the subject of investigation from frustrating the investigatory process, to ensure the proper functioning and integrity of law enforcement activities, to prevent disclosure of investigative techniques, to maintain the confidence of foreign governments in the integrity of the procedures under which privileged or confidential information may be provided, and to fulfill commitments made to sources to protect their identities and the confidentiality of information and to avoid endangering these sources and law enforcement personnel.

Board of Appellate Review Records. STATE–02.
Coordinator for the Combating of Terrorism Records. STATE–06.
Extradition Records. STATE–11.
Garnishment of Wages Records. STATE–61.
Information Access Program Records. STATE–35.
Intelligence and Research Records. STATE–15.
Munitions Control Records. STATE–42.
Overseas Citizens Services Records. STATE–05.
Overseas Records. STATE–25.
Personality Cross Reference Index to the Secretariat Automated Data Index. STATE–28.
Personality Index to the Central Foreign Policy Records. STATE–29.
Overseas Citizens Services Records. STATE–05.
Overseas Records. STATE–25.
Personality Cross-Reference Index to the Secretariat Automated Data Index. STATE–28.
Extradition Records. STATE–11.
Information Access Programs Records. STATE–35.
Intelligence and Research Records. STATE–15.

(4) Exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(k)(4). The reason for invoking this exemption is to avoid needless review of records that are used solely for statistical purposes and from which no individual determinations are made.
Foreign Service Institute Records. STATE–14.
Information Access Programs Records. STATE–35.
Personnel Payroll Records. STATE–36.
(5) Exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(5). The reasons for invoking this exemption are to ensure the proper functioning of the investigatory process, to ensure effective determination of suitability, eligibility, and qualification for employment and to protect the confidentiality of sources of information.
Foreign Service Grievance Board Records. STATE–13.
Information Access Programs Records. STATE–35.
Overseas Records. STATE–25.
Personality Cross-Reference Index to the Secretariat Automated Data Index Records. STATE–28.
Records of the Office of White House Liaison. STATE–34.
Rover Records. STATE–41.
Senior Personnel Appointments Records. STATE–47.

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§ 171.40 Purpose and scope.

This subpart sets forth the regulations under which persons may request access to the public financial disclosure reports of employees of the Department as well as limits to such requests and use of such information. The Ethics in Government Act 1978, as amended, and the Office of Government Ethics implementing regulations, 5 CFR part 2634, require that high-level Federal officials disclose publicly their personal financial interests.

§ 171.41 Covered employees.

(a) Officers and employees (including special Government employees as defined in 5 U.S.C. 202) whose positions are classified at grades GS–16 and above of the General Schedule, or the rate of basic pay for which is fixed, other than under the General Schedule, at a rate equal to or greater than the 120% of the minimum rate of basic pay for GS–15 of the General Schedule;

(b) Officers or employees in any other positions determined by the Director of the Office of Government Ethics to be of equal classification to GS–16;

(c) Employees in the excepted service in positions that are of a confidential or policy-making character, unless by regulation their positions have been excluded by the Director of the Office of Government Ethics;

(d) The designated agency official who acts as the Department’s Ethics Officer;

(e) Incumbent officials holding positions referred to above if they have served 61 days or more in the position during the preceding calendar year.

(f) Officials who have terminated employment from a position referred to above and who have not accepted another such position within 30 days of such termination.

§ 171.42 Requests and identifying information.

Requests for access to public financial disclosure reports of covered employees should be made in writing to the Information and Privacy Coordinator at the address given in § 171.5 setting forth:

(a) The name and/or position title of the Department of State official who is the subject of the request,

(b) The time period covered by the report requested,

(c) A completed Office of Government Ethics request form, OGE Form 201, October, 1999. This form may be obtained by writing to the Information and Privacy Coordinator or by visiting the Public Reading Room described in § 171.3 or http://www.usoge.gov.

§ 171.43 Time limits and fees.

