

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****United States Patent and Trademark Office****37 CFR Part 102**

RIN 0651-AB21

**Public Information, Freedom of Information and Privacy**

AGENCY: United States Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) adds regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), including the Electronic Freedom of Information Act (EFOIA) Amendments of 1996, and the Privacy Act (PA).

**DATES:** Effective October 2, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joseph G. Piccolo, 703-305-9035.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This rule was proposed in a notice of proposed rulemaking published at 65 FR 41903 on July 7, 2000. Background information on this rule may be found in that notice. A public-interest group sent a comment with eleven recommendations. A section of a bar association submitted a comment with a single recommendation.

**Discussion of Comments**

(1) The first comment recommended deletion of the phrase "created by USPTO" in § 102.2(b). The comment appears to interpret the phrase as a limitation on what the FOIA Officer may have posted on the USPTO Web page. Since the comment's interpretation is not consistent with the plain language of the rule, the recommendation will not be adopted.

(2) The first comment recommended changing the date for determining responsive records in § 102.5(a) from the date of the request to the date of the response because requesters might be injured by processing delays. The recommendation is not adopted because it would exacerbate the problem it intends to address. The comment's proposal creates a circular definition for the response date because completion of processing would trigger a new search requiring further processing. Such a practice would increase processing time for all cases and would likely lead to inconsistent results. This recommendation is not adopted because it is not required by law and it would be administratively unworkable.

(3) The first comment recommended that § 102.5(b) be revised to limit

referrals to other agencies to situations in which the other agency retained control over the requested record and the referral would not delay a response. The first part of the recommendation is not workable because the originating agency is often the best, even the only, agency in a position to determine the releasability of the record. The second part of the test is impossible to predict before the referral is made and, in any case, could require USPTO to waive another agency's exemptions routinely without consultation. Moreover, the comment appears to interpret the rule as barring the FOIA Officer from responding to a request that has been referred to another agency for consultation. Since that interpretation is not consistent with the plain language of the rule, the recommendation is not adopted.

(4) The first comment recommends eliminating what it characterizes as a "pre-suit, non-judicial extension of time for the completion of requests" in § 102.6(c)(3). The paragraph in question does not provide for such extensions. Since the rule simply places requesters on notice that there may be circumstances in which a backlog may excuse a delay, the recommendation is not adopted.

(5) The first comment recommends elimination of the last sentence of § 102.6(c)(3). The comment interprets the sentence as suggesting a jurisdictional bar to judicial review when a requester refuses to work with USPTO to permit a timely response. The sentence simply notes that a court might take a requester's conduct into account before reaching the merits of a complaint. Since the comment's interpretation is not consistent with the language of the rule, the recommendation is not adopted.

(6) The first comment recommends that § 102.6(d)(1) be revised to provide specific standards for multitracking. There is no basis in USPTO for more specific standards for multitracking at this time. When more specific standards become necessary, USPTO will promulgate them in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(D)(i).

(7) The first comment recommends revising the sections that require payment before the search results are released. The comment characterizes this requirement as an impermissible advance payment. The comment's characterization is inconsistent with *Strout v. United States Parole Comm'n*, 40 F.3d 136, 139 (6th Cir. 1994). Paragraph 102.11(i) explicitly bars the FOIA Officer from requiring advance payment except as permitted by statute

and the case law. The recommendation is not adopted.

(8) The first comment recommends eliminating the provision in § 102.11(i)(4) that a request in which advance payment may be required is not considered received until the advance payment is received. Adopting the recommendation would create the paradoxical situation in which the USPTO response is untimely even though the advanced payment was never received or was received so late that no response was possible. The only alternative USPTO would have would be to process the request without any assurance that it would be paid in precisely the situation where the statute permits a requirement of advance payment. The rule provides a reasonable interpretation of the statute that eliminates the paradox. The recommendation is not adopted.

(9) The first comment recommends eliminating the last sentence of § 102.11(k)(2)(ii). The comment appears to interpret this provision as barring the FOIA Officer from granting a fee waiver to a second requester of previously released information. The plain language of the rule does not compel that result, but rather requires the FOIA Officer to evaluate that issue in the context of a specific request. Since the comment's interpretation is not consistent with the language of the rule, the recommendation is not adopted.

(10) The first comment recommends eliminating the provision in § 102.9(f) that permits the submitter of business information from pointing out all available exemptions from disclosure. It is not clear from the comment what basis USPTO would have to censor a business submitter from pointing out any exemption that might meet its interest in keeping its confidential information from disclosure. Moreover, the point of the rule is to ensure that a business submitter makes its entire case in a single response rather than advancing exemptions in a piecemeal fashion. The recommendation is not adopted.

(11) The first comment recommends revising the last sentence of § 102.10(d), which provides that an administrative appeal may continue after a requester has initiated a civil action. The comment appears to interpret paragraph (d) as requiring some requesters to choose between continuing an administrative appeal and filing a civil action. The sentence does not force such an election, but rather simply puts requesters on notice of a practice that is not universal in judicial review of USPTO action. Since the comment's interpretation is not consistent with the

language of the rule, the recommendation is not adopted.

(12) The second comment recommends that USPTO make the material available under § 102.2(c)(4)–(6) also available at the USPTO web site ([www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)). The recommendation is already adopted in § 102.2(b) for materials created on or after the effective date of the EFOIA amendments, November 1, 1996.

#### Other Considerations

This rule is not significant under Executive Order 12866.

This rule does not contain a “collection of information” as defined by the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. ch. 35).

In accordance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 605(b)), USPTO has certified that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

#### List of Subjects in 37 CFR Part 102

Administrative practice and procedure, Freedom of Information, Privacy, Public information.

For the reasons stated in the preamble, amend 37 CFR Chapter I by adding Part 102 to read:

### PART 102—DISCLOSURE OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

#### Subpart A—Freedom of Information Act

Sec.

- 102.1 General.
- 102.2 Public reference facilities.
- 102.3 Records under FOIA.
- 102.4 Requirements for making requests.
- 102.5 Responsibility for responding to requests.
- 102.6 Time limits and expedited processing.
- 102.7 Responses to requests.
- 102.9 Business Information.
- 102.10 Appeals from initial determinations or untimely delays.
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#### Subpart B—Privacy Act

- 102.21 Purpose and scope.
- 102.22 Definitions.
- 102.23 Procedures for making inquiries.
- 102.24 Procedures for making requests for records.
- 102.25 Disclosure of requested records to individuals.
- 102.26 Special procedures: Medical records.
- 102.27 Procedures for making requests for correction or amendment.
- 102.28 Review of requests for correction or amendment.
- 102.29 Appeal of initial adverse determination on correction or amendment.
- 102.30 Disclosure of record to person other than the individual to whom it pertains.
- 102.31 Fees.
- 102.32 Penalties.

102.33 General exemptions.

102.34 Specific exemptions.

Appendix to Part 102—Systems of Records Noticed by Other Federal Agencies and Applicable to USPTO Records, and Applicability of this Part Thereto

**Authority:** 5 U.S.C. 552; 5 U.S.C. 552a; 5 U.S.C. 553; 31 U.S.C. 3717; 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2), 21, 41, 42, 122; 44 U.S.C. 3101.

#### Subpart A—Freedom of Information Act

##### § 102.1 General.

(a) The information in this part is furnished for the guidance of the public and in compliance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as amended (5 U.S.C. 552). This part sets forth the procedures the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) follows to make publicly available the materials and indices specified in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2) and records requested under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3). Information routinely provided to the public as part of a regular USPTO activity (for example, press releases issued by the Office of Public Affairs) may be provided to the public without following this part. USPTO’s policy is to make discretionary disclosures of records or information exempt from disclosure under FOIA whenever disclosure would not foreseeably harm an interest protected by a FOIA exemption, but this policy does not create any right enforceable in court.

(b) As used in this subpart, *FOIA Officer* means the USPTO employee designated to administer FOIA for USPTO. To ensure prompt processing of a request, correspondence should be addressed to the FOIA Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, WASHINGTON DC 20231 or delivered by hand to Crystal Park Two, 2121 Crystal Drive, Suite 714, Arlington, Virginia.

##### § 102.2 Public reference facilities.

(a) USPTO maintains a public reference facility that contains the records FOIA requires to be made regularly available for public inspection and copying; furnishes information and otherwise assists the public concerning USPTO operations under FOIA; and receives and processes requests for records under FOIA. The FOIA Officer is responsible for determining which of USPTO’s records are required to be made available for public inspection and copying, and for making those records available in USPTO’s reference and records inspection facility. The FOIA Officer shall maintain and make

available for public inspection and copying a current subject-matter index of USPTO’s public inspection facility records. Each index shall be updated regularly, at least quarterly, with respect to newly included records. In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), USPTO has determined that it is unnecessary and impracticable to publish quarterly, or more frequently, and distribute copies of the index and supplements thereto. The public reference facility is located in the Public Search Room, Crystal Plaza Three, 2021 South Clark Place, Room 1A01, Arlington, Virginia.

(b) The FOIA Officer shall also make public inspection facility records created by USPTO on or after November 1, 1996, available electronically through USPTO’s World Wide Web site (<http://www.uspto.gov>). Information available at the site shall include:

(1) The FOIA Officer’s index of the public inspection facility records, which indicates which records are available electronically; and

(2) The general index referred to in paragraph (c)(3) of this section.

(c) USPTO maintains and makes available for public inspection and copying:

(1) A current index providing identifying information for the public as to any matter that is issued, adopted, or promulgated after July 4, 1967, and that is retained as a record and is required to be made available or published. Copies of the index are available upon request after payment of the direct cost of duplication;

(2) Copies of records that have been released and that the FOIA Officer determines, because of their subject matter, have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records;

(3) A general index of the records described in paragraph (c)(2) of this section;

(4) Final opinions and orders, including concurring and dissenting opinions made in the adjudication of cases;

(5) Those statements of policy and interpretations that have been adopted by USPTO and are not published in the **Federal Register**; and

(6) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public.

