

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

APPENDIX U

WV 46 CSR 8

**TITLE 46
PROCEDURAL RULE
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD**

**SERIES 8
RULES ON REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

§46-8-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- These rules prescribe the procedures under which the public may inspect and obtain information and records generated, developed or held by the Environmental Quality Board. These rules do not apply to the disclosure of information to any officer, employee or authorized representative of the State or Federal government.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code 29B-1 et seq., and 29A-3-3.

1.3. Filing Date. -- January 19, 1996.

1.4. Effective Date. -- February 18, 1996.

§46-8-2. Definitions.

2.1. For the purpose of these rules:

(a) "Act" means the Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 29B, Article 1 of the West Virginia Code.

(b) "Board" means the Environmental Quality Board located at 1615 Washington Street, East, Charleston, West Virginia 25311-2126.

(c) "Record" means any books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings or other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics which are in the possession of the Board, but does not include materials that are the personal property of a Board employee and does not include materials which are copyrighted or are readily available to the public such as books, journals, and periodicals.

(d) "Request" means a written request made in accordance with these rules of procedure to inspect or obtain a copy of one or more records.

(e) "Requestor" means any person, including any natural person, corporation, partnership, firm or association, who has submitted a request to the Board.

§46-8-3. Policy on Disclosure.

3.1.

(a) All Board records shall be available to the public unless they are exempt from the disclosure requirements of the Act.

(b) All nonexempt records shall be available to the public upon request regardless of whether any justification or need has been shown by the requestor and regardless of whether or not the request cites the Act.

§46-8-4. Form of Request.

4.1. A request shall be made in writing, shall reasonably describe the records sought in a way that will permit their identification and location, and should be addressed to the Environmental Quality Board, 1615 Washington Street, East, Suite 301, Charleston, West Virginia 25311-2126.

§46-8-5. Requests Which Do Not Reasonably Describe Records Sought.

5.1. If the description of the records sought in the request is not sufficient to allow the Board to identify and locate the requested records, the requestor will be notified within five working days that the request is denied until additional information is provided in an amended request. Until such additional information is provided, the Board has no further obligation to fulfill the request.

§46-8-6. Misdirected Requests; Oral Requests.

6.1 The Board cannot assure that requests received in a manner inconsistent with these rules will be answered in a timely fashion. The five-day period, as provided for in these rules of procedure, shall begin at the time the Board receives the request. Oral or phone requests for the records may be honored if followed by a written request.

§46-8-7. Responsibilities of the Board.

7.1.

(a) The Board shall, upon receipt of a written request, mark the request with the date of receipt and begin to identify and locate the requested information or ask for a more specific request,

(b) The Board shall respond in writing to the requestor within five working days of the receipt of the request. Such response shall:

(i) Furnish copies of the requested information;

(ii) Advise the requestor of the time and place at which he/she may inspect and copy the information;

(iii) Deny the request in accordance with these rules of procedure; or

(iv) Notify the requestor that the records require more than five days to assemble, and identify an approximate date of completion of the request.

§46-8-8. Denials of Requests.

8.1.

(a) Denials of requests may be issued only in the following circumstances:

(i) the requested record is not known to exist;

(ii) the record is not in the Board's possession;

(iii) the record is exempt from disclosure under the Act; or

(iv) the description of the record sought in the request is not sufficient for the Board to identify and locate the record.

(b) Written notification informing the requestor of the denial must be sent within five days of the Board's receipt of the request. The notification shall state the following:

(i) the reason for the denial;

(ii) that the agency's responsibility to provide information is at an end; and

(iii) that the requestor may pursue injunctive or declaratory relief in the circuit court in the county where the public record is kept.

§46-8-9. Exemptions.

9.1. The following categories of information are specifically exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the Act:

(a) Trade secrets, as used in this section, which may include, but are not limited to, any formula, plan, pattern, process, tool, mechanism, compound, procedure, production data, or compilation of information which is not patented which is known only to certain individuals within a commercial concern who are using it to fabricate, produce or compound an article or trade or a service or to locate minerals or other substances, having commercial value, and which gives its users an opportunity to obtain business advantage over competitors; provided that in no case shall effluent data submitted pursuant to Chapter 22, Article 11 of the West Virginia Code be considered trade secrets under this paragraph;

(b) Information of a personal nature such as that kept in a personal, medical or similar file, if the public disclosure thereof would constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy, unless the public interest by clear and convincing evidence requires disclosure in the particular instance; provided, that nothing in this article shall be construed as precluding an individual from inspecting or copying his own personal, medical or similar file;

(c) Test questions, scoring keys and other examination data used to administer a licensing examination, examination for employment or academic examination;

(d) Records of law enforcement agencies that deal with the detection and investigation of crime and the internal records and notations of such law enforcement agencies which are maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement;

(e) Information specifically exempted from disclosure by statute;

(f) Records, archives, documents or manuscripts describing the location of undeveloped historic, prehistoric, archaeological, paleontological and battlefield sites or constituting gifts to any public body upon which the donor has attached restrictions on usage or the handling of which could irreparably damage such record, archive, document or manuscript;

(g) Information contained in or related to examination, operating or condition reports prepared by, or on behalf of, or for the use of any agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions, except those reports which are by law required to be published in newspapers; and

(h) Internal memoranda or letters received or prepared by any public body.

§46-8-10. Partial Disclosure.

10.1. If a requested record contains both exempt and nonexempt material, to the extent practicable, the nonexempt material shall be disclosed after the exempt material has been deleted.

§46-8-11. Fees.

11.1. Fees will be charged requestors for searching for and reproducing requested records, in accordance with the following:

(a) Copying costs including the certification of the record to circuit court, shall be twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per page provided that if the total cost is less than \$2.50, there shall be no charge.

(b) The charge for copying materials that must be reproduced outside the Board's facilities shall be the actual cost of such copying.

(c) A fee of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars per hour or fraction thereof shall be charged for the agency's time spent in locating and duplicating the requested records beyond the initial quarter hour used to locate such records.

(d) An invoice for the total amount of fees will be sent to the requestor. Payment shall be made by check or money order made payable to the Environmental Quality Board

(e) Total or partial prepayment may be required if the Board determines that the unpaid fees attributable to one (1) or more requests by the same requestor exceed or will exceed ten dollars (\$10.00).

(f) The Board may waive the fees prescribed by these rules upon written request by a person requesting documents who shall state that he or she is unable to pay such fees.