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administrative officer shall respond within 10 days of receipt of a request and shall inform the individual whether a system of records maintained by the Commission contains such a record.

(b) In the case of a request for access to a record or for a copy of a record, the chief administrative officer shall acknowledge the request within 10 days and shall promptly thereafter—

(1) Fulfill the request by mail or arrange for an inspection by the requester in the Commission's offices; or

(2) If the request is denied, notify the requester of the denial, the reasons for the denial, the procedures for appealing the refusal, and the name and address of the Chairman of the Commission who will consider an appeal.

(c) In the case of a request for amendment, the chief administrative officer shall:

(1) Acknowledge the request in writing within 10 days;

(2) Promptly review the record; and

(3)(i) Make any requested amendment of a record found to be not accurate, relevant, timely, or complete; notify the requester of the change and provide a copy of the corrected record; and notify any previous recipient of the record (excluding Commission staff who obtained the record in the performance of their duties and recipients under the Freedom of Information Act) of any change; or

(ii) Inform the requester of a refusal to amend the record, the reasons for the refusal, the procedures for appealing the refusal, and the name and address of the Chairman of the Commission who will consider an appeal.

[64 FR 57982, Oct. 28, 1999. Redesignated at 85 FR 9615, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3005.105 Appeals of denials of access or amendment.

(a) If a request for access to or amendment of a record is denied, the requester may file a written appeal with the Chairman of the Commission. The Chairman will decide each appeal within 30 days of receipt unless the Chairman has, for good cause, extended the period for another 30 days.

(b) If an appeal is denied, the requester will be notified of the decision, the reasons for the denial, the right to

file a concise statement of disagreement, the procedures for filing a statement of disagreement, the subsequent uses of a statement of disagreement, and of the right to seek judicial review in accordance with subsection (g) of the Privacy Act.

[64 FR 57982, Oct. 28, 1999. Redesignated at 85 FR 9615, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3005.106 Fees.

The first copy of any record furnished under the Privacy Act of 1974 will be provided without charge. Additional copies will be charged at the cost of reproduction.

[64 FR 57982, Oct. 28, 1999. Redesignated at 85 FR 9615, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3005.107 Exemptions.

The Postal Regulatory Commission has not established any exempt system of records.

[64 FR 57982, Oct. 28, 1999, as amended at 72 FR 33165, June 15, 2007. Redesignated at 85 FR 9615, Feb. 19, 2020]

PART 3006—PUBLIC RECORDS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552; 39 U.S.C. 503.

SOURCE: 74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 85 FR 9615, Feb. 19, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 88 FR 37153, June 7, 2023, the authority citation for part 3006 was revised, effective July 7, 2023. For the convenience of the user, the revised text is set forth as follows:

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552; 39 U.S.C. 407, 503, 504.

§ 3006.1 Purpose.

(a) This part implements the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, and describes the procedures by which a person may request copies of Commission records pursuant to FOIA. It contains the rules that the Commission follows in handling requests, such as the amount of time it has to make a determination regarding release of records and what fees to charge. It also describes how a submitter of trade secrets or confidential business information can identify information that the submitter believes to be exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b).

(b) Information required to be published or made available pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(1) and (a)(2) may be found in part 3000 of this chapter, and on the Commission's website at <http://www.prc.gov>. The Commission's guide to FOIA, all required FOIA indexes, and recent annual FOIA reports are also available on the website.

(c) Section 3006.10 identifies records that the Commission has determined to be public.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 85 FR 9617, 9660, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.2 Presumption of openness.

(a) The Commission shall be proactive and timely in identifying and posting public records and other frequently requested records to its website.

(b) It is the stated policy of the Commission that FOIA requests shall be administered with a clear presumption of openness. The Commission will only withhold information if it reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest protected by a FOIA exemption, as enumerated in § 3006.11, or disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law.

[82 FR 12507, Mar. 6, 2017, as amended at 85 FR 9617, 9660, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.3 How to make a request.

(a) To request Commission records, please contact the Commission via letter or use the online request form provided on the Commission's website at <http://www.prc.gov/foia/onlinerequest>.

(b) Requests must describe the records sought in sufficient detail to enable the Commission to locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. To the extent possible, the requests should provide any specific information that might assist the Commission in responding to the request.