##### § 102.3 Records under FOIA.

(a) Records under FOIA include all Government records, regardless of format, medium or physical characteristics, and include electronic

records and information, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs.

(b) There is no obligation to create, compile, or obtain from outside USPTO a record to satisfy a FOIA request. With regard to electronic data, the issue of whether records are created or merely extracted from an existing database is not always apparent. When responding to FOIA requests for electronic data where creation of a record or programming becomes an issue, USPTO shall undertake reasonable efforts to search for the information in electronic format.

(c) USPTO officials may, upon request, create and provide new information pursuant to user fee statutes, such as the first paragraph of 15 U.S.C. 1525, or in accordance with authority otherwise provided by law. This is outside the scope of FOIA.

(d) The FOIA Officer shall preserve all correspondence pertaining to the requests received under this subpart, as well as copies of all requested records, until disposition or destruction is authorized by Title 44 of the United States Code or a National Archives and Records Administration's General Records Schedule. The FOIA Officer shall not dispose of records while they are the subject of a pending request, appeal, or lawsuit under FOIA.

#### **§ 102.4 Requirements for making requests.**

(a) A request for USPTO records that are not customarily made available to the public as part of USPTO's regular informational services must be in writing, and shall be processed under FOIA, regardless of whether FOIA is mentioned in the request. Requests should be sent to the USPTO FOIA Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Washington DC 20231 (records FOIA requires to be made regularly available for public inspection and copying are addressed in § 102.2(c)). For the quickest handling, the request letter and envelope should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Request." For requests for records about oneself, § 102.24 contains additional requirements. For requests for records about another individual, either a written authorization signed by that individual permitting disclosure of those records to the requester or proof that that individual is deceased (for example, a copy of a death certificate or an obituary) facilitates processing the request.

(b) The records requested must be described in enough detail to enable USPTO personnel to locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. Whenever possible, a request should include specific information about each record

sought, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, and subject matter of the record, and the name and location of the office where the record is located. Also, if records about a court case are sought, the title of the case, the court in which the case was filed, and the nature of the case should be included. If known, any file designations or descriptions for the requested records should be included. In general, the more specifically the request describes the records sought, the greater the likelihood that USPTO will locate those records. If the FOIA Officer determines that a request does not reasonably describe records, the FOIA Officer will inform the requester what additional information is needed or why the request is otherwise insufficient. The FOIA Officer also may give the requester an opportunity to discuss the request so that it may be modified to meet the requirements of this section.

#### **§ 102.5 Responsibility for responding to requests.**

(a) *In general.* Except as stated in paragraph (b) of this section, the USPTO will process FOIA requests directed to USPTO. In determining records responsive to a request, the FOIA Officer shall include only those records within USPTO's possession and control as of the date the FOIA Officer receives the request.

(b) *Consultations and referrals.* If the FOIA Officer receives a request for a record in USPTO's possession in which another Federal agency subject to FOIA has the primary interest, the FOIA Officer shall refer the record to that agency for direct response to the requester. The FOIA Officer shall consult with another Federal agency before responding to a requester if the FOIA Officer receives a request for a record in which another Federal agency subject to FOIA has a significant interest, but not the primary interest; or another Federal agency not subject to FOIA has the primary interest or a significant interest. Ordinarily, the agency that originated a record will be presumed to have the primary interest in it.

(c) *Notice of referral.* Whenever a FOIA Officer refers a document to another Federal agency for direct response to the requester, the FOIA Officer will ordinarily notify the requester in writing of the referral and inform the requester of the name of the agency to which the document was referred.

(d) *Timing of responses to consultations and referrals.* All consultations and referrals shall be handled according to the date the FOIA

request was received by the first Federal agency.

(e) *Agreements regarding consultations and referrals.* The FOIA Officer may make agreements with other Federal agencies to eliminate the need for consultations or referrals for particular types of records.

#### **§ 102.6 Time limits and expedited processing.**

(a) *In general.* The FOIA Officer ordinarily shall respond to requests according to their order of receipt.

(b) *Initial response and appeal.* Subject to paragraph (c)(1) of this section, an initial response shall be made within 20 working days (i.e., excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) of the receipt of a request for a record under this part by the proper FOIA Officer identified in accordance with § 102.5(a), and an appeal shall be decided within 20 working days of its receipt by the Office of the General Counsel.

(c) *Unusual circumstances.* (1) In unusual circumstances as specified in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the FOIA Officer may extend the time limits in paragraph (b) of this section by notifying the requester in writing as soon as practicable of the unusual circumstances and of the date by which processing of the request is expected to be completed. Extensions of time for the initial determination and extensions on appeal may not exceed a total of ten working days, unless the requester agrees to a longer extension, or the FOIA Officer provides the requester with an opportunity either to limit the scope of the request so that it may be processed within the applicable time limit, or to arrange an alternative time frame for processing the request or a modified request.

(2) As used in this section, *unusual circumstances* means, but only to the extent reasonably necessary to properly process the particular request:

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

(ii) The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records that are the subject of a single request; or

(iii) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another Federal agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request.

(3) Unusual circumstances do not include a delay that results from a predictable workload of requests, unless

USPTO demonstrates reasonable progress in reducing its backlog of pending requests. Refusal to reasonably modify the scope of a request or arrange an alternate time frame may affect a requester's ability to obtain judicial review.

(4) If the FOIA Officer reasonably believes that multiple requests submitted by a requester, or by a group of requesters acting in concert, constitute a single request that would otherwise involve unusual circumstances, and the requests involve clearly related matters, the FOIA Officer may aggregate them. Multiple requests involving unrelated matters will not be aggregated.

(d) *Multitrack processing.* (1) The FOIA Officer may use two or more processing tracks by distinguishing between simple and more complex requests based on the number of pages involved, or some other measure of the amount of work and/or time needed to process the request, and whether the request qualifies for expedited processing as described in paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) The FOIA Officer may provide requesters in a slower track with an opportunity to limit the scope of their requests in order to qualify for faster processing. The FOIA Officer may contact the requester by telephone or by letter, whichever is most efficient in each case.

(e) *Expedited processing.* (1) Requests and appeals shall be taken out of order and given expedited treatment whenever it is determined they involve:

(i) Circumstances in which the lack of expedited treatment could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual;

(ii) The loss of substantial due process rights;

(iii) A matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist questions about the Government's integrity that affect public confidence; or

(iv) An urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal Government activity, if made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information.

(2) A request for expedited processing may be made at the time of the initial request for records or at any later time. For a prompt determination, a request for expedited processing should be sent to the FOIA Officer.

(3) A requester who seeks expedited processing must submit a statement, certified to be true and correct to the best of that person's knowledge and belief, explaining in detail the basis for

requesting expedited processing. For example, a requester within the category described in paragraph (e)(1)(iv) of this section, if not a full-time member of the news media, must establish that he or she is a person whose main professional activity or occupation is information dissemination, though it need not be his or her sole occupation. A requester within the category described in paragraph (e)(1)(iv) of this section must also establish a particular urgency to inform the public about the Government activity involved in the request, beyond the public's right to know about Government activity generally. The formality of certification may be waived as a matter of administrative discretion.

(4) Within ten calendar days of receipt of a request for expedited processing, the FOIA Officer will decide whether to grant it and shall notify the requester of the decision. If a request for expedited treatment is granted, the request shall be given priority and processed as soon as practicable. If a request for expedited processing is denied, any appeal of that decision shall be acted on expeditiously.

#### § 102.7 Responses to requests.

(a) *Grants of requests.* If the FOIA Officer makes a determination to grant a request in whole or in part, the FOIA Officer will notify the requester in writing. The FOIA Officer will inform the requester in the notice of any fee charged under § 102.11 and disclose records to the requester promptly upon payment of any applicable fee. Records disclosed in part shall be marked or annotated to show each applicable FOIA exemption and the amount of information deleted, unless doing so would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption. The location of the information deleted shall also be indicated on the record, if feasible.

(b) *Adverse determinations of requests.* If the FOIA Officer makes an adverse determination regarding a request, the FOIA Officer will notify the requester of that determination in writing. An adverse determination is a denial of a request in any respect, namely: A determination to withhold any requested record in whole or in part; a determination that a requested record does not exist or cannot be located; a determination that a record is not readily reproducible in the form or format sought by the requester; a determination that what has been requested is not a record subject to FOIA (except that a determination under § 102.11(j) that records are to be made available under a fee statute other than FOIA is not an adverse determination); a determination against

the requester on any disputed fee matter, including a denial of a request for a fee waiver; or a denial of a request for expedited treatment. Each denial letter shall be signed by the FOIA Officer and shall include:

(1) The name and title or position of the denying official;

(2) A brief statement of the reason(s) for the denial, including applicable FOIA exemption(s);

(3) An estimate of the volume of records or information withheld, in number of pages or some other reasonable form of estimation. This estimate need not be provided if the volume is otherwise indicated through deletions on records disclosed in part, or if providing an estimate would harm an interest protected by an applicable FOIA exemption; and

(4) A statement that the denial may be appealed, and a list of the requirements for filing an appeal under § 102.10(b).

#### § 102.9 Business Information.

(a) *In general.* Business information obtained by USPTO from a submitter will be disclosed under FOIA only under this section.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purposes of this section:

(1) *Business information* means commercial or financial information, obtained by USPTO from a submitter, which may be protected from disclosure under FOIA exemption 4 (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4)).

(2) *Submitter* means any person or entity outside the Federal Government from whom USPTO obtains business information, directly or indirectly. The term includes corporations; state, local and tribal governments; and foreign governments.

(c) *Designation of business information.* A submitter of business information should designate by appropriate markings, either at the time of submission or at a reasonable time thereafter, any portions of its submission that it considers to be protected from disclosure under FOIA 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 FOIA Officer shall provide a submitter with prompt written notice of a FOIA request or administrative appeal that seeks its business information whenever required under paragraph (e) of this section, except as provided in paragraph (h) of this section, in order to give the submitter an opportunity under paragraph (f) of this section to object to disclosure of any specified portion of

that information. Such written notice shall be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested, or similar means. The notice shall either describe the business information requested or include copies of the requested records containing the information. When notification of a large number of submitters is required, notification may be made by posting or publishing the notice in a place reasonably likely to accomplish notification.