(a) Reports shall be made available within thirty (30) days from receipt of a request by the Department. The Department does not charge a fee for a single copy of a public financial report. However, the Department will charge for additional copies of a report at a rate of 15 cents per page plus the actual direct cost of mailing the reports. However, the Department will not charge for individual requests if the total charge would be $10.00 or less.
(b) A report shall be retained by the Department and made available to the public for a period of six (6) years after receipt of such report. After such a six year period, the report shall be destroyed, unless needed in an ongoing investigation, except that those reports filed by individuals who are nominated for office by the President to a position that requires the advice and consent of the Senate, and who subsequently are not confirmed by the Senate, will be retained and made available for a one-year period, and then destroyed, unless needed in an ongoing investigation.

§ 171.44 Improper use of reports.
(a) The Attorney General may bring a civil action against any person who obtains or uses a financial disclosure report:
(1) For any unlawful purpose;
(2) For any commercial purpose, other than for news or community dissemination to the general public;
(3) For determining or establishing the credit rating of any individual;
(4) For use, directly or indirectly, in the solicitation of money for any political, charitable, or other purpose.
(b) The court in which such action is brought may assess a civil penalty not to exceed $10,000 against any person who obtains or uses the reports for these prohibited purposes. Such remedy shall be in addition to any other remedy available under statutory or common law.

Subpart F—Appeal Procedures
§ 171.50 Appeal of denials of expedited processing.
(a) A denial of a request for expedited processing may be appealed to the Chief of the Requester Liaison Division of the office of the Information and Privacy Coordinator at the address given in § 171.5 within 30 days of receipt of the denial. Appeals should contain as much information and documentation as possible to support the request for expedited processing in accordance with the criteria set forth in § 171.12(b).
(b) The Requester Liaison Division Chief will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days from the date on which the office of the Information and Privacy Coordinator receives the appeal.

§ 171.51 Appeals of denials of fee waivers or reductions.
(a) A denial of a request for a waiver or reductions of fees may be appealed to the Chief of the Requester Liaison Division of the Office of the Information and Privacy Coordinator at the address given in § 171.5 within 30 days of receipt of the denial. Appeals should contain as much information and documentation as possible to support the request for fee waiver or reduction in accordance with the criteria set forth in § 171.17.
(b) The Requester Liaison Division Chief will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days from the date on which the office of the Information and Privacy Coordinator receives the appeal.

§ 171.52 Appeal of denial of access to, declassification of, amendment of, accounting of disclosures of, or challenge to classification of records.

(a) Right of administrative appeal. Except for records that have been reviewed and withheld within the past two years or are the subject of litigation, any requester whose request for access to records, declassification of records, amendment of records, accounting of disclosures of records, or any authorized holder of classified information whose classification challenge has been denied, has a right to appeal the denial to the Department’s Appeals Review Panel. This appeal right includes the right to appeal the determination by the Department that no records responsive to an access request exist in Department files. Privacy Act appeals may be made only by the individual to whom the records pertain.
(b) Form of appeal. There is no required form for an appeal. However, it is essential that the appeal contain a clear statement of the decision or determination by the Department being appealed. When possible, the appeal should include argumentation and documentation to support the appeal and to contest the bases for denial cited by the Department. The appeal should be sent to: Chairman, Appeals Review
Panel, c/o Information and Privacy Coordinator/Appeals Officer, at the address given in §171.5.

(c) Time limits. The appeal should be received within 60 days of the date of receipt by the requester of the Department’s denial. The time limit for response to an appeal begins to run on the day that the appeal is received. The time limit (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) for agency decision on an administrative appeal is 20 days under the FOIA (which may be extended for up to an additional 10 days in unusual circumstances) and 30 days under the Privacy Act (which the Panel may extend an additional 30 days for good cause shown). The Panel shall decide mandatory decategorization review appeals as promptly as possible.