(c) Requesters must provide contact information to assist the Commission in communicating with them concerning requests and responding to the request.

[82 FR 12507, Mar. 6, 2017, as amended at 84 FR 53056, Oct. 4, 2019]

§ 3006.10 Public records.

(a) Except as provided in § 3006.11 and in § 3011.200 of this chapter, the public records of the Commission include all submissions and filings as follows:

(1) Requests of the Postal Service for decisions or advisory opinions, notices, public reports, complaints (both formal and informal), and other papers seeking Commission action;

(2) Financial, statistical and other reports to the Commission, and other filings and submittals to the Commission in compliance with the requirements of any statute, executive order, or Commission rule, regulation or order;

(3) All answers, replies, responses, objections, protests, motions, stipulations, exceptions, other pleadings, notices, depositions, certificates, proofs of service, transcripts and briefs in any matter or proceeding;

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(4) Exhibits, attachments and appendices to, amendments and corrections of, supplements to, or transmittals or withdrawals of any of the foregoing; and

(5) Commission correspondence related to the foregoing.

(b) All other parts of the formal record in any matter or proceeding before the Commission and correspondence related thereto, including:

(1) Notices or Commission orders initiating the matter or proceeding;

(2) Designation of the presiding officer;

(3) Transcript of hearings;

(4) Offers of proof, motions and stipulations made during a hearing;

(5) Exhibits received in evidence during a hearing;

(6) Certifications to the Commission; and

(7) Anything else upon which action of a presiding officer or the Commission may be based.

(c) Proposed testimony or exhibits filed with the Commission but not yet offered or received in evidence.

(d) Presiding officer actions and all presiding officer correspondence and memoranda to or from anyone other than staff assigned to provide assistance to the presiding officer.

(e) Commission decisions, reports, opinions, orders, notices, findings, determinations and other actions in any matter or proceeding and all Commission minutes which have been approved.

(f) Commission correspondence relating to any data or information request directed to the Postal Service.

(g) Commission correspondence with respect to the furnishing of data, information, comments, or recommendations to or by another branch, department, or agency of the Government where furnished to satisfy a specific requirement of a statute or where made public by that branch, department, or agency.

(h) Commission correspondence and reports on legislative matters under consideration by the Office of Management and Budget or Congress, but only if and after authorized for release or publication by that office, the Commission, or the Member of Congress involved.

(i) Commission correspondence on the interpretation or applicability of any statute, rule, regulation, decision, advisory opinion, or public report issued by the Commission and letters of opinion on that subject signed by the General Counsel and sent to persons other than the Commission, a Commissioner, or any of the staff.

(j) Copies of all filings by the Commission, and all orders, judgments, decrees, and mandates directed to the Commission in court proceedings involving Commission action and all correspondence with the courts, or clerks of court.

(k) The Commission's administrative and operating manuals as issued.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.11 Use of exemptions.

(a) Under FOIA, there are nine exemptions which may be used to protect information from disclosure. The Commission has paraphrased the exemptions in paragraphs (b) through (j) of this section. These paraphrases are not intended to be interpretations of the exemptions.

(b) National security information concerning national defense or foreign policy, provided that such information has been properly classified, in accordance with an Executive Order.

(c) Information related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.

(d) Information specifically exempted from disclosure by statute, for example, 39 U.S.C. 410(c):

(1) The name or address, past or present, of any postal patron;

(2) Information of a commercial nature, including trade secrets, whether or not obtained from a person outside the Postal Service, which under good business practice would not be publicly disclosed;

(3) Information prepared for use in connection with the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements under 39 U.S.C. chapter 12, or minutes of, or notes kept during negotiating sessions conducted under such chapter;

(4) Information prepared for use in connection with proceedings under 39 U.S.C. chapter 36; and

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(5) The reports and memoranda of consultants or independent contractors except to the extent that they would be required to be disclosed if prepared within the agency.

(e) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information which is obtained from a person and is privileged or confidential.

(f) Inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters that would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency. This exemption shall not apply to records created 25 years or more before the date on which the records were requested.

(g) Personnel and medical files and similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(h) Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, the release of which:

(1) Could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings;

(2) Would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;

(3) Could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(4) Could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source and investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law; or

(5) Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.