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

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

(2) The FOIA Officer has reason to believe that the information may be protected from disclosure under FOIA exemption 4.

(f) *Opportunity to object to disclosure.* The FOIA Officer shall allow a submitter seven working days (i.e., excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) from the date of receipt of the written notice described in paragraph (d) of this section to provide the FOIA Officer with a detailed statement of any objection to disclosure. The statement must specify all grounds for withholding any portion of the information under any exemption of 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. If a submitter fails to respond to the notice within the time specified, the submitter will be considered to have no objection to disclosure of the information. Information a submitter provides under this paragraph may itself be subject to disclosure under FOIA.

(g) *Notice of intent to disclose.* The FOIA Officer shall consider a submitter's objections and specific grounds under FOIA for nondisclosure in deciding whether to disclose business information. If the FOIA Officer decides to disclose business information over the objection of a submitter, the FOIA Officer shall give the submitter written notice via certified mail, return receipt requested, or similar means, which shall include:

(1) A statement of reason(s) why the submitter's objections to disclosure were not sustained;

(2) A description of the business information to be disclosed; and

(3) A statement that the FOIA Officer intends to disclose the information seven working days from the date the submitter receives the notice.

(h) *Exceptions to notice requirements.* The notice requirements of paragraphs (d) and (g) of this section shall not apply if:

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

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

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

(4) The designation made by the submitter under paragraph (c) of this section appears obviously frivolous, in which case the FOIA Officer shall provide the submitter written notice of any final decision to disclose the information seven working days from the date the submitter receives the notice.

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

(j) *Corresponding notice to requesters.* Whenever a FOIA Officer provides a submitter with notice and an opportunity to object to disclosure under paragraph (d) of this section, the FOIA Officer shall also notify the requester(s). Whenever a submitter files a lawsuit seeking to prevent the disclosure of business information, the FOIA Officer shall notify the requester(s).

#### **§ 102.10 Appeals from initial determinations or untimely delays.**

(a) If a request for records is initially denied in whole or in part, or has not been timely determined, or if a requester receives an adverse initial determination regarding any other matter under this subpart (as described in § 102.7(b)), the requester may file a written appeal, which must be received by the Office of General Counsel within thirty calendar days of the date of the written denial or, if there has been no determination, may be submitted anytime after the due date, including the last extension under § 102.6(c), of the determination.

(b) Appeals shall be decided by a Deputy General Counsel. Appeals should be addressed to the General Counsel, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Washington DC 20231. Both the letter and the appeal envelope should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Appeal". The appeal must include a copy of the original request and the initial denial, if any, and may include a statement of the reasons why the records requested should be made available and why the

initial denial, if any, was in error. No opportunity for personal appearance, oral argument or hearing on appeal is provided.

(c) If an appeal is granted, the person making the appeal shall be immediately notified and copies of the releasable documents shall be made available promptly thereafter upon receipt of appropriate fees determined in accordance with § 102.11.

(d) If no determination of an appeal has been sent to the requester within the twenty-working-day period specified in § 102.6(b) or the last extension thereof, the requester is deemed to have exhausted his administrative remedies with respect to the request, giving rise to a right of judicial review under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(C). If the person making a request initiates a civil action against USPTO based on the provision in this paragraph, the administrative appeal process may continue.

(e) A determination on appeal shall be in writing and, when it denies records in whole or in part, the letter to the requester shall include:

(1) A brief explanation of the basis for the denial, including a list of applicable FOIA exemptions and a description of how the exemptions apply;

(2) A statement that the decision is final;

(3) Notification that judicial review of the denial is available in the United States district court for the district in which the requester resides or has its principal place of business, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, or the District of Columbia; and

(4) The name and title or position of the official responsible for denying the appeal.

#### **§ 102.11 Fees.**

(a) *In general.* USPTO shall charge for processing requests under FOIA in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section, except when fees are limited under paragraph (d) of this section or when a waiver or reduction of fees is granted under paragraph (k) of this section. USPTO shall collect all applicable fees before sending copies of requested records to a requester. Requesters must pay fees by check or money order made payable to the Treasury of the United States.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section:

(1) *Commercial use request* means a request from or on behalf of a person who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers his or her commercial, trade, or profit interests, which can include furthering those interests through litigation. The FOIA

Officer shall determine, whenever reasonably possible, the use to which a requester will put the requested records. When it appears that the requester will put the records to a commercial use, either because of the nature of the request itself or because the FOIA Officer has reasonable cause to doubt a requester's stated use, the FOIA Officer shall provide the requester a reasonable opportunity to submit further clarification.

(2) *Direct costs* means those expenses USPTO incurs in searching for and duplicating (and, in the case of commercial use requests, reviewing) records to respond to a FOIA request. Direct costs include, for example, the labor costs of the employee performing the work (the basic rate of pay for the employee, plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits). Not included in direct costs are overhead expenses such as the costs of space and heating or lighting of the facility in which the records are kept.

(3) *Duplication* means the making of a copy of a record, or of the information contained in it, necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Copies may take the form of paper, microform, audiovisual materials, or electronic records (for example, magnetic tape or disk), among others. The FOIA Officer shall honor a requester's specified preference of form or format of disclosure if the record is readily reproducible with reasonable efforts in the requested form or format.

(4) *Educational institution* means a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate higher education, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of professional education, or an institution of vocational education, that operates a

program of scholarly research. To be in this category, a requester must show that the request is authorized by and is made under the auspices of a qualifying institution, and that the records are sought to further scholarly research rather than for a commercial use.

(5) *Noncommercial scientific institution* means an institution that is not operated on a "commercial" basis, as that term is defined in paragraph (b)(1) 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. To be in this category, a requester must show that the request is authorized by and is made under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are sought to further scientific research rather than for a commercial use.

(6) *Representative of the news media, or news media requester* 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. Examples of news media entities include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large and publishers of periodicals (but only if they can qualify as disseminators of "news") that make their products available for purchase or subscription by the general public. For "freelance" journalists to be regarded as working for a news organization, they must demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that organization. A publication contract would be the clearest proof, but the FOIA Officer

shall also look to the past publication record of a requester in making this determination. To be in this category, a requester must not be seeking the requested records for a commercial use. However, a request for records supporting the news-dissemination function of the requester shall not be considered to be for a commercial use.

(7) *Review* means the examination of a record located in response to a request in order to determine whether any portion of it is exempt from disclosure. It also includes processing any record for disclosure—for example, doing all that is necessary to redact it and prepare it for disclosure. Review costs are recoverable even if a record ultimately is not disclosed. Review time does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(8) *Search* means the process of looking for and retrieving records or information responsive to a request. It includes page-by-page or line-by-line identification of information within records and also includes reasonable efforts to locate and retrieve information from records maintained in electronic form or format. The FOIA Officer shall ensure that searches are done in the most efficient and least expensive manner reasonably possible.

(c) *Fees*. In responding to FOIA requests, the FOIA Officer shall charge the fees summarized in chart form in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this section and explained in paragraphs (c)(3) through (c)(5) of this section, unless a waiver or reduction of fees has been granted under paragraph (k) of this section.

(1) The four categories and chargeable fees are:

Category	Chargeable fees
(i) Commercial Use Requesters .....	Search, Review, and Duplication.
(ii) Educational and Non-commercial Scientific Institution Requesters ...	Duplication (excluding the cost of the first 100 pages).
(iii) Representatives of the News Media .....	Duplication (excluding the cost of the first 100 pages).
(iv) All Other Requesters .....	Search and Duplication (excluding the cost of the first 2 hours of search and 100 pages).

(2) *Uniform fee schedule.*

Service	Rate
(i) Manual search .....	Actual salary rate of employee involved, plus 16 percent of salary rate.
(ii) Computerized search .....	Actual direct cost, including operator time.
(iii) Duplication of records:	
(A) Paper copy reproduction .....	\$.15 per page
(B) Other reproduction (e.g., computer disk or printout, microfilm, microfiche, or microform).	Actual direct cost, including operator time.
(iv) Review of records (includes preparation for release, i.e. excising) ...	Actual salary rate of employee conducting review, plus 16 percent of salary rate.

(3) *Search.* (i) Search fees shall be charged for all requests—other than requests made by educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions, or representatives of the news media—subject to the limitations of paragraph (d) of this section. The FOIA Officer will charge for time spent searching even if no responsive records are located or if located records are entirely exempt from disclosure. Search fees shall be the direct costs of conducting the search by the involved employees.

(ii) For computer searches of records, requesters will be charged the direct costs of conducting the search, although certain requesters (as provided in paragraph (d)(1) of this section) will be charged no search fee and certain other requesters (as provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section) are entitled to the cost equivalent of two hours of manual search time without charge. These direct costs include the costs, attributable to the search, of operating a central processing unit and operator/programmer salary.

(4) *Duplication.* Duplication fees will be charged to all requesters, subject to the limitations of paragraph (d) of this section. For a paper photocopy of a record (no more than one copy of which need be supplied), the fee shall be \$.15 cents per page. For copies produced by computer, such as tapes or printouts, the FOIA Officer shall charge the direct costs, including operator time, of producing the copy. For other forms of duplication, the FOIA Officer will charge the direct costs of that duplication.

(5) *Review.* Review fees shall be charged to requesters who make a commercial use request. Review fees shall be charged only for the initial record review—the review done when the FOIA Officer determines whether an exemption applies to a particular record at the initial request level. No charge will be made for review at the administrative appeal level for an exemption already applied. However, records withheld under an exemption that is subsequently determined not to apply may be reviewed again to determine whether any other exemption not previously considered applies, and the costs of that review are chargeable. Review fees shall be the direct costs of conducting the review by the involved employees.