(d) Notification to appellant. The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel shall notify the appellant in writing of the Panel’s decision on the appeal. When the decision is to uphold the denial, the Chairman shall include in his notification the reasons therefore. The appellant shall be advised that the decision of the Panel represents the final decision of the Department and of the right to seek judicial review of the Panel’s decision, when applicable. In mandatory decategorization review appeals, the Panel shall advise the requester of the right to appeal the decision to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel under §3.5(d) of E.O. 12958.

(e) Procedures in Privacy Act amendment cases. (1) If the Panel’s decision is that a record shall be amended in accordance with the appellant’s request, the Chairman shall direct the office responsible for the record to amend the record, advise all previous recipients of the record of the amendment and its substance if an accounting of disclosure has been made, and so advise the individual in writing.

(2) If the Panel’s decision is that the request of the appellant to amend the record is denied, in addition to the notification required by paragraph (d) of this section, the Chairman shall advise the appellant:

(i) Of the right to file a concise statement of the reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the Department;

(ii) Of the procedures for filing the statement of disagreement;

(iii) That any statement of disagreement that is filed will be made available to anyone to whom the record is subsequently disclosed, together with, at the discretion of the Department, a brief statement by the Department summarizing its reasons for refusing to amend the record;

(iv) That prior recipients of the disputed record will be provided a copy of any statement of disagreement, to the extent that an accounting of disclosures was maintained.

(3) If the appellant files a statement under paragraph (e)(2) of this section, the Department will clearly annotate the record so that the fact that the record is disputed is apparent to anyone who may subsequently have access to the record. When information that is the subject of a statement of dispute filed by an individual is subsequently disclosed, the Department will note that the information is disputed and provide a copy of the individual’s statement. The Department may also include a brief summary of reasons for not amending the record when disclosing disputed information. Copies of the Department’s statement shall be treated as part of the individual’s record for granting access; however, it will not be subject to amendment by an individual under these regulations.

PART 172—SERVICE OF PROCESS; PRODUCTION OR DISCLOSURE OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO COURT ORDERS, SUBPOENAS, NOTICES OF DEPOSITIONS, REQUESTS FOR ADMISSIONS, INTERROGATORIES, OR SIMILAR REQUESTS OR DEMANDS IN CONNECTION WITH FEDERAL OR STATE LITIGATION; EXPERT TESTIMONY

Sec.

172.1 Purpose and scope; definitions.

172.2 Service of summonses and complaints.

172.3 Service of subpoenas, court orders, and other demands or requests for official information or action.

172.4 Testimony and production of documents prohibited unless approved by appropriate Department officials.
§ 172.1 Purpose and scope; definitions.

(a) This part sets forth the procedures to be followed with respect to:

(1) Service of summonses and complaints or other requests or demands directed to the Department of State (Department) or to any Department employee or former employee in connection with federal or state litigation arising out of or involving the performance of official activities of the Department; and

(2) The oral or written disclosure, in response to subpoenas, orders, or other requests or demands of federal or state judicial or quasi-judicial authority (collectively, “demands”), whether civil or criminal in nature, or in response to requests for depositions, affidavits, admissions, responses to interrogatories, document production, or other litigation-related matters, pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, or applicable state rules (collectively, “requests”), of any material contained in the files of the Department, any information relating to material contained in the files of the Department, or any information acquired while the subject of the demand or request is or was an employee of the Department as part of the performance of that person’s duties or by virtue of that person’s official status.

(b) For purposes of this part, and except as the Department may otherwise determine in a particular case, the term employee includes the Secretary and former Secretaries of State, and all employees and former employees of the Department of State or any other federal agencies who are or were appointed by, or subject to the supervision, jurisdiction, or control of the Secretary of State or his Chiefs of Mission, whether residing or working in the United States or abroad, including United States nationals, foreign nationals, and contractors.