(i) Information contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports, prepared by, or on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for regulating or supervising financial institutions.

(j) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

(k) It is Commission policy to make records publicly available upon request, unless the record qualifies for exemption under one or more of the nine exemptions. It is Commission policy to make discretionary releases; however, a discretionary release is not normally appropriate for records ex-

empt under exemptions identified in paragraphs (b), (d), (e), (g), (h)(3) and (h)(5) of this section. The remainder of the exemptions are discretionary.

(1) The following are examples of information that is not part of the public records of the Commission:

(1) Written communications between or among the Commission, members of the Commission, the Secretary, and expressly designated staff members while particularly assigned, in accordance with all applicable legal requirements, to aid the Commission in the drafting of any decision, notice, order, advisory opinion, or public report and findings, with or without opinion, or report in any matter or proceeding;

(2) Reports and records compiled or created by the Inspector General of the Commission designated as confidential; and

(3) Unaccepted offers of settlement in any matter or proceeding unless or until made public by act of the offeror.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 82 FR 12507, Mar. 6, 2017]

§ 3006.12 Reading room.

(a) The Commission maintains a public reading room at its offices (901 New York Avenue, NW., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20268–0001) and an electronic reading room at <http://www.prc.gov>. The public reading room at its offices is open during business hours.

(b) The records available for public inspection and printing include, for example, decisions; reports; opinions; orders; notices; findings; determinations; statements of policy; copies of selected records released under FOIA; indexes required to be maintained under FOIA; and records described in § 3006.10 relating to any matter or proceeding before the Commission.

(c) The Commission shall make available, in an electronic and physical reading room, records previously released under FOIA and which the Commission determines are or are likely to become of significant public interest, including agency records that have been requested three or more times.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 82 FR 12508, Mar. 6, 2017; 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

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§ 3006.13 Notice and publication of public information.

(a) Decisions, advisory opinions, orders, public reports, and agency records that have been requested three or more times will be made available to the public by posting on the Commission's website at <http://www.prc.gov>.

(b) Descriptions of the Commission's organization, its methods of operation, statements of policy and interpretations, and procedural and substantive rules, are published in the FEDERAL REGISTER publication system, and are available on the Commission's website, <http://www.prc.gov>.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 82 FR 12508, Mar. 6, 2017; 85 FR 9660, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.20 Commission procedure when served a subpoena.

If an officer or employee of the Commission is served with a subpoena duces tecum, material that is not part of the public files and records of the Commission shall be produced only as authorized by the Commission. Service of such a subpoena shall immediately be reported to the Commission with a statement of all relevant facts. The Commission will thereupon enter such order or give such instructions as it deems advisable.

§ 3006.30 Relationship among the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and the Commission's procedures for according appropriate confidentiality.

(a) *Coverage.* FOIA applies to all Commission records and provides the public with access to government records.

(b) *Requesting records subject to the Privacy Act.* A request by an individual for the individual's own records contained in a system of records is governed by the Privacy Act. Release will first be considered under the Privacy Act pursuant to part 3005 of this chapter. However, if there is any record that the Commission need not release under the Privacy Act, the Commission will also consider the request under FOIA, and will release the record if FOIA requires it.

(c) *Requesting another individual's record.* Request for records of individ-

uals which may not be granted under the Privacy Act shall be considered under FOIA.

(1) If the Commission makes a disclosure in response to a request and the disclosure is permitted by the Privacy Act's disclosure provision, 5 U.S.C. 552a(b), the Commission will rely on the Privacy Act to govern the disclosure.

(2) In some circumstances, the Privacy Act may prohibit the Commission's ability to release records which may be released under FOIA.

(d) *Requesting a Postal Service record.* The Commission maintains custody of records that are both Commission and Postal Service records. In all instances that the Postal Service submits materials to the Commission that the Postal Service reasonably believes to be exempt from public disclosure, the Postal Service shall follow the procedures described in subpart B of part 3011 of this chapter.

(1) A request made pursuant to FOIA for records designated as non-public by the Postal Service shall be referred to the Postal Service; and

(2) A request made pursuant to part 3011 of this chapter for records designated as non-public by the Postal Service shall be considered under the applicable standards set forth in that part.