(d) *Limitations on charging fees.*

(1) No search fee will be charged for requests by educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions, or representatives of the news media.

(2) No search fee or review fee will be charged for a quarter-hour period unless

more than half of that period is required for search or review.

(3) Except for requesters seeking records for a commercial use, the FOIA Officer will provide without charge:

(i) The first 100 pages of duplication (or the cost equivalent); and

(ii) The first two hours of search (or the cost equivalent).

(4) Whenever a total fee calculated under paragraph (c) of this section is \$20.00 or less for any request, no fee will be charged.

(5) The provisions of paragraphs (d) (3) and (4) of this section work together. This means that for requesters other than those seeking records for a commercial use, no fee will be charged unless the cost of the search in excess of two hours plus the cost of duplication in excess of 100 pages totals more than \$20.00.

(e) *Notice of anticipated fees over \$20.00.* When the FOIA Officer determines or estimates that the fees to be charged under this section will be more than \$20.00, the FOIA Officer shall notify the requester of the actual or estimated fees, unless the requester has indicated a willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. If only a portion of the fee can be estimated readily, the FOIA Officer shall advise the requester that the estimated fee may be only a portion of the total fee. If the FOIA Officer has notified a requester that actual or estimated fees are more than \$20.00, the FOIA Officer shall not consider the request received or process it further until the requester agrees to pay the anticipated total fee. Any such agreement should be in writing. A notice under this paragraph shall offer the requester an opportunity to discuss the matter with USPTO personnel in order to reformulate the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost.

(f) *Charges for other services.* Apart from the other provisions of this section, the FOIA Officer shall ordinarily charge the direct cost of special services. Such special services could include certifying that records are true copies or sending records by other than ordinary mail.

(g) *Charging interest.* The FOIA Officer shall charge interest on any unpaid bill starting on the 31st calendar day following the date of billing the requester. Interest charges shall be assessed at the rate provided in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and accrue from the date of the billing until payment is received by the FOIA Officer. The FOIA Officer shall follow the provisions of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-134), as amended, and its administrative procedures, including the use of consumer reporting agencies, collection agencies, and offset.

(h) *Aggregating requests.* If a FOIA Officer reasonably believes that a requester or a group of requesters acting together is attempting to divide a request into a series of requests for the purpose of avoiding fees, the FOIA Officer may aggregate those requests and charge accordingly. The FOIA Officer may presume that multiple requests of this type made within a 30-calendar-day period have been made in order to avoid fees. If requests are separated by a longer period, the FOIA Officer shall aggregate them only if a solid basis exists for determining that aggregation is warranted under all the circumstances involved. Multiple requests involving unrelated matters shall not be aggregated.

(i) *Advance payments.* (1) For requests other than those described in paragraphs (i)(2) and (3) of this section, the FOIA Officer shall not require the requester to make an advance payment: a payment made before work is begun or continued on a request. Payment owed for work already completed (*i.e.*, a payment before copies are sent to a requester) is not an advance payment.

(2) If the FOIA Officer determines or estimates that a total fee to be charged under this section will be more than \$250.00, the requester must pay the entire anticipated fee before beginning to process the request, unless the FOIA Officer receives a satisfactory assurance of full payment from a requester who has a history of prompt payment.

(3) If a requester has previously failed to pay a properly charged FOIA fee to USPTO or another responsible Federal agency within 30 calendar days of the date of billing, the FOIA Officer shall require the requester to pay the full amount due, plus any applicable interest, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of any anticipated fee, before the FOIA Officer begins to process a new request or continues to process a pending request from that requester.

(4) In cases in which the FOIA Officer requires payment under paragraphs (i)(2) or (3) of this section, the request shall not be considered received and further work will not be done on it until the required payment is received.

(5) Upon the completion of processing of a request, when a specific fee is determined to be payable and appropriate notice has been given to the requester, the FOIA Officer shall make records available to the requester only upon receipt of full payment of the fee.

(j) *Other statutes specifically providing for fees.* The fee schedule of this section does not apply to fees charged under any statute (except for FOIA) that specifically requires USPTO

or another responsible Federal agency to set and collect fees for particular types of records. If records responsive to requests are maintained for distribution by agencies operating such statutorily based fee schedule programs, the FOIA Officer shall inform requesters of how to obtain records from those sources.

(k) *Requirements for waiver or reduction of fees.* (1) Records responsive to a request will be furnished without charge or at a charge reduced below that established under paragraph (c) of this section if the FOIA Officer determines, based on all available information, that the requester has demonstrated that:

(i) Disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the Government; and

(ii) Disclosure of the information is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(2) To determine whether the first fee waiver requirement is met, the FOIA Officer shall consider the following factors:

(i) *The subject of the request:* whether the subject of the requested records concerns the operations or activities of the Government. The subject of the requested records must concern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal Government, with a connection that is direct and clear, not remote or attenuated.

(ii) *The informative value of the information to be disclosed:* whether the disclosure is "likely to contribute" to an understanding of Government operations or activities. The disclosable portions of the requested records must be meaningfully informative about Government operations or activities in order to be "likely to contribute" to an increased public understanding of those operations or activities. The disclosure of information that already is in the public domain, in either a duplicative or a substantially identical form, would not be likely to contribute to such understanding.

(iii) *The contribution to an understanding of the subject by the public likely to result from disclosure:* whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester. A requester's expertise in the subject area and ability and intention to effectively convey information to the public shall be considered. It shall be presumed that a representative of the news media satisfies this consideration. It shall be

presumed that a requester who merely provides information to media sources does not satisfy this consideration.

(iv) *The significance of the contribution to public understanding:* whether the disclosure is likely to contribute "significantly" to public understanding of Government operations or activities. The public's understanding of the subject in question prior to the disclosure must be significantly enhanced by the disclosure.

(3) To determine whether the second fee waiver requirement is met, the FOIA Officer shall consider the following factors:

(i) *The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest:* whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. The FOIA Officer shall consider any commercial interest of the requester (with reference to the definition of "commercial use request" in paragraph (b)(1) of this section), or of any person on whose behalf the requester may be acting, that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. Requesters shall be given an opportunity to provide explanatory information regarding this consideration.

(ii) *The primary interest in disclosure:* whether any 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." A fee waiver or reduction is justified if the public interest standard (paragraph (k)(1)(i) of this section) is satisfied and the public interest is greater than any identified commercial interest in disclosure. The FOIA Officer ordinarily shall presume that if a news media requester has satisfied the public interest standard, the public interest is the primary interest served by disclosure to that requester. Disclosure to data brokers or others who merely compile and market Government information for direct economic return shall not be presumed to primarily serve the public interest.

(4) If only some of the records to be released satisfy the requirements for a fee waiver, a waiver shall be granted for those records.

(5) Requests for the waiver or reduction of fees should address the factors listed in paragraphs (k)(2) and (3) of this section, insofar as they apply to each request.

## Subpart B—Privacy Act

### § 102.21 Purpose and scope.

(a) The purpose of this subpart is to establish policies and procedures for implementing the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a) (the Act). The main objectives are to facilitate full exercise of rights conferred on individuals under the Act and to ensure the protection of privacy as to individuals on whom USPTO maintains records in systems of records under the Act. USPTO accepts the responsibility to act promptly and in accordance with the Act upon receipt of any inquiry, request or appeal from a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence into the United States, regardless of the age of the individual. Further, USPTO accepts the obligations to maintain only such information on individuals as is relevant and necessary to the performance of its lawful functions, to maintain that information with such accuracy, relevancy, timeliness, and completeness as is reasonably necessary to assure fairness in determinations made by USPTO about the individual, to obtain information from the individual to the extent practicable, and to take every reasonable step to protect that information from unwarranted disclosure. USPTO will maintain no record describing how an individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment unless expressly authorized by statute or by the individual about whom the record is maintained or unless pertinent to and within the scope of an authorized law enforcement activity. An individual's name and address will not be sold or rented by USPTO unless such action is specifically authorized by law; however, this provision shall not be construed to require the withholding of names and addresses otherwise permitted to be made public.

(b) This subpart is administered by the Privacy Officer of USPTO.

(c) Matters outside the scope of this subpart include the following:

(1) Requests for records which do not pertain to the individual making the request, or to the individual about whom the request is made if the requester is the parent or guardian of the individual;

(2) Requests involving information pertaining to an individual which is in a record or file but not within the scope of a system of records notice published in the **Federal Register**;

(3) Requests to correct a record where a grievance procedure is available to the individual either by regulation or by provision in a collective bargaining

agreement with USPTO, and the individual has initiated, or has expressed in writing the intention of initiating, such grievance procedure. An individual selecting the grievance procedure waives the use of the procedures in this subpart to correct or amend a record; and,

(4) Requests for employee-employer services and counseling which were routinely granted prior to enactment of the Act, including, but not limited to, test calculations of retirement benefits, explanations of health and life insurance programs, and explanations of tax withholding options.

(d) Any request for records which pertains to the individual making the request, or to the individual about whom the request is made if the requester is the parent or guardian of the individual, shall be processed under the Act and this subpart and under the Freedom of Information Act and USPTO's implementing regulations at Subpart A of this part, regardless whether the Act or the Freedom of Information Act is mentioned in the request.

#### § 102.22 Definitions.

(a) All terms used in this subpart which are defined in 5 U.S.C. 552a shall have the same meaning herein.

(b) As used in this subpart:

(1) *Act* means the "Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a)".

(2) *Appeal* means a request by an individual to review and reverse an initial denial of a request by that individual for correction or amendment.

(3) *USPTO* means the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

(4) *Inquiry* means either a request for general information regarding the Act and this subpart or a request by an individual (or that individual's parent or guardian) that USPTO determine whether it has any record in a system of records which pertains to that individual.

(5) *Person* means any human being and also shall include but not be limited to, corporations, associations, partnerships, trustees, receivers, personal representatives, and public or private organizations.

(6) *Privacy Officer* means a USPTO employee designated to administer this subpart.

