

## Environmental Protection Agency

## § 16.7

a statement declaring his or her identity and stipulating that he or she understands it is a misdemeanor punishable by fine up to \$5,000 to knowingly and willfully seek or obtain access to records about another individual under false pretenses).

### **§ 16.6 Initial decision on request for access to, or correction or amendment of, records.**

(a) Within 10 working days of receipt of a request, the Agency Privacy Act Officer will send a letter to the requester acknowledging receipt of the request and promptly forward it to the manager of the system of records where the requested record is located with instructions to:

(1) Make a determination whether to permit access to the record, or to make the requested correction or amendment;

(2) Inform the requester of that determination and, if the determination is to deny access to the record, or to not correct or amend it, the reason for that decision and the procedures for appeal.

(b) If the system manager is unable to decide whether to grant a request of access to, or amendment or correction of a record within 20 working days of the Agency's receipt of the request, he or she will inform the requester reasons for the delay, and an estimate of when a decision will be made.

(c) In reviewing a request for the correction or amendment of a record, the system manager will be guided by the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(1) and (e)(5).

(d) A system manager who decides to grant all or any portion of a request to correct or amend a record will inform any person or entity outside EPA that was provided the record of the correction or amendment, and, where there is an accounting of that disclosure, make a note of the action taken in the accounting.

(e) If a request pursuant to § 16.3 for access to a record is in a system of records which is exempted, the records system manager or designee will decide whether any information will nonetheless be made available. If the decision is to deny access, the reason for denial

and the appeal procedure will be given to the requester.

(f) A person whose request for access is initially denied may appeal that denial to EPA's Privacy Act Officer. EPA's General Counsel will decide the appeal within 30 working days. If an appeal concerns a system of records maintained by the Office of Inspector General, the Privacy Act Officer will forward the appeal to the Counsel to the Inspector General who will decide on the appeal in accordance with § 16.7. The Counsel to the Inspector General will carry out all responsibilities with respect to the appeal that are otherwise assigned to EPA's General Counsel under § 16.7.

(g) If the appeal under § 16.7(e)(6) is denied, the requester will be notified of the right to seek judicial review in accordance with subsection (g) of the Privacy Act.

### **§ 16.7 The appeal process.**

(a) An individual whose request for access to, or correction or amendment of a record is initially denied and who wishes to appeal that denial may do so by sending a letter to EPA's Privacy Act Officer within 30 days of the receipt of the initial denial. The appeal must identify and restate the initial request. If an appeal concerns an adverse decision by the Office of Inspector General, the Privacy Act Officer will forward it to the Counsel to the Inspector General, or his or her designee, who will then act on the appeal. The Counsel to the Inspector General, or his or her designee, will carry out all responsibilities with respect to PA appeals that are otherwise assigned to EPA's General Counsel under this section; however, if the Counsel to the Inspector General has signed the initial adverse determination, the General Counsel, or his or her designee, will act on the appeal.

(b) EPA's General Counsel, or his or her designee, will make final decisions on PA appeals within 30 working days from the date on which the appeal is properly received in the Office of General Counsel, unless, for good cause shown, the 30-day period is extended and the requester is notified of the extension in writing. Such extensions

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will be utilized only in exceptional circumstances.

(c) In conducting PA appeals, the General Counsel, or his or her designee, will be guided by the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(1) and (e)(5).

(d) If an appeal is granted in whole or in part, the requester will be notified, in writing, and access to the record will be granted, or the correction or amendment of the record will be made. In all such cases, the Privacy Act Officer will ensure that § 16.7(d) is complied with.

(e) If the General Counsel or the Counsel to the Inspector General decides not to grant all or any portion of an appeal, the requester will be informed:

- (1) Of the decision and its basis;
- (2) Of the requester's right to file a concise statement of reasons for disagreeing with EPA's decision;
- (3) Of the procedures for filing such statement of disagreement;
- (4) That such statements of disagreements will be made available in subsequent disclosures of the record, together with an agency statement (if deemed appropriate) summarizing its refusal;
- (5) That prior recipients of the disputed record will be provided with statements as in paragraph (e)(4) of this section, to the extent that an accounting of disclosures is maintained under 5 U.S.C. 552a(c); and
- (6) Of the requester's right to seek judicial review under 5 U.S.C. 552a(g).

## § 16.8 Special procedures: Medical Records.

Should EPA receive a request for access to medical records (including psychological records) disclosure of which the system manager decides would be harmful to the individual to whom they relate, EPA may refuse to disclose the records directly to the individual and instead offer to transmit them to a physician designated by the individual.

## § 16.9 Fees.

No fees will be charged for providing the first copy of a record or any portion of a record to an individual to whom the record pertains. The fee schedule for reproducing other records

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is the same as that set forth in 40 CFR 21.07.

## § 16.10 Penalties.

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))

## § 16.11 General exemptions.

(a) *Systems of records affected.* (1) EPA–17 OCEFT Criminal Investigative Index and Files.

(2) EPA–40 Inspector General's Operation and Reporting (IGOR) System Investigative Files.

(3) EPA–63 eDiscovery Enterprise Tool Suite.

(4) EPA–79 NEIC Master Tracking System.

(b) *Authority.* Under 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2), the head of any Federal agency may by rule exempt any PA system of records within the agency from certain provisions of the Act, if the system of records is maintained by an agency or component thereof which performs as its principal function any activity pertaining to the enforcement of criminal laws and which consists of:

(1) Information compiled for the purpose of identifying individual criminal offenders and alleged offenders and consisting only of identifying data and notations of arrests, the nature and disposition of criminal charges, sentencing, confinement, release, and parole and probation status;

(2) Information compiled for the purpose of a criminal investigation, including reports of informants and investigators, and associated with an identifiable individual; or

(3) Reports identifiable to an individual compiled at any stage of the process of enforcement of the criminal laws from arrest or indictment through release from supervision.

(c) *Qualification for exemption.* (1) The Agency's system of records, EPA–17 system of records is maintained by the Criminal Investigation Division, Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics, and Training, a component of EPA