(e) *Requesting a record submitted under seal by a person other than the Postal Service.* The Commission maintains records of a confidential nature submitted by persons other than the Postal Service as non-public materials.

(1) A request made pursuant to FOIA for records designated as non-public by a person other than the Postal Service shall be considered in light of all applicable exemptions; and

(2) A request made pursuant to part 3011 of this chapter for records designated as non-public by a person other than the Postal Service shall be considered under the applicable standards set forth in that part.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 83 FR 31281, July 3, 2018; 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 88 FR 37153, June 7, 2023, § 3006.30 was amended by revising paragraphs (d) and (e), effective July 7, 2023.

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For the convenience of the user, the revised text is set forth as follows:

§ 3006.30 Relationship among the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and the Commission's procedures for acceding appropriate confidentiality.

* * * * *

(d) *Requesting a Postal Service record.* The Commission maintains custody of records that are both Commission and Postal Service records. Except when the Postal Service submits materials to the Commission in connection with activities under 39 U.S.C. 407(b)(2)(A), in all other instances that the Postal Service submits materials to the Commission that the Postal Service reasonably believes to be exempt from public disclosure, the Postal Service shall follow the procedures described in part 3011, subpart B of this chapter.

(1) A request made pursuant to FOIA for Postal Service records shall be referred to the Postal Service; and

(2) A request made pursuant to part 3011 of this chapter for records designated as non-public by the Postal Service shall be considered under the applicable standards set forth in that part.

(e) *Requesting a record submitted by a person other than the Postal Service.* The Commission maintains records of a confidential nature submitted by persons other than the Postal Service as non-public materials.

(1) A request made pursuant to FOIA for records submitted by a person other than the Postal Service shall adhere to the applicable procedures of § 3006.35. If such a FOIA request is not referred to a different Federal agency pursuant to § 3006.35(b), the Commission shall consider it in light of all applicable exemptions and in accordance with the following procedures:

(i) If such materials are designated as non-public, the Commission shall follow the procedures appearing in § 3006.70(b)–(d) in determining the FOIA request; or

(ii) In all other instances, the Commission shall determine the FOIA request after notifying the person of the FOIA request and providing the person with an opportunity to respond within seven days of the date of the notice under the following circumstances:

(A) The records sought contain confidential commercial information that may be protected from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4); and

(B) The Commission determines that it may be required to disclose the records, provided that at least one of the following applies:

(1) The requested information has been designated in good faith by the submitter as information considered protected from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4); or

(2) The Commission has a reason to believe that the requested information may be protected from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), but has not yet determined whether the information is protected from disclosure; and

(2) A request made pursuant to part 3011 of this chapter for records designated as non-public by a person other than the Postal Service shall be considered under the applicable standards set forth in that part.

§ 3006.35 Consultation, referral, and coordination.

(a) *Consultation.* If records originated with the Commission but contain within them information of significance to another Federal agency or office, the Commission will typically consult with that other entity prior to making a release determination.

(b) *Referral.* In addition to referring all requests made pursuant to FOIA for Postal Service records to the Postal Service as specified by § 3006.30(d)(1), if the Commission believes that a different Federal agency is best able to determine whether to disclose the record, the Commission will typically refer responsibility for responding to the request regarding that record to that agency. Ordinarily, the agency that originated the record is presumed to be the best agency to make the disclosure determination. Whenever the Commission refers any part of the responsibility for responding to a request to another agency, the Commission will notify the requester of the referral, including the name of the agency and that agency's FOIA contact information.

(c) *Coordination.* The standard referral procedure is not appropriate where disclosure of the identity of the Federal agency to which the referral would be made could harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption, such as the exemptions that protect personal privacy or national security interests. For example, if a non-law enforcement agency responding to a request for records on a living third party locates within its files records originating with a law enforcement agency, and if the existence of that law enforcement interest in the third party was not publicly known, then to disclose that law enforcement interest could cause an unwarranted invasion of

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the personal privacy of the third party. Similarly, if the Commission locates within its files material originating with an Intelligence Community agency, and the involvement of that agency in the matter is classified and not publicly acknowledged, then to disclose or give attribution to the involvement of that Intelligence Community agency could cause national security harms. In such instances, in order to avoid harm to an interest protected by an applicable exemption, the Commission will coordinate with the originating agency to seek its views on disclosure of the record. The Commission then will notify the requester of the release determination for the record that is the subject of the coordination.