(c) For purposes of this part, the term litigation encompasses all pre-trial, trial, and post-trial stages of all judicial or administrative actions, hearings, investigations, or similar proceedings before courts, commissions, boards (including the Board of Appellate Review), or other judicial or quasi-judicial bodies or tribunals, whether criminal, civil, or administrative in nature. This part governs, inter alia, responses to discovery requests, depositions, and other pre-trial, trial, or post-trial proceedings, as well as responses to informal requests by attorneys or others in situations involving litigation. However, this part shall not apply to any claims by Department of State employees (present or former), or applicants for Department employment, for which jurisdiction resides with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board; the Office of Special Counsel; the Federal Labor Relations Authority; the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board; the Foreign Service Grievance Board; or a labor arbitrator operating under a collective bargaining agreement between the Department and a labor organization representing Department employees; or their successor agencies or entities.

(d) For purposes of this part, official information means all information of any kind, however stored, that is in the custody and control of the Department, any information relating to material contained in the files of the Department, any information acquired while the subject of the demand or request is or was an employee of the Department as part of the performance of that person’s duties or by virtue of that person’s official status.

(e) Nothing in this part affects disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, Executive Order 12356 on national security information (3 CFR, 1982 Comp., p. 186), the Government in the Sunshine Act, 5
U.S.C. 552b, the Department’s implementing regulations in 22 CFR part 171 or pursuant to congressional subpoena. Nothing in this part otherwise permits disclosure of information by the Department or its employees except as provided by statute or other applicable law.

(f) This part is intended only to inform the public about Department procedures concerning the service of process and responses to demands or requests and is not intended to and does not create, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the Department or the United States.

(g) Nothing in this part affects:

(1) The disclosure of information during the course of legal proceedings in non-United States courts, commissions, boards, or other judicial or quasi-judicial bodies or tribunals; or

(2) The rules and procedures, under applicable U.S. law and international conventions, governing diplomatic and consular immunity.

(h) Nothing in this part affects the disclosure of official information to other federal agencies or Department of Justice attorneys in connection with litigation conducted on behalf or in defense of the United States, its agencies, officers, and employees, or to federal, state, local, or foreign prosecuting and law enforcement authorities in conjunction with criminal law enforcement investigations, prosecutions, or other proceedings, e.g., extradition, deportation.

§ 172.2 Service of summonses and complaints.

(a) Only the Executive Office of the Office of the Legal Adviser (L/EX) is authorized to receive and accept summonses or complaints sought to be served upon the Department or Department employees. All such documents should be delivered or addressed to The Executive Office, Office of the Legal Adviser, room 5519, United States Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20520–6310.

(b) In the event any summons or complaint described in §172.1(a) is delivered to an employee of the Department other than in the manner specified in this part, such attempted service shall be ineffective, and the recipient thereof shall either decline to accept the proffered service or return such document under cover of a written communication which directs the person attempting to make service to the procedures set forth herein.

(c) Except as otherwise provided §§172.2(d) and 173.3(c), the Department is not an authorized agent for service of process with respect to civil litigation against Department employees purely in their personal, non-official capacity. Copies of summonses or complaints directed to Department employees in connection with legal proceedings arising out of the performance of official duties may, however, be served upon L/EX.

(d) Although the Department is not an agent for the service of process upon its employees with respect to purely personal, non-official litigation, the Department recognizes that its employees stationed overseas should not use their official positions to evade their personal obligations and will, therefore, counsel and encourage Department employees to accept service of process in appropriate cases, and will waive applicable diplomatic or consular privileges and immunities when the Department determines that it is in the interest of the United States to do so.

(e) Documents for which L/EX accepts service in official capacity only shall be stamped “Service Accepted in Official Capacity Only”. Acceptance of service shall not constitute an admission or waiver with respect to jurisdiction, propriety of service, improper venue, or any other defense in law or equity available under the laws of rules applicable for the service of process.

§ 172.3 Service of subpoenas, court orders, and other demands or requests for official information or action.