(7) *Request for access* means a request by an individual or an individual's parent or guardian to see a record which is in a particular system of records and which pertains to that individual.

(8) *Request for correction or amendment* means the request by an individual or an individual's parent or guardian that USPTO change (either by

correction, amendment, addition or deletion) a particular record in a system of records which pertains to that individual.

#### § 102.23 Procedures for making inquiries.

(a) Any individual, regardless of age, who is a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence into the United States may submit an inquiry to USPTO. The inquiry should be made either in person at Crystal Park Two, 2121 Crystal Park Drive, Suite 714, Arlington, Virginia, or by mail addressed to the Privacy Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, WASHINGTON DC 20231 or to the official identified in the notification procedures paragraph of the systems of records notice published in the **Federal Register**. If an individual believes USPTO maintains a record pertaining to that individual but does not know which system of records might contain such a record, the USPTO Privacy Officer will provide assistance in person or by mail.

(b) Inquiries submitted by mail should include the words "PRIVACY ACT INQUIRY" in capital letters at the top of the letter and on the face of the envelope. If the inquiry is for general information regarding the Act and this subpart, no particular information is required. USPTO reserves the right to require compliance with the identification procedures appearing at § 102.24(d) where circumstances warrant. If the inquiry is a request that USPTO determine whether it has, in a given system of records, a record which pertains to the individual, the following information should be submitted:

(1) Name of individual whose record is sought;

(2) Individual whose record is sought is either a U.S. citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence;

(3) Identifying data that will help locate the record (for example, maiden name, occupational license number, period or place of employment, etc.);

(4) Record sought, by description and by record system name, if known;

(5) Action requested (that is, sending information on how to exercise rights under the Act; determining whether requested record exists; gaining access to requested record; or obtaining copy of requested record);

(6) Copy of court guardianship order or minor's birth certificate, as provided in § 102.24(f)(3), but only if requester is guardian or parent of individual whose record is sought;

(7) Requester's name (printed), signature, address, and telephone number (optional);

(8) Date; and,

(9) Certification of request by notary or other official, but only if

(i) Request is for notification that requested record exists, for access to requested record or for copy of requested record;

(ii) Record is not available to any person under 5 U.S.C. 552; and

(iii) Requester does not appear before an employee of USPTO for verification of identity.

(c) Any inquiry which is not addressed as specified in paragraph (a) of this section or which is not marked as specified in paragraph (b) of this section will be so addressed and marked by USPTO personnel and forwarded immediately to the Privacy Officer. An inquiry which is not properly addressed by the individual will not be deemed to have been "received" for purposes of measuring the time period for response until actual receipt by the Privacy Officer. In each instance when an inquiry so forwarded is received, the Privacy Officer shall notify the individual that his or her inquiry was improperly addressed and the date the inquiry was received at the proper address.

(d)(1) Each inquiry received shall be acted upon promptly by the Privacy Officer. Every effort will be made to respond within ten working days (i.e., excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal public holidays) of the date of receipt. If a response cannot be made within ten working days, the Privacy Officer shall send an acknowledgment during that period providing information on the status of the inquiry and asking for such further information as may be necessary to process the inquiry. The first correspondence sent by the Privacy Officer to the requester shall contain USPTO's control number assigned to the request, as well as a note that the requester should use that number in all future contacts in order to facilitate processing. USPTO shall use that control number in all subsequent correspondence.

(2) If the Privacy Officer fails to send an acknowledgment within ten working days, as provided above, the requester may ask the General Counsel to take corrective action. No failure of the Privacy Officer to send an acknowledgment shall confer administrative finality for purposes of judicial review.

(e) An individual shall not be required to state a reason or otherwise justify his or her inquiry.

(f) Special note should be taken of the fact that certain agencies are responsible for publishing notices of systems of records having Government-wide

application to other agencies, including USPTO. The agencies known to be publishing these general notices and the types of records covered therein appear in an appendix to this part. The provisions of this section, and particularly paragraph (a) of this section, should be followed in making inquiries with respect to such records. Such records in USPTO are subject to the provisions of this part to the extent indicated in the appendix to this part. The exemptions, if any, determined by an agency publishing a general notice shall be invoked and applied by USPTO after consultation, as necessary, with that other agency.

**§ 102.24 Procedures for making requests for records.**

(a) Any individual, regardless of age, who is a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence into the United States may submit a request for access to records to USPTO. The request should be made either in person at Crystal Park Two, 2121 Crystal Drive, Suite 714, Arlington, Virginia, or by mail addressed to the Privacy Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231.

(b) Requests submitted by mail should include the words "PRIVACY ACT REQUEST" in capital letters at the top of the letter and on the face of the envelope. Any request which is not addressed as specified in paragraph (a) of this section or which is not marked as specified in this paragraph will be so addressed and marked by USPTO personnel and forwarded immediately to the Privacy Officer. A request which is not properly addressed by the individual will not be deemed to have been "received" for purposes of measuring time periods for response until actual receipt by the Privacy Officer. In each instance when a request so forwarded is received, the Privacy Officer shall notify the individual that his or her request was improperly addressed and the date when the request was received at the proper address.

(c) If the request follows an inquiry under § 102.23 in connection with which the individual's identity was established by USPTO, the individual need only indicate the record to which access is sought, provide the USPTO control number assigned to the request, and sign and date the request. If the request is not preceded by an inquiry under § 102.23, the procedures of this section should be followed.

(d) The requirements for identification of individuals seeking access to records are as follows:

(1) *In person.* Each individual making a request in person shall be required to present satisfactory proof of identity.

The means of proof, in the order of preference and priority, are:

(i) A document bearing the individual's photograph (for example, driver's license, passport or military or civilian identification card);

(ii) A document, preferably issued for participation in a federally sponsored program, bearing the individual's signature (for example, unemployment insurance book, employer's identification card, national credit card, and professional, craft or union membership card); and

(iii) A document bearing neither the photograph nor the signature of the individual, preferably issued for participation in a federally sponsored program (for example, Medicaid card). In the event the individual can provide no suitable documentation of identity, USPTO will require a signed statement asserting the individual's identity and stipulating that the individual understands the penalty provision of 5 U.S.C. 552a(i)(3) recited in § 102.32(a). In order to avoid any unwarranted disclosure of an individual's records, USPTO reserves the right to determine the adequacy of proof of identity offered by any individual, particularly when the request involves a sensitive record.

(2) *Not in person.* If the individual making a request does not appear in person before the Privacy Officer or other employee authorized to determine identity, a certification of a notary public or equivalent officer empowered to administer oaths must accompany the request under the circumstances prescribed in § 102.23(b)(9). The certification in or attached to the letter must be substantially in accordance with the following text:

City of \_\_\_\_\_  
 County of \_\_\_\_\_ :ss  
 (Name of individual), who affixed (his) (her) signature below in my presence, came before me, a (title), in and for the aforesaid County and State, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, and established (his) (her) identity to my satisfaction.  
 My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (Signature)

(3) *Parents of minors and legal guardians.* An individual acting as the parent of a minor or the legal guardian of the individual to whom a record pertains shall establish his or her personal identity in the same manner prescribed in either paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section. In addition, such other individual shall establish his or her identity in the representative capacity of parent or legal guardian. In the case of the parent of a minor, the

proof of identity shall be a certified or authenticated copy of the minor's birth certificate. In the case of a legal guardian of an individual who has been declared incompetent due to physical or mental incapacity or age by a court of competent jurisdiction, the proof of identity shall be a certified or authenticated copy of the court's order. For purposes of the Act, a parent or legal guardian may represent only a living individual, not a decedent. A parent or legal guardian may be accompanied during personal access to a record by another individual, provided the provisions of § 102.25(f) are satisfied.

(e) When the provisions of this subpart are alleged to impede an individual in exercising his or her right to access, USPTO will consider, from an individual making a request, alternative suggestions regarding proof of identity and access to records.

(f) An individual shall not be required to state a reason or otherwise justify his or her request for access to a record.

**§ 102.25 Disclosure of requested records to individuals.**

(a)(1) The Privacy Officer shall act promptly upon each request. Every effort will be made to respond within ten working days (i.e., excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) of the date of receipt. If a response cannot be made within ten working days due to unusual circumstances, the Privacy Officer shall send an acknowledgment during that period providing information on the status of the request and asking for any further information that may be necessary to process the request. "Unusual circumstances" shall include circumstances in which

(i) A search for and collection of requested records from inactive storage, field facilities or other establishments is required;

(ii) A voluminous amount of data is involved;

(iii) Information on other individuals must be separated or expunged from the particular record; or

(iv) Consultations with other agencies having a substantial interest in the determination of the request are necessary.

(2) If the Privacy Officer fails to send an acknowledgment within ten working days, as provided above in paragraph (a) of this section, the requester may ask the General Counsel to take corrective action. No failure of the Privacy Officer to send an acknowledgment shall confer administrative finality for purposes of judicial review.

(b) *Grant of access*—(1) *Notification*. An individual shall be granted access to a record pertaining to him or her, except where the provisions of paragraph (g)(1) of this section apply. The Privacy Officer will notify the individual of a determination to grant access, and provide the following information:

(i) The methods of access, as set forth in paragraph (b)(2) of this section;

(ii) The place at which the record may be inspected;

(iii) The earliest date on which the record may be inspected and the period of time that the records will remain available for inspection. In no event shall the earliest date be later than thirty calendar days from the date of notification;

(iv) The estimated date by which a copy of the record could be mailed and the estimate of fees pursuant to § 102.31. In no event shall the estimated date be later than thirty calendar days from the date of notification;

(v) The fact that the individual, if he or she wishes, may be accompanied by another individual during personal access, subject to the procedures set forth in paragraph (f) of this section; and,

(vi) Any additional requirements needed to grant access to a specific record.