(d) *Classified information.* On receipt of any request involving classified information, the Commission will determine whether the information is currently and properly classified in accordance with applicable classification rules. Whenever a request involves a record containing information that has been classified or may be appropriate for classification by another agency under any applicable executive order concerning the classification of records, the Commission must refer the responsibility for responding to the request regarding that information to the agency that classified the information, or that should consider the information for classification. Whenever an agency's record contains information that has been derivatively classified (for example, when it contains information classified by another agency), the Commission must refer the responsibility for responding to that portion of the request to the agency that classified the underlying information.

(e) *Timing of responses to consultations and referrals.* All consultations and referrals received by the Commission will be handled according to the date that the first agency received the perfected FOIA request.

(f) *Agreements regarding consultations and referrals.* The Commission may establish agreements with other agencies to eliminate the need for consultations or referrals with respect to particular types of records.

[88 FR 37154, June 7, 2023]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 88 FR 37154, June 7, 2023, § 3006.35 was added, effective July 7, 2023.

§ 3006.40 Hard copy requests for records and for expedited processing.

(a) A hard copy request for records must:

- (1) Be in writing;
- (2) Include the name and address of the requester;
- (3) Reasonably describe the records sought;
- (4) Include a daytime telephone number;
- (5) Be clearly identified as "Freedom of Information Act Request" both in the text of the request and on the envelope;
- (6) Identify the request category under § 3006.51; and
- (7) Be submitted to the Commission at the offices of the Commission (901 New York Avenue NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20268-0001).

(b) *Expedited processing.* A person demonstrating a compelling need as defined in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(E)(v) may request expedited processing at the time of an initial request (or appeal) or at a later time. In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section, an expedited request for records must:

- (1) Demonstrate a compelling need as defined in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(E)(v);
- (2) Be clearly identified as "Expedited Freedom of Information Act Request" both in the text of the request and on the envelope; and
- (3) Certify the statement of compelling need to be true and correct to the best of the requester's knowledge and belief. At its discretion, the Commission may waive the requirement for certification.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 84 FR 53056, Oct. 4, 2019; 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.41 Electronic requests for records and for expedited processing.

(a) An electronic request for records must:

- (1) Be submitted using the Commission's online FOIA request form at <http://www.prc.gov>;
- (2) Reasonably describe the records sought;

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(3) Include a daytime telephone number and valid e-mail address; and

(4) Identify the request category under § 3006.51; and

(b) *Expedited processing.* A person satisfying the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section may request expedited processing at the time of the initial request or at a later time by:

(1) Demonstrating a compelling need as defined in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(E)(v);

(2) Clearly identifying the request as an “Expedited Freedom of Information Act Request” in the body of the submission; and

(3) Certifying the statement of compelling need to be true and correct to the best of the requester’s knowledge and belief. At its discretion, the Commission may waive the requirement for certification.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.42 Tracking of requests.

(a) Upon receipt of a request, the Commission shall assign a unique tracking number to the request and within 3 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) provide that number to the person making the request.

(b) Any person with a tracking number may call or e-mail the Commission’s Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations (PAGR) to check the status of a request. PAGR may be e-mailed at PRC-PAGR@prc.gov or called at 202-789-6800.

§ 3006.43 Response to requests.

(a) *Determination.* Within 20 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays) after receipt of a request for a Commission record, the Chief FOIA Officer or his/her designee will notify the requester of its determination to grant or deny the request and the right to seek assistance from the Commission’s FOIA Public Liaison. In the case of an adverse determination, the Commission will notify the requester of his/her right to appeal and right to seek dispute resolution services from the Commission’s FOIA Public Liaison or the Office of Government Information Services.

(b) *Granting request.* If granting the request, the Chief FOIA Officer or his/

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her designee will notify the requester of any fees that must be paid.