(a) Except in cases in which the Department is represented by legal counsel who have entered an appearance or otherwise given notice of their representation, only L/EX is authorized to receive and accept subpoenas, or other demands or requests directed to the
Department, or any component thereof, or its employees, or former employees, whether civil or criminal nature, for:

(1) Material, including documents, contained in the files of the Department;

(2) Information, including testimony, affidavits, declarations, admissions, responses to interrogatories, or informal statements, relating to material contained in the files of the Department or which any Department employee acquired in the course and scope of the performance of his official duties;

(3) Garnishment or attachment of compensation of current or former employees; or

(4) The performance or non-performance of any official Department duty.

(b) In the event that any subpoena, demand, or request is sought to be delivered to a Department employee (including former employees) other than in the manner prescribed in paragraph (a) of this section, such attempted service shall be ineffective. Such employee shall, after consultation with the Office of the Legal Adviser, decline to accept the subpoena, demand or request or shall return them to the server under cover of a written communication referring to the procedures prescribed in this part.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in this part, the Department is not an agent for service, or otherwise authorized to accept on behalf of its employees any subpoenas, show-cause orders, or similar compulsory process of federal or state courts, or requests from private individuals or attorneys, which are not related to the employees’ official duties except upon the express, written authorization of the individual Department employee to whom such demand or request is directed.

(d) Acceptance of such documents by L/EX does not constitute a waiver of any defenses that might otherwise exist with respect to service under the Federal Rules of Civil or Criminal Procedure or other applicable rules.

§ 172.4 Testimony and production of documents prohibited unless approved by appropriate Department officials.

(a) No employee of the Department shall, in response to a demand or request in connection with any litigation, whether criminal or civil, provide oral or written testimony by deposition, declaration, affidavit, or otherwise concerning any information acquired while such person is or was an employee of the Department as part of the performance of that person’s official duties or by virtue of that person’s official status, unless authorized to do so by the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Personnel (M/DGP) or the Legal Adviser (L), or delegates of either, following consultation between the two bureaus, or as authorized in §172.4(b).

(b) With respect to the official functions of the Passport Office, the Visa Office, and the Office of Citizens Services, the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs or delegate thereof may, subject to concurrence by the Office of the Legal Adviser, authorize employees to provide oral or written testimony.

(c) No employee shall, in response to a demand or request in connection with any litigation, produce for use at such proceedings any document or any material acquired as part of the performance of that employee’s duties or by virtue of that employee’s official status, unless authorized to do so by the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Personnel, the Legal Adviser, or the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, or the delegates thereof, as appropriate, following consultations between the concerned bureaus.

§ 172.5 Procedure when testimony or production of documents is sought; general.

(a) If official Department information is sought, through testimony or otherwise, by a request or demand, the party seeking such release or testimony must (except as otherwise required by federal law or authorized by the Office of the Legal Adviser) set forth in writing, and with as much specificity as possible, the nature and
relevance of the official information sought. Where documents or other materials are sought, the party should provide a description using the types of identifying information suggested in 22 CFR 171.10(a) and 171.31. Subject to §172.7, Department employees may only produce, disclose, release, comment upon, or testify concerning those matters which were specified in writing and properly approved by the appropriate Department official designated in §172.4. See United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen, 340 U.S. 462 (1951). The Office of the Legal Adviser may waive this requirement in appropriate circumstances.

(b) To the extent it deems necessary or appropriate, the Department may also require from the party seeking such testimony or documents a plan of all reasonably foreseeable demands, including but not limited to the names of all employees and former employees from whom discovery will be sought, areas of inquiry, expected duration of proceedings requiring oral testimony, and identification of potentially relevant documents.

(c) The appropriate Department official designated in §172.2 will notify the Department employee and such other persons as circumstances may warrant of its decision regarding compliance with the request or demand.

(d) The Office of the Legal Adviser will consult with the Department of Justice regarding legal representation for Department employees in appropriate cases.