(2) *Methods of access*. The following methods of access to records by an individual may be available depending on the circumstances of a given situation:

(i) Inspection in person may be had in a location specified by the Privacy Officer during business hours;

(ii) Transfer of records to a Federal facility more convenient to the individual may be arranged, but only if the Privacy Officer determines that a suitable facility is available, that the individual's access can be properly supervised at that facility, and that transmittal of the records to that facility will not unduly interfere with operations of USPTO or involve unreasonable costs, in terms of both money and manpower; and

(iii) Copies may be mailed at the request of the individual, subject to payment of the fees prescribed in § 102.31. USPTO, on its own initiative, may elect to provide a copy by mail, in which case no fee will be charged the individual.

(c) Access to medical records is governed by the provisions of § 102.26.

(d) USPTO will supply such other information and assistance at the time of access as to make the record intelligible to the individual.

(e) USPTO reserves the right to limit access to copies and abstracts of original

records, rather than the original records. This election would be appropriate, for example, when the record is in an automated data media such as tape or diskette, when the record contains information on other individuals, and when deletion of information is permissible under exemptions (for example, 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2)). In no event shall original records of USPTO be made available to the individual except under the immediate supervision of the Privacy Officer or the Privacy Officer's designee.

(f) Any individual who requests access to a record pertaining to that individual may be accompanied by another individual of his or her choice. "Accompanied" includes discussion of the record in the presence of the other individual. The individual to whom the record pertains shall authorize the presence of the other individual in writing. The authorization shall include the name of the other individual, a specific description of the record to which access is sought, the USPTO control number assigned to the request, the date, and the signature of the individual to whom the record pertains. The other individual shall sign the authorization in the presence of the Privacy Officer. An individual shall not be required to state a reason or otherwise justify his or her decision to be accompanied by another individual during personal access to a record.

(g) *Initial denial of access*—(1) *Grounds*. Access by an individual to a record which pertains to that individual will be denied only upon a determination by the Privacy Officer that:

(i) The record is exempt under § 102.33 or § 102.34, or exempt by determination of another agency publishing notice of the system of records, as described in § 102.23(f);

(ii) The record is information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action or proceeding;

(iii) The provisions of § 102.26 pertaining to medical records temporarily have been invoked; or

(iv) The individual has unreasonably failed to comply with the procedural requirements of this part.

(2) *Notification*. The Privacy Officer shall give notice of denial of access to records to the individual in writing and shall include the following information:

(i) The Privacy Officer's name and title or position;

(ii) The date of the denial;

(iii) The reasons for the denial, including citation to the appropriate section of the Act and this part;

(iv) The individual's opportunities, if any, for further administrative

consideration, including the identity and address of the responsible official. If no further administrative consideration within USPTO is available, the notice shall state that the denial is administratively final; and

(v) If stated to be administratively final within USPTO, the individual's right to judicial review provided under 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(1), as limited by 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(5).

(3) *Administrative review*. When an initial denial of a request is issued by the Privacy Officer, the individual's opportunities for further consideration shall be as follows:

(i) As to denial under paragraph (g)(1)(i) of this section, two opportunities for further consideration are available in the alternative:

(A) If the individual contests the application of the exemption to the records, review procedures in § 102.25(g)(3)(ii) shall apply; or

(B) If the individual challenges the exemption itself, the procedure is a petition for the issuance, amendment, or repeal of a rule under 5 U.S.C. 553(e). If the exemption was determined by USPTO, such petition shall be filed with the General Counsel. If the exemption was determined by another agency (as described in § 102.23(f)), USPTO will provide the individual with the name and address of the other agency and any relief sought by the individual shall be that provided by the regulations of the other agency. Within USPTO, no such denial is administratively final until such a petition has been filed by the individual and disposed of on the merits by the General Counsel.

(ii) As to denial under paragraphs (g)(1)(ii) of this section, (g)(1)(iv) of this section or (to the limited extent provided in paragraph (g)(3)(i)(A) of this section) paragraph (g)(1)(i) of this section, the individual may file for review with the General Counsel, as indicated in the Privacy Officer's initial denial notification. The procedures appearing in § 102.28 shall be followed by both the individual and USPTO to the maximum extent practicable.

(iii) As to denial under paragraph (g)(1)(iii) of this section, no further administrative consideration within USPTO is available because the denial is not administratively final until expiration of the time period indicated in § 102.26(a).

(h) If a request is partially granted and partially denied, the Privacy Officer shall follow the appropriate procedures of this section as to the records within the grant and the records within the denial.

**§ 102.26 Special procedures: Medical records.**

(a) No response to any request for access to medical records by an individual will be issued by the Privacy Officer for a period of seven working days (*i.e.*, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) from the date of receipt.

(b) USPTO has published as a routine use, for all systems of records containing medical records, consultations with an individual's physician or psychologist if, in the sole judgment of USPTO, disclosure could have an adverse effect upon the individual. The mandatory waiting period set forth in paragraph (a) of this section will permit exercise of this routine use in appropriate cases. USPTO will pay no cost of any such consultation.

(c) In every case of a request by an individual for access to medical records, the Privacy Officer shall:

(1) Inform the individual of the waiting period prescribed in paragraph (a) of this section;

(2) Obtain the name and address of the individual's physician and/or psychologist, if the individual consents to give them;

(3) Obtain specific, written consent for USPTO to consult the individual's physician and/or psychologist in the event that USPTO believes such consultation is advisable, if the individual consents to give such authorization;

(4) Obtain specific, written consent for USPTO to provide the medical records to the individual's physician or psychologist in the event that USPTO believes access to the record by the individual is best effected under the guidance of the individual's physician or psychologist, if the individual consents to give such authorization; and

(5) Forward the individual's medical record to USPTO's medical expert for review and a determination on whether consultation with or transmittal of the medical records to the individual's physician or psychologist is warranted. If the consultation with or transmittal of such records to the individual's physician or psychologist is determined to be warranted, USPTO's medical expert shall so consult or transmit. Whether or not such a consultation or transmittal occurs, USPTO's medical officer shall provide instruction to the Privacy Officer regarding the conditions of access by the individual to his or her medical records.

(d) If an individual refuses in writing to give the names and consents set forth in paragraphs (c)(2) through (c)(4) of this section and USPTO has determined that

disclosure could have an adverse effect upon the individual, USPTO shall give the individual access to said records by means of a copy, provided without cost to the requester, sent registered mail return receipt requested.

**§ 102.27 Procedures for making requests for correction or amendment.**

(a) Any individual, regardless of age, who is a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence into the United States may submit a request for correction or amendment to USPTO. The request should be made either in person or by mail addressed to the Privacy Officer who processed the individual's request for access to the record, and to whom is delegated authority to make initial determinations on requests for correction or amendment. The office of the Privacy Officer is open to the public between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding legal public holidays).

(b) Requests submitted by mail should include the words "PRIVACY ACT REQUEST" in capital letters at the top of the letter and on the face of the envelope. Any request which is not addressed as specified in paragraph (a) of this section or which is not marked as specified in this paragraph will be so addressed and marked by USPTO personnel and forwarded immediately to the Privacy Officer. A request which is not properly addressed by the individual will not be deemed to have been "received" for purposes of measuring the time period for response until actual receipt by the Privacy Officer. In each instance when a request so forwarded is received, the Privacy Officer shall notify the individual that his or her request was improperly addressed and the date the request was received at the proper address.

(c) Since the request, in all cases, will follow a request for access under § 102.25, the individual's identity will be established by his or her signature on the request and use of the USPTO control number assigned to the request.

(d) A request for correction or amendment should include the following:

(1) Specific identification of the record sought to be corrected or amended (for example, description, title, date, paragraph, sentence, line and words);

(2) The specific wording to be deleted, if any;

(3) The specific wording to be inserted or added, if any, and the exact place at which to be inserted or added; and

(4) A statement of the basis for the requested correction or amendment, with all available supporting documents and materials which substantiate the statement. The statement should identify the criterion of the Act being invoked, that is, whether the information in the record is unnecessary, inaccurate, irrelevant, untimely or incomplete.

**§ 102.28 Review of requests for correction or amendment.**

(a)(1)(i) Not later than ten working days (*i.e.*, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal public holidays) after receipt of a request to correct or amend a record, the Privacy Officer shall send an acknowledgment providing an estimate of time within which action will be taken on the request and asking for such further information as may be necessary to process the request. The estimate of time may take into account unusual circumstances as described in § 102.25(a). No acknowledgment will be sent if the request can be reviewed, processed, and the individual notified of the results of review (either compliance or denial) within the ten working days. Requests filed in person will be acknowledged in writing at the time submitted.

(ii) If the Privacy Officer fails to send the acknowledgment within ten working days, as provided in paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section, the requester may ask the General Counsel to take corrective action. No failure of the Privacy Officer to send an acknowledgment shall confer administrative finality for purposes of judicial review.

(2) Promptly after acknowledging receipt of a request, or after receiving such further information as might have been requested, or after arriving at a decision within the ten working days, the Privacy Officer shall either:

(i) Make the requested correction or amendment and advise the individual in writing of such action, providing either a copy of the corrected or amended record or a statement as to the means whereby the correction or amendment was effected in cases where a copy cannot be provided (for example, erasure of information from a record maintained only in magnetically recorded computer files); or

(ii) Inform the individual in writing that his or her request is denied and provide the following information:

(A) The Privacy Officer's name and title or position;

(B) The date of the denial;

(C) The reasons for the denial, including citation to the appropriate sections of the Act and this subpart; and

(D) The procedures for appeal of the denial as set forth in § 102.29, including the address of the General Counsel.

(3) The term *promptly* in this section means within thirty working days (*i.e.*, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays). If the Privacy Officer cannot make the determination within thirty working days, the individual will be advised in writing of the reason therefor and of the estimated date by which the determination will be made.

(b) Whenever an individual's record is corrected or amended pursuant to a request by that individual, the Privacy Officer shall be responsible for notifying all persons and agencies to which the corrected or amended portion of the record had been disclosed prior to its correction or amendment, if an accounting of such disclosure required by the Act was made. The notification shall require a recipient agency maintaining the record to acknowledge receipt of the notification, to correct or amend the record, and to apprise any agency or person to which it had disclosed the record of the substance of the correction or amendment.