(c) *Partial granting of request.* If the Commission is unable to grant the request in its entirety, any reasonably segregable portion of the request shall be provided, with deleted portions treated as specified in paragraph (d) of this section, and the Chief FOIA Officer or his/her designee will notify the requester of any fees that must be paid.

(d) *Denying request.* If denying the request, in whole or in part, the Chief FOIA Officer or his/her designee will inform the requester in writing of:

(1) The reason for the denial, including each exemption used as a basis for withholding of the records sought and, if applicable, the harm to an interest protected by a statutory exemption;

(2) An estimate of the volume of requested matter that was denied:

(i) If disclosure of a record has been partially denied, the amount of information deleted will be indicated on the released portion if technically feasible; and

(ii) If revealing the amount or location of a denied record will harm an interest protected by an exemption, then the description of the amount or location of deleted information shall be withheld.

(3) The right to appeal the denial to the Commission within 1 year.

(e) *Expedited processing.* Within 10 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) after receipt of a request for expedited processing, the Chief FOIA Officer or his/her designee will:

(1) Grant the request for expedited processing and process the request for records as soon as practicable; or

(2) Deny the request for expedited processing by informing the individual of:

(i) The denial in writing;

(ii) The right to appeal the denial to the Commission in writing; and

(iii) The procedures for appealing the denial.

(3) Any request for records that has been denied expedited processing will be processed in the same manner as a request that did not seek expedited processing.

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(f) Where a compelling need is not shown in an expedited request as specified in § 3006.41(b)(1), the Commission may grant requests for expedited processing at its discretion.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 82 FR 12508, Mar. 6, 2017; 84 FR 53056, Oct. 4, 2019; 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.44 Appeals.

(a) The Commission may review any decision of the Chief FOIA Officer or his/her designee on its own initiative.

(b) A requester who seeks to appeal any adverse determination must file an appeal with the Commission within 1 year of the date of the Commission's response.

(c)(1) The Commission will grant or deny the appeal in writing within 20 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays) of the date the appeal is received. If on appeal the adverse determination is upheld, the Commission will notify the requester of the availability of dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services as a voluntary, non-exclusive alternative to litigation and the provisions for judicial review of that determination pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(c).

(2) The Commission will expeditiously consider an appeal of a denial of expedited processing.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 82 FR 12508, Mar. 6, 2017; 84 FR 53057, Oct. 4, 2019]

§ 3006.45 Extension of response time limit.

(a) The Commission may extend the time limit for a response to a request or appeal for up to 10 business days due to unusual circumstances, as specified in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B)(iii). In such a case, the Commission will notify the requester in writing of the unusual circumstance causing the extension and the date by which the Commission estimates that the request can be processed.

(b) If an extension will exceed 10 business days, the Commission will:

(1) Provide the requester with an opportunity to limit the scope of the request or to arrange an alternative timeframe for processing the request or a modified request. The applicable time

limits are not tolled while the Commission waits for a response from the requester under this subsection; and

(2) Make its FOIA Public Liaison available to the requester and apprise the requester of their right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services.

[82 FR 12508, Mar. 6, 2017]

§ 3006.50 Fees—definitions as used in this part.

Commercial use means a request from or on behalf of a person seeking information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester or person on whose behalf the request is made. In determining the applicability of this term, the use to which a requester will put the document is considered first; where reasonable doubt exists as to the use, the Commission may seek clarification before assigning the request to a category.

Direct costs means the expenditures the Commission incurs in searching for, duplicating, and, where applicable, reviewing documents to respond to a request. They include (without limitation) the salary of the employee(s) performing work (the basic pay rate of such employee(s) plus 16 percent to cover benefits).

Duplication means copying the documents necessary to respond to a request. Such copies may be paper, microform, audiovisual, or machine-readable.

Educational institution means a pre-school, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of graduate or undergraduate higher education, an institution of professional education, and an institution of vocational education, which operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

Noncommercial scientific institution means an institution, not operated on a commercial basis (as referenced above), which is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research whose results are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

Representative of the news media means any person or entity that gathers information of potential interest to

a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience. 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 are television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large and publishers of periodicals (but only if such entities qualify as disseminators of “news”) who make their products available for purchase or by subscription or by free distribution to the general public. These examples are not all inclusive and may include alternate media to disseminate news. A freelance journalist shall be regarded as working for a news media entity if the journalist can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that entity (e.g., by a publication contract or prior publication record), whether or not the journalist is actually employed by the entity.

