

§9.40

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search for any request not sought for commercial use and not covered in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) The NRC will duplicate agency records requested under §9.23(b) without charge for the first 100 pages of standard paper copies, or the equivalent cost of 100 pages of standard paper copies when providing the requester copies in microfiche or electronic form such as computer disks, if the requester is not a commercial use requester.

(d) The NRC may not bill any requester for fees if the cost of collecting the fee would be equal to or greater than the fee itself.

(e) The NRC may aggregate requests in determining search and duplication to be provided without charge as provided in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, if the NRC finds a requester or group of requesters acting in concert, has filed multiple requests that actually constitute a single request, and that the requests involve clearly-related matters.

§9.40 Assessment of fees.

(a) If the request is expected to require the NRC to assess fees in excess of \$25 for search and/or duplication, the NRC will notify the requester that fees will be assessed unless the requester has indicated in advance his or her willingness to pay fees as high as estimated.

(b) In the notification, the NRC will include the estimated cost of search fees and the nature of the search required and estimated cost of duplicating fees.

(c) The NRC will encourage requesters to discuss with the NRC the possibility of narrowing the scope of the request with the goal of reducing the cost while retaining the requester's original objective.

(d) If the fee is determined to be in excess of \$250, the NRC will require an advance payment.

(e) Unless a requester has agreed to pay the estimated fees or, as provided for in paragraph (d) of this section, the requester has paid an estimated fee in excess of \$250, the NRC may not begin to process the request.

(f) If the NRC receives a new request and determines that the requester has

previously failed to pay a properly charged fee under the Freedom of Information Act to the NRC or other Federal agency within 30 calendar days of receipt of the bill on a previous request, the NRC may refuse to accept the new request for processing until payment is made of the full amount owed on the prior request, plus any applicable interest assessed as provided in §9.34.

(g) Within 10 working days of the receipt of NRC's notice that fees will be assessed, the requester will provide advance payment if required, notify the NRC in writing that the requester agrees to bear the estimated costs, or submit a request for a waiver or reduction of fees pursuant to §9.41.

[63 FR 2876, Jan. 20, 1998, as amended at 70 FR 34308, June 14, 2005]

§9.41 Requests for waiver or reduction of fees.

(a)(1) The NRC will collect fees for searching for, reviewing, and duplicating agency records, except as provided in §9.39, unless a requester submits a request in writing for a waiver or reduction of fees. To ensure that there will be no delay in the processing of Freedom of Information Act requests, the request for a waiver or reduction of fees should be included in the initial Freedom of Information Act request letter.

(2) Each request for a waiver or reduction of fees should be addressed to the Office of Information Services, and sent using an appropriate method listed in §9.6.

(b) A person requesting the NRC to waive or reduce search, review, or duplication fees will—

(1) Describe the purpose for which the requester intends to use the requested information;

(2) Explain the extent to which the requester will extract and analyze the substantive content of the agency record;

(3) Describe the nature of the specific activity or research in which the agency records will be used and the specific qualifications the requester possesses to utilize information for the intended use in such a way that it will contribute to public understanding;