(c) The following criteria will be considered by the Privacy Officer in reviewing a request for correction or amendment:

(1) The sufficiency of the evidence submitted by the individual;

(2) The factual accuracy of the information;

(3) The relevance and necessity of the information in terms of purpose for which it was collected;

(4) The timeliness and currency of the information in light of the purpose for which it was collected;

(5) The completeness of the information in terms of the purpose for which it was collected;

(6) The degree of risk that denial of the request could unfairly result in determinations adverse to the individual;

(7) The character of the record sought to be corrected or amended; and

(8) The propriety and feasibility of complying with the specific means of correction or amendment requested by the individual.

(d) USPTO will not undertake to gather evidence for the individual, but does reserve the right to verify the evidence which the individual submits.

(e) Correction or amendment of a record requested by an individual will be denied only upon a determination by the Privacy Officer that:

(1) The individual has failed to establish, by a preponderance of the evidence, the propriety of the correction or amendment in light of the criteria set forth in paragraph (c) of this section;

(2) The record sought to be corrected or amended is part of the official record in a terminated judicial, quasi-judicial, or quasi-legislative proceeding to which the individual was a party or participant;

(3) The information in the record sought to be corrected or amended, or the record sought to be corrected or amended, is the subject of a pending judicial, quasi-judicial, or quasi-legislative proceeding to which the individual is a party or participant;

(4) The correction or amendment would violate a duly enacted statute or promulgated regulation; or

(5) The individual has unreasonably failed to comply with the procedural requirements of this part.

(f) If a request is partially granted and partially denied, the Privacy Officer shall follow the appropriate procedures of this section as to the records within the grant and the records within the denial.

**§ 102.29 Appeal of initial adverse determination on correction or amendment.**

(a) When a request for correction or amendment has been denied initially under § 102.28, the individual may submit a written appeal within thirty working days (*i.e.*, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal public holidays) after the date of the initial denial. When an appeal is submitted by mail, the postmark is conclusive as to timeliness.

(b) An appeal should be addressed to the General Counsel, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. An appeal should include the words "PRIVACY APPEAL" in capital letters at the top of the letter and on the face of the envelope. An appeal not addressed and marked as provided herein will be so marked by USPTO personnel when it is so identified and will be forwarded immediately to the General Counsel. An appeal which is not properly addressed by the individual will not be deemed to have been "received" for purposes of measuring the time periods in this section until actual receipt by the General Counsel. In each instance when an appeal so forwarded is received, the General Counsel shall notify the individual that his or her appeal was improperly addressed and the date when the appeal was received at the proper address.

(c) The individual's appeal shall include a statement of the reasons why the initial denial is believed to be in error and USPTO's control number assigned to the request. The appeal shall be signed by the individual. The record which the individual requests be corrected or amended and all

correspondence between the Privacy Officer and the requester will be furnished by the Privacy Officer who issued the initial denial. Although the foregoing normally will comprise the entire record on appeal, the General Counsel may seek additional information necessary to assure that the final determination is fair and equitable and, in such instances, disclose the additional information to the individual to the greatest extent possible, and provide an opportunity for comment thereon.

(d) No personal appearance or hearing on appeal will be allowed.

(e) The General Counsel shall act upon the appeal and issue a final determination in writing not later than thirty working days (*i.e.*, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal public holidays) from the date on which the appeal is received, except that the General Counsel may extend the thirty days upon deciding that a fair and equitable review cannot be made within that period, but only if the individual is advised in writing of the reason for the extension and the estimated date by which a final determination will issue. The estimated date should not be later than the sixtieth working day after receipt of the appeal unless unusual circumstances, as described in § 102.25(a), are met.

(f) If the appeal is determined in favor of the individual, the final determination shall include the specific corrections or amendments to be made and a copy thereof shall be transmitted promptly both to the individual and to the Privacy Officer who issued the initial denial. Upon receipt of such final determination, the Privacy Officer promptly shall take the actions set forth in § 102.28(a)(2)(i) and (b).

(g) If the appeal is denied, the final determination shall be transmitted promptly to the individual and state the reasons for the denial. The notice of final determination also shall inform the individual of the following:

(1) The right of the individual under the Act to file a concise statement of reasons for disagreeing with the final determination. The statement ordinarily should not exceed one page and USPTO reserves the right to reject a statement of excessive length. Such a statement shall be filed with the General Counsel. It should provide the USPTO control number assigned to the request, indicate the date of the final determination and be signed by the individual. The General Counsel shall acknowledge receipt of such statement and inform the individual of the date on which it was received.

(2) The facts that any such disagreement statement filed by the individual will be noted in the disputed record, that the purposes and uses to which the statement will be put are those applicable to the record in which it is noted, and that a copy of the statement will be provided to persons and agencies to which the record is disclosed subsequent to the date of receipt of such statement;

(3) The fact that USPTO will append to any such disagreement statement filed by the individual, a copy of the final determination or summary thereof which also will be provided to persons and agencies to which the disagreement statement is disclosed; and,

(4) The right of the individual to judicial review of the final determination under 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(1)(A), as limited by 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(5).

(h) In making the final determination, the General Counsel shall employ the criteria set forth in § 102.28(c) and shall deny an appeal only on the grounds set forth in § 102.28(e).

(i) If an appeal is partially granted and partially denied, the General Counsel shall follow the appropriate procedures of this section as to the records within the grant and the records within the denial.

(j) Although a copy of the final determination or a summary thereof will be treated as part of the individual's record for purposes of disclosure in instances where the individual has filed a disagreement statement, it will not be subject to correction or amendment by the individual.

(k) The provisions of paragraphs (g)(1) through (g)(3) of this section satisfy the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3).

**§ 102.30 Disclosure of record to person other than the individual to whom it pertains.**

(a) USPTO may disclose a record pertaining to an individual to a person other than the individual to whom it pertains only in the following instances:

(1) Upon written request by the individual, including authorization under § 102.25(f);

(2) With the prior written consent of the individual;

(3) To a parent or legal guardian under 5 U.S.C. 552a(h);

(4) When required by the Act and not covered explicitly by the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a(b); and

(5) When permitted under 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(1) through (12), which read as follows:<sup>1</sup>

(i) To those officers and employees of the agency which maintains the record who have a need for the record in the performance of their duties;

(ii) Required under 5 U.S.C. 552 ;

(iii) For a routine use as defined in 5 U.S.C. 552a(a)(7) and described under 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(4)(D);

(iv) To the Bureau of the Census for purposes of planning or carrying out a census or survey or related activity pursuant to the provisions of Title 13;

(v) To a recipient who has provided the agency with advance adequate written assurance that the record will be used solely as a statistical research or reporting record, and the record is to be transferred in a form that is not individually identifiable;

(vi) To the National Archives and Records Administration as a record which has sufficient historical or other value to warrant its continued preservation by the United States Government, or for evaluation by the Archivist of the United States or the designee of the Archivist to determine whether the record has such value;

(vii) To another agency or to an instrumentality of any governmental jurisdiction within or under the control of the United States for a civil or criminal law enforcement activity if the activity is authorized by law, and if the head of the agency or instrumentality has made a written request to the agency which maintains the record specifying the particular portion desired and the law enforcement activity for which the record is sought;

(viii) To a person pursuant to a showing of compelling circumstances affecting the health or safety of an individual if upon such disclosure notification is transmitted to the last known address of such individual;

(ix) To either House of Congress, or, to the extent of matter within its jurisdiction, any committee or subcommittee thereof, any joint committee of Congress or subcommittee of any such joint committee;

(x) To the Comptroller General, or any of his authorized representatives, in the course of the performance of the duties of the General Accounting Office;

(xi) Pursuant to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or

(xii) To a consumer reporting agency in accordance with section 3711(e) of Title 31.

(b) The situations referred to in paragraph (a)(4) of this section include the following:

(1) 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(4) requires dissemination of a corrected or amended record or notation of a disagreement statement by USPTO in certain circumstances;

(2) 5 U.S.C. 552a(d) requires disclosure of records to the individual to whom they pertain, upon request; and

(3) 5 U.S.C. 552a(g) authorizes civil action by an individual and requires disclosure by USPTO to the court.

(c) The Privacy Officer shall make an accounting of each disclosure by him of any record contained in a system of records in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(c) (1) and (2). Except for a disclosure made under 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(7), the Privacy Officer shall make such accounting available to any individual, insofar as it pertains to that individual, on request submitted in accordance with § 102.24. The Privacy Officer shall make reasonable efforts to notify any individual when any record in a system of records is disclosed to any person under compulsory legal process, promptly upon being informed that such process has become a matter of public record.

**§ 102.31 Fees.**

The only fees to be charged to or collected from an individual under the provisions of this part are for duplication of records at the request of the individual. The Privacy Officer shall charge fees for duplication of records under the Act in the same way in which they charge duplication fees under § 102.11, except as provided in this section.

(a) No fees shall be charged or collected for the following: Search for and retrieval of the records; review of the records; copying at the initiative of USPTO without a request from the individual; transportation of records and personnel; and first-class postage.

(b) It is the policy of USPTO to provide an individual with one copy of each record corrected or amended pursuant to his or her request without charge as evidence of the correction or amendment.

(c) As required by the United States Office of Personnel Management in its published regulations implementing the Act, USPTO will charge no fee for a single copy of a personnel record covered by that agency's Government-wide published notice of systems of records.

**§ 102.32 Penalties.**

(a) The Act provides, in pertinent part:

Any person who knowingly and willfully requests or obtains any record concerning an individual from an agency under false pretenses shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000. (5 U.S.C. 552a(i)(3)).

<sup>1</sup> 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(4) has no application within USPTO.

(b) A person who falsely or fraudulently attempts to obtain records under the Act also may be subject to prosecution under such other criminal statutes as 18 U.S.C. 494, 495 and 1001.