Review means examining documents located in response to a request to determine whether any portion is exempt from disclosure, and processing or preparing documents for release, but not determination of general legal or policy issues regarding application of exemptions.

Search includes all time spent looking for material responsive to a request, including identification of pages or lines within documents. The term covers both manual and computerized searching.

§ 3006.51 Fees—request category.

(a) The level of fee charged depends on the request category.

(1) *Commercial use.* A request appearing to be for commercial use will be charged the full direct costs of searching for, reviewing, and duplicating the records sought.

(2) *Educational and noncommercial scientific institutions.* A request from an educational or noncommercial scientific institution will be charged for the cost of duplication only (excluding charges for the first 100 pages). To be eligible for this category, a requester must show that the request is made under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are not

sought for commercial use but are in furtherance of scholarly (in the case of educational institutions) or scientific (in the case of noncommercial scientific institutions) research.

(3) *News media.* A request from a representative of the news media will be charged the cost of duplication only (excluding charges for the first 100 pages).

(4) *Other requesters.* A request from any other person will be charged the full direct cost of searching for, reviewing, and duplicating records responsive to the request, except that the first 100 pages of duplication and the first 2 hours of search/review will be furnished without charge.

(b) *Privacy Act.* A request by an individual for the individual’s own records in a system of records will be charged fees as provided under the Commission’s Privacy Act regulations in part 3005 of this chapter.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.52 Fees—general provisions.

(a) The Commission may charge search fees even if no records are found or if the records found are exempt from disclosure.

(b) Except in the case of commercial use requesters, the first 100 pages of duplication and the first 2 hours of search time are provided without charge.

(1) A page for these purposes is a letter- or legal-size sheet, or the equivalent amount of information in a medium other than paper copy.

(2) Search time for these purposes refers to manual searching; if the search is performed by computer, the 2 hours provided without charge will be equal to 2 hours’ salary of the person performing the search.

(c) No requester will be charged a fee when the Commission determines that the cost of collecting the fee would equal or exceed the fee itself. In determining whether cost of collection would equal or exceed the fee, the allowance for 2 hours’ search or 100 pages of duplication will be made before comparing the remaining fee and the cost of collection.

(d) Records will be provided without charge or at a reduced charge if disclosure of the information is in the public

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interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(e) No requester will be charged a fee after any search or response which occurs after the applicable time limits as described in §§ 3006.43 and 3006.44, unless:

(1) The Commission extends the time limit for its response due to unusual circumstances, pursuant to § 3006.45(a), and the Commission completes its response within the extension of time provided under that section; or

(2) The Commission extends the time limit for its response due to unusual circumstances and more than 5,000 pages are necessary to respond to the request and the Commission has discussed with the requester how they could effectively limit the scope of the request or made at least three good faith attempts to do so; or

(3) A court has determined that exceptional circumstances exist and excused the Commission from responding by court order.

(f) The Commission may, however, charge fees for review, and in some cases duplication, for a partial grant of a request while it reviews records that may be exempt and may be responsive to the request, so long as the partial grant is made within the applicable time limits.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 82 FR 12508, Mar. 6, 2017; 85 FR 9617, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.53 Fee schedule.

(a) Fees will be calculated as follows:

(1) *Manual search.* At the salary rate (basic pay plus 16 percent) of the employee(s) making the search. Search time may be charged for even if the Commission fails to locate records or if records located are exempt from disclosure.

(2) *Computer search.* At the direct cost of providing the search, including computer search time directly attributable to searching for records responsive to the request runs and employee salary apportionable to the search.

(3) *Review (commercial use).* At the salary rate (basic pay plus 16 percent) of

the employee(s) conducting the review. Charges are imposed only for the review necessary at the initial administrative level to determine the applicability of any exemption, and not for review at the administrative appeal level of an exemption already applied.

(4) *Duplication.* At 10 cents per page for paper copy, which the Commission has found to be the reasonable direct cost thereof. For copies of records prepared by computer the direct cost of production, including employee time, will be charged.

