



National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

# FOIA: Freedom of Information Act

## NOAA resources for filing FOIA requests

The [Freedom of Information Act](#) (5 USC 552) was enacted in 1966. FOIA provides that any person has a right to obtain access to federal agency records, except to the extent that such records (or portions of them) are protected from public disclosure by one of nine FOIA exemptions or by one of three special law enforcement record exclusions. This right is enforceable in court.

The Federal FOIA does not provide access to records held by U.S. state or local government agencies or by businesses or individuals. States have their own statutes governing public access to state and local records, and they should be consulted for further information.

### Filing a FOIA Request

Before submitting FOIA requests, individuals should ensure that the information they seek is not already in the public domain. Offices maintaining information in the public domain are listed in [NOAA's FOIA Reading Room](#). If the information is [Help improve this site](#)

follow the suggestions listed below to file a new request:

## FILING ONLINE

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- Submit a request via the DOC FOIA Public Access link site <https://foia-pal.commerce.gov/> or the FOIA.gov website <https://www.foia.gov/>;
  - identify the records requested (be as specific as possible, i.e., describe the subject matter of the records, and, if known, indicate the dates of the records, the places where they originated, and the names of the originating persons or offices);
  - state that the records are requested under the Freedom of Information Act;
  - include daytime telephone numbers in case additional information is needed before answering requests.
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## FILING BY MAIL

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Mark the outside of the envelope, "**Freedom of Information Request**" and mail to the address listed below.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Public Reference Facility (SOU1000)  
1315 East-West Highway (SSMC3)  
Room 9719  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

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## CONTACT NOAA FOIA STAFF BY PHONE / FAX / EMAIL

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Phone: 301-628-5658

Email: [FOIA@noaa.gov](mailto:FOIA@noaa.gov)

[NOAA FOIA Corporate Services, Staff and Line Office Contacts](#)

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## FILING AN APPEAL

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You have the right to file an administrative appeal if you are not satisfied with our response to your FOIA request. All appeals should include a statement of the reasons why you believe the FOIA response was not satisfactory. An appeal based on documents in this release must be received within 90 calendar days of the date of this response letter at the following address:

Assistant General Counsel for Employment, Litigation, and Information  
U.S. Department of Commerce Room 5896  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20230

An appeal may also be sent by email to [FOIAAppeals@doc.gov](mailto:FOIAAppeals@doc.gov).

For your appeal to be complete, it must include the following items:

- a copy of the original request,
- our response to your request,
- a statement explaining why the withheld records should be made available, and why the denial of the records was in error.
- “Freedom of Information Act Appeal” must appear on your appeal letter. It should also be written on your envelope, email subject line, or your fax cover sheet.

FOIA appeals posted to the email box or Office after normal business hours will be deemed received on the next business day. If the 90th calendar day for submitting an appeal falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal public holiday, an appeal received by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, the next business day will be deemed timely.

FOIA grants requesters the right to challenge an agency's final action in federal court. Before doing so, an adjudication of an administrative appeal is ordinarily required.

The Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), an office created within the National Archives and Records Administration, offers free mediation services to FOIA requesters. They may be contacted in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
Room 2510  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001

## FILING AN APPEAL

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Email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)

Phone: 301-837-1996

Fax: 301-837-0348

Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

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