§172.6 Procedure when response to demand is required prior to receiving instructions.

(a) If a response to a demand is required before the appropriate Department official designated in §172.4 renders a decision, the Department will request that either a Department of Justice attorney or a Department attorney designated for the purpose:

(1) Appear with the employee upon whom the demand has been made;

(2) Furnish the court or other authority with a copy of the regulations contained in this part;

(3) Inform the court or other authority that the demand has been, or is being, as the case may be, referred for the prompt consideration of the appropriate Department official; and

(4) Respectively request the court or authority to stay the demand pending receipt of the requested instructions.

(b) In the event that an immediate demand for production or disclosure is made in circumstances which would preclude the proper designation or appearance of a Department of Justice or Department attorney on the employee’s behalf, the employee shall respectfully request the demanding court or authority for a reasonable stay of proceedings for the purpose of obtaining instructions from the Department.

§172.7 Procedure in the event of an adverse ruling.

If the court or other judicial or quasi-judicial authority declines to stay the effect of the demand in response to a request made pursuant to §172.6, or if the court or other authority rules that the demand must be complied with irrespective of the Department's instructions not to produce the material or disclose the information sought, the employee upon whom the demand has been made shall respectfully decline to comply with the demand, citing this part and United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen, 340 U.S. 462 (1951).

§172.8 Considerations in determining whether the Department will comply with a demand or request.

(a) In deciding whether to comply with a demand or request, Department officials and attorneys shall consider, among others:

(1) Whether such compliance would be unduly burdensome or otherwise inappropriate under the applicable rules of discovery or the rules of procedure governing the case or matter in which the demand arose;

(2) Whether compliance is appropriate under the relevant substantive law concerning privilege or disclosure of information;

(3) The public interest;

(4) The need to conserve the time of Department employees for the conduct of official business;

(5) The need to avoid spending the time and money of the United States for private purposes;
(6) The need to maintain impartiality between private litigants in cases where a substantial government interest is not implicated;

(7) Whether compliance would have an adverse effect on performance by the Department of its mission and duties; and

(8) The need to avoid involving the Department in controversial issues not related to its mission.

(b) Among those demands and requests in response to which compliance will not ordinarily be authorized are those with respect to which, inter alia, any of the following factors exist:

(1) Compliance would violate a statute or a rule of procedure;

(2) Compliance would violate a specific regulation or executive order;

(3) Compliance would reveal information properly classified in the interest of national security;

(4) Compliance would reveal confidential commercial or financial information or trade secrets without the owner's consent;

(5) Compliance would reveal the internal deliberative processes of the Executive Branch; or

(6) Compliance would potentially impede or prejudice an on-going law enforcement investigation.

§ 172.9 Prohibition on providing expert or opinion testimony.

(a) Except as provided in this section, and subject to 5 CFR 2635.805, Department employees shall not provide opinion or expert testimony based upon information which they acquired in the scope and performance of their official Department duties, except on behalf of the United States or a party represented by the Department of Justice.

(b) Upon a showing by the requestor of exceptional need or unique circumstances and that the anticipated testimony will not be adverse to the interests of the United States, the appropriate Department official designated in § 172.4 may, consistent with 5 CFR 2635.805, in their discretion and with the concurrence of the Office of the Legal Adviser, grant special, written authorization for Department employees to appear and testify as expert witnesses at no expense to the United States.

(c) If, despite the final determination of the appropriate Department official designated in § 172.4, a court of competent jurisdiction or other appropriate authority orders the appearance and expert or opinion testimony of a Department employee, such employee shall immediately inform the Office of the Legal Adviser, and the Office of the Legal Adviser determines that no further legal review of or challenge to the court's order will be made, the Department employee shall comply with the order. If so directed by the Office of the Legal Adviser, however, the employee shall respectfully decline to testify. See United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen, 340 U.S. 462 (1951).