(5) *Additional services.* Postage, insurance, and other additional services that may be arranged for by the requester will be charged at actually incurred cost.

(b) In addition to the fee waiver provisions of § 3006.52(d), fees may be waived at the discretion of the Commission.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 85 FR 9618, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.54 Procedure for assessing and collecting fees.

(a) Advance payment may be required if the requester failed to pay previous bills in a timely fashion or when the fees are likely to exceed \$250.

(1) Where the requester has previously failed to pay within 30 days of the billing date, the Commission may require the requester to pay an advance payment of the estimated fee together with either the past due fees (plus applicable interest) or proof that the past fees were paid.

(2) When advance payment is required, the administrative time limits prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6) (§ 3006.43) begin only after such payment has been received.

(b) Interest at the rate published by the Secretary of the Treasury as prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717 will be charged on unpaid fee bills starting on the 31st day after the bill was sent. Receipt of a fee by the Commission, whether processed or not, will stay the accrual of interest.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 85 FR 9618, Feb. 19, 2020]

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§ 3006.60 Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer.

The Commission designates the General Counsel of the Commission as the Chief FOIA Officer. The Chief FOIA Officer shall be responsible for the administration of and reporting on the Commission's Freedom of Information Act program.

[84 FR 53057, Oct. 4, 2019]

§ 3006.61 Freedom of Information Act Public Liaison.

The Commission designates the Director of the Office of Public Affairs and Government Relations or the individual's designee as the FOIA Public Liaison who shall assist in the resolution of any dispute between a requester and the Commission. The FOIA Public Liaison may be contacted via email at *PRC-PAGR@prc.gov* or telephone at 202-789-6800.

[85 FR 9618, Feb. 19, 2020]

§ 3006.70 Submission of non-public materials by a person other than the Postal Service.

(a) *Overlap with treatment of non-public materials.* Any person who submits materials to the Commission (submitter) that the submitter reasonably believes to be exempt from public disclosure shall follow the procedures described in subpart B of part 3011 of this chapter.

(b) *Notice of request.* Except as provided in §3006.30(d), if a FOIA request seeks materials designated as non-public materials, the Commission will provide the submitter with notice of the request. The Commission may also provide notice when it has reason to believe that materials submitted by a person other than the Postal Service are possibly exempt from disclosure and may fall within the scope of any FOIA request.

(c) *Objections to disclosure.* A submitter may file written objections to the request specifying all grounds for withholding the information under FOIA within seven days of the date of the notice. If the submitter fails to respond to the notice, the submitter will be considered to have no objection, beyond those objections articulated in its application for non-public treatment

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pursuant to §3011.201 of this chapter, to the disclosure of the information.

(d) *Notice of decision.* If, after considering the submitter's objections to disclosure the Commission decides to disclose the information, it will give the submitter written notice of the decision and a brief explanation of the reasons for not sustaining the submitter's objections. The actual disclosure will not be made before 3 days after publication of the Commission's decision.

[74 FR 57256, Nov. 5, 2009, as amended at 83 FR 31281, July 3, 2018; 85 FR 9618, Feb. 19, 2020]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 88 FR 37154, June 7, 2023, §3006.70 was amended by revising paragraph (a), effective July 7, 2023. For the convenience of the user, the revised text is set forth as follows:

§ 3006.70 Submission of non-public materials by a person other than the Postal Service.

(a) *Overlap with treatment of non-public materials.* Any person who submits materials to the Commission (submitter) that the submitter reasonably believes to be exempt from public disclosure shall follow the procedures described in part 3011, subpart B of this chapter, except when the submitter submits materials to the Commission in connection with activities under 39 U.S.C. 407(b)(2)(A).

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PART 3007—COMMISSION MEETINGS

AUTHORITY: 39 U.S.C. 404(d); 503; 504; 3661.

SOURCE: 85 FR 9618, Feb. 19, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3007.100 Public access to Commission meetings.

(a) *Definition.* *Commission meeting* means the deliberations of at least three Commissioners where such deliberations determine or result in the joint conduct or disposition of official Commission business.

(b) *Open Commission meetings.* (1) Commissioners shall not jointly conduct or dispose of agency business other than in accordance with this section. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, every portion of every meeting of the Commission shall be open to public observation.