**§ 102.33 General exemptions.**

(a) Individuals may not have access to records maintained by USPTO but which were provided by another agency which has determined by regulation that such information is subject to general exemption under 5 U.S.C. 552a(j). If such exempt records are within a request for access, USPTO will advise the individual of their existence and of the name and address of the source agency. For any further information concerning the record and the exemption, the individual must contact that source agency.

(b) The general exemption determined to be necessary and proper with respect to systems of records maintained by USPTO, including the parts of each system to be exempted, the provisions of the Act from which they are exempted, and the justification for the exemption, is as follows: *Investigative Records—Contract and Grant Frauds and Employee Criminal Misconduct—COMMERCE/DEPT.—12.* Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2), these records are hereby determined to be exempt from all provisions of the Act, except 5 U.S.C. 552a (b), (c) (1) and (2), (e)(4) (A) through (F), (e) (6), (7), (9), (10), and (11), and (i). 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 law enforcement proceedings, to avoid the disclosure of investigative techniques, to avoid the endangering of law enforcement personnel, to avoid premature disclosure of the knowledge of criminal activity and the evidentiary bases of possible enforcement actions, and to maintain the integrity of the law enforcement process.

**§ 102.34 Specific exemptions.**

(a)(1) Some systems of records under the Act which are maintained by USPTO contain, from time-to-time, material subject to the exemption appearing at 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(1), relating to national defense and foreign policy materials. The systems of records

published in the **Federal Register** by USPTO which are within this exemption are: COMMERCE/PAT-TM-6, COMMERCE/PAT-TM-7, COMMERCE/PAT-TM-8, COMMERCE/PAT-TM-9.

(2) USPTO hereby asserts a claim to exemption of such materials wherever they might appear in such systems of records, or any systems of records, at present or in the future. The materials would be exempt from 5 U.S.C. 552a (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4) (G), (H), and (I), and (f) to protect materials required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of the national defense and foreign policy.

(b) The specific exemptions determined to be necessary and proper with respect to systems of records maintained by USPTO, including the parts of each system to be exempted, the provisions of the Act from which they are exempted, and the justification for the exemption, are as follows:

(1)(i) Exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2). The systems of records exempt (some only conditionally), the sections of the Act from which exempted, and the reasons therefor are as follows:

(A) Investigative Records—Contract and Grant Frauds and Employee Criminal Misconduct—COMMERCE/DEPT-12, but only on condition that the general exemption claimed in § 102.33(b)(3) is held to be invalid;

(B) Investigative Records—Persons Within the Investigative Jurisdiction of USPTO—COMMERCE/DEPT-13;

(C) Litigation, Claims and Administrative Proceeding Records—COMMERCE/DEPT-14;

(D) Attorneys and Agents Registered to Practice Before the Office—COMMERCE/PAT-TM-1;

(E) Complaints, Investigations and Disciplinary Proceedings Relating to Registered Patent Attorneys and Agents—COMMERCE/PAT-TM-2; and

(F) Non-Registered Persons Rendering Assistance to Patent Applicants—COMMERCE/PAT-TM-5.

(ii) The foregoing are exempted from 5 U.S.C. 552a (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (H), and (I), and (f). The reasons for asserting the exemption are to prevent subjects of investigation from frustrating the investigatory process, to insure the proper functioning and integrity of law enforcement activities, to prevent

disclosure of investigative techniques, to maintain the ability to obtain necessary information, 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. Special note is taken of the fact that the proviso clause in this exemption imports due process and procedural protections for the individual. The existence and general character of the information exempted will be made known to the individual to whom it pertains.

(2)(i) Exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(5). The systems of records exempt (some only conditionally), the sections of the act from which exempted, and the reasons therefor are as follows:

(A) Investigative Records—Contract and Grant Frauds and Employee Criminal Misconduct—COMMERCE/DEPT-12, but only on condition that the general exemption claimed in § 102.33(b)(3) is held to be invalid;

(B) Investigative Records—Persons Within the Investigative Jurisdiction of USPTO—COMMERCE/DEPT-13; and

(C) Litigation, Claims, and Administrative Proceeding Records—COMMERCE/DEPT-14.

(ii) The foregoing are exempted from 5 U.S.C. 552a (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4) (G), (H), and (I), and (f). The reasons for asserting the exemption are to maintain the ability to obtain candid and necessary information, to fulfill commitments made to sources to protect the confidentiality of information, to avoid endangering these sources and, ultimately, to facilitate proper selection or continuance of the best applicants or persons for a given position or contract. Special note is made of the limitation on the extent to which this exemption may be asserted. The existence and general character of the information exempted will be made known to the individual to whom it pertains.

(c) At the present time, USPTO claims no exemption under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k) (3), (4), (6) and (7).

**Appendix to Part 102—Systems of Records Noticed by other Federal Agencies<sup>1</sup> and Applicable to USPTO Records and Applicability of this Part thereto**

Category of records	Other federal agency
Federal Personnel Records .....	Office of Personnel Management. <sup>2</sup>
Federal Employee Compensation Act Program .....	Department of Labor. <sup>3</sup>
Equal Employment Opportunity Appeal Complaints .....	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. <sup>4</sup>

Category of records	Other federal agency
Formal Complaints/Appeals of Adverse Personnel Actions .....	Merit Systems Protection Board. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Other than systems of records noticed by the Department of Commerce. Where the system of records applies only to USPTO, these regulations apply. Where the system of records applies generally to components of the Department of Commerce, the regulations of that department attach at the point of any denial for access or for correction or amendment.

<sup>2</sup> The provisions of this part do not apply to these records covered by notices of systems of records published by the Office of Personnel Management for all agencies. The regulations of OPM alone apply.

<sup>3</sup> The provisions of this part apply only initially to these records covered by notices of systems of records published by the U.S. Department of Labor for all agencies. The regulations of that department attach at the point of any denial for access or for correction or amendment.

<sup>4</sup> The provisions of this part do not apply to these records covered by notices of systems of records published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for all agencies. The regulations of the Commission alone apply.

<sup>5</sup> The provisions of this part do not apply to these records covered by notices of systems of records published by the Merit Systems Protection Board for all agencies. The regulations of the Board alone apply.

Dated: August 25, 2000.

**Q. Todd Dickinson,**

*Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.*

[FR Doc. 00-22356 Filed 8-30-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-16-P

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR Part 52

[FRL-6862-9]

#### Notice of Availability of Responses to Comments on Proposed Rulemaking for Section 126 Petitions for Purposes of Reducing Interstate Ozone Transport

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The EPA conducted an extensive rulemaking on petitions filed by eight Northeastern States under section 126 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). These petitions sought to reduce interstate transport of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), one of the precursors of ground-level ozone. During part of the rulemaking process and after EPA had taken one final action on the petitions (64 FR 28250, May 25, 1999), EPA issued a proposal (64 FR 33962, June 24, 1999) and solicited comments on a set of discrete issues. In response, a number of comments were submitted that were outside the scope of the June 24, 1999 proposal and that, effectively, sought reconsideration of issues on which EPA had already taken final action. On January 18, 2000, the Agency took final action on the June 24, 1999 proposal, and noted that it would respond to those comments at a later date. This notice informs the public that EPA has responded separately to those comments and that the responses are now available in the docket (Docket Number A-97-43).

**ADDRESSES:** Documents relevant to this action are available for inspection at the Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (6102), Attention: Docket No. A-97-43, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street SW, room M-1500, Washington, DC 20460, telephone (202) 260-7548 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. A reasonable fee may be charged for copying.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Questions concerning today's action should be addressed to David Cole, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Air Quality Strategies and Standards Division, MD-15, Research Triangle Park, NC, 27711, telephone (919) 541-5565, e-mail at [cole.david@epa.gov](mailto:cole.david@epa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Availability of Related Information**

The official record for the section 126 rulemaking, as well as the public version of the record, has been established under docket number A-97-43. The public version of this record, including printed, paper versions of electronic comments, which does not include any information claimed as confidential business information, is available for inspection from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The official rulemaking record is located at the address in **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this document. In addition, the **Federal Register** rulemakings and associated documents are located on EPA's websites at <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/rto/126> and at <http://www.epa.gov/acidrain/modrule/main.html#126>.

**Background**

On May 25, 1999 (64 FR 28250), EPA made final determinations that portions of the petitions filed by eight Northeastern States under section 126 of the CAA are technically meritorious. The petitions sought to mitigate what they described as significant transport of one of the main precursors of ground-

level ozone, NO<sub>x</sub>, across State boundaries. Each petition specifically requested that EPA make a finding that certain stationary sources emit NO<sub>x</sub> in violation of the CAA's prohibition on emissions that significantly contribute to nonattainment problems in the petitioning State.

On June 24, 1999 (64 FR 33962), EPA proposed to revise two aspects of the May 25, 1999 final rule. The EPA proposed to stay indefinitely the affirmative technical determinations based on the 8-hour standard pending further developments in the litigation of that standard (see 64 FR 33956, June 24, 1999). The EPA also proposed to remove the trigger mechanism for making section 126 findings that was based on deadlines specified in a related EPA action to reduce interstate transport of ozone, the NO<sub>x</sub> State implementation plan (SIP) call, and to instead make the findings under the 1-hour standard.

The EPA finalized the revisions to the May 25, 1999 final rule on January 18, 2000 (65 FR 2674). In this revised rule, EPA noted that it received comments on the June 24, 1999 proposal that the Agency considers to be outside the scope of that proposal. These comments relate primarily to issues that have been addressed previously either in the NO<sub>x</sub> SIP call final rule, the NO<sub>x</sub> SIP call response to comments document, the May 25, 1999 final rule for the section 126 petitions, or the April 1999 response to comments document for the section 126 petitions. Although these comments were outside the scope of the rulemaking, EPA responded to most of them in the revised rule of January 18, 2000.

The EPA did not, in the revised rule, respond to certain comments that the Agency believes should be considered to be, in effect, petitions for reconsideration of the May 25, 1999 section 126 final rule. By today's action, EPA is notifying the public that EPA has responded to these comments separately in a document placed in the rulemaking docket for the section 126 petitions (A-97-43), document number XII-A-01.