

General Services Administration

§ 105-60.404

request is granted, GSA will process the request ahead of non-expedited requests, as soon as practicable. If the request is not granted, GSA will give expeditious consideration to administrative appeals of this denial.

(e) GSA may, at its discretion, establish three processing queues based on whether any requests have been granted expedited status and on the difficulty and complexity of preparing a response. Within each queue, responses will be prepared on a "first in, first out" basis. One queue will be made up of expedited requests; the second, of simple responses that clearly can be prepared without requesting an extension of time; the third, of responses that will require an extension of time.

§ 105-60.403 Appeal within GSA.

(a) A requester who receives a denial of a request, in whole or in part, a denial of a request for expedited processing or of a fee waiver request may appeal that decision within GSA. A requester may also appeal the adequacy of the search if GSA determines that it has searched for but has not requested records. The requester must send the appeal to the GSA FOIA Officer, General Services Administration (CAI), Washington, DC 20405, regardless of whether the denial being appealed was made in the Central Office or in a regional office. For denials which originate in the Office of Inspector General, the requester must send the appeal to the Inspector General, General Services Administration, 1800 F Street NW., Washington, DC 20405.

(b) The GSA FOIA Officer must receive an appeal no later than 120 calendar days after receipt by the requester of the initial denial of access or fee waiver.

(c) An appeal must be in writing and include a brief statement of the reasons he or she thinks GSA should release the records or provide expedited processing and enclose copies of the initial request and denial. The appeal letter must include the words "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" on both the face of the appeal letter and on the envelope. Failure to follow these procedures will delay processing of the appeal. GSA has 20 workdays after receipt of a proper appeal of denial of

records to issue a determination with respect to the appeal. The 20-workday time limit shall not begin until the GSA FOIA Officer receives the appeal. As noted in §105-60.404, the GSA FOIA Officer may extend this time limit in unusual circumstances. GSA will process appeals of denials of expedited processing as soon as possible after receiving them.

(d) A requester who receives a denial of an appeal, or who has not received a response to an appeal or initial request within the statutory time frame may seek judicial review in the United States District Court in the district in which the requester resides or has a principal place of business, or where the records are situated, or in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

§ 105-60.404 Extension of time limits.

(a) In unusual circumstances, the GSA FOIA Officer or the regional FOIA Officer may extend the time limits prescribed in §§105-60.402 and 105-60.403. For purposes of this section, the term *unusual circumstances* means:

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

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

(3) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of GSA having substantial subject-matter interest therein; or

(4) The need to consult with the submitter of the requested information.

(b) If necessary, GSA may take more than one extension of time. However, the total extension of time to respond to any single request shall not exceed 10 workdays. The extension may be divided between the initial and appeal stages or within a single stage. GSA will provide written notice to the requester of any extension of time limits.