

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION FAQs



Frequently asked Questions

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What is Freedom of Information?

The Freedom of Information Act governs access to information held by Government Departments and certain scheduled public bodies. It relates to records which are not routinely available by other means, and specifically guarantees the following statutory rights;

- The right to access records held by Government Departments or other Public bodies, which were created after 21 April 1998. Earlier records must be made available if they are necessary to give a greater understanding of records created after this date.
- The right to access all records relating to personnel information held with regard to clients and all staff records created after 21 April 1995. Access must be consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy.
- The individual has the right to inspect files and to obtain reasons for decision-making processes.
- The individual has the right to have information amended, where it relates to them personally and where it is incomplete, misleading or inaccurate.

Do I need to make a Freedom of Information Request?

- Applicants should consider whether the information which they seek can be generally available or whether they need to make a request for the information under the Freedom of Information Act. The authority publishes a large amount of information regarding its activities through a variety of publications such as its annual report and master plans as well as through the Authority website. As such applicants may not need to use the Freedom of information act to attain the information which they

require. If you are unsure which avenue to take please feel free to contact us.

What is the purpose of the Freedom of Information Act?

The Freedom of Information act seeks to ensure greater openness and transparency in the manner in which public bodies conduct their business. It seeks to establish a framework through which the public can access records and information regarding the workings of public bodies and to generally increase the sense that public bodies are accountable to the public which they serve. In essence it seeks to develop an environment of trust between the public bodies and the public as a whole and to foster a sense of ownership by the public with regard to the manner in which business is conducted.

Are there any exemptions under the Act?

Part III of the Act sets out a series of exemptions designed to protect records relating to core Government activities such as security, defense and international relations as well as parliamentary and court matters. These exemptions also protect third party information of a personal, commercial or confidential nature. In keeping with this the Authority requires that parties submitting information which they deem to be of a sensitive or confidential nature should explicitly state that the information is of this quality and the reasons why it is considered to be such. The applicant is not required to give a reason for their request for information but the Authority must detail reasons for refusal in the event of a request being denied.

How do I make a Freedom of Information request?

In making a request applicants should ensure that;

- The information which they seek is not readily available outside the Freedom of Information Act.
- Requests are made in writing (inclusive of email,) stating that they are being made under the Freedom of Information Act. Application forms can be downloaded directly or alternatively written applications should be addressed to
F.O.I Officer,
Dublin Docklands Development Authority,
52 – 55 Sir John Rogerson’s Quay,
Docklands,
Dublin 2
- Adequate information is provided to enable the Authority to identify the required records. Providing as much information as possible enables the authority to provide the records in an efficient manner and with the greatest degree of accuracy in relation to the specific request.
- Applicants should state the format in which they require the records, i.e. do they wish to inspect the original documentation, do they require copies etc.
- A fee of €15 (€10 for medical card holders) accompanies all requests for non-personal information. If the application is being sent by email, processing will not begin until the adequate fee has been received.

- Where personal information is being requested applicants must provide proof of identity e.g. a birth certificate or passport and one other form of identity, e.g. electricity or telephone bill.

What is the timeframe for response?

All requests will be acknowledged within two weeks of receipt and a decision will normally be made within four weeks. Time frames are to a degree dependant on whether a third party is involved, if this is the case the applicant will be informed appropriately. If the applicant is seeking an internal review they must submit the request within 20 working days of notification of the initial decision. In the event where review is sought by the Commissioner, the applicant must apply within 6 months of notification of the decision by the public body.

What is the appeals procedure?

In certain circumstances, specifically with regard to part III of the Act, the authority may choose to withhold certain records. In this event the applicant has the right to seek an internal review of the decision with the senior F.O.I. officer within the Authority. This action can be taken if the applicant is unhappy with the response received or in the event where the applicant has not received a response within the assigned timeframe.

Requests for internal review should be addressed to;

The Senior F.O.I. Officer

Dublin Docklands Development Authority,

52 – 55 Sir John Rogerson’s Quay,

Docklands,

Dublin 2

Following from this the applicant may choose to seek an additional review by the Information Commissioner. This avenue may be taken if the applicant is unsatisfied with the result of the internal review or in the event where the applicant has not received a response within three weeks.

Requests for review by the Information Commissioner should be addressed to;

**Office of the Information Commissioner,
18 Lower Leeson Street,
Dublin 2**

Following from this the applicant may choose to appeal to the High Court on a point of law.

What is the cost?

Fees are not charged in regard to the retrieval of personal information. Initial requests under section 7 of the act are charged at a standard fee of €15. In regard to requests for general information search and retrieval costs may be charged at an hourly rate of €20.95/hour. Search and retrieval and photocopying charges waived if less than €15. A deposit of 20% will be sought if estimated Search and retrieval costs are over €50.79. Reduced fees will be charged for medical card holders.

Type of Request	Standard Fee	Reduced Fee*
Initial request under Section 7 of the Act	€15	€10
Internal Appeal under Section 7 of the Act	€75	€25
Appeal to Information Commissioner under Section 7	€150	€50
Request for personal information under Section 7	No Charge	No Charge
Application for amendment containing incorrect information	No Charge	No Charge
Application for reasons for a decision affecting individual	No Charge	No Charge

*Reduced fees will be charged for medical card holders.

What are the Publication Requirements under the act?

In accordance with Section 15 of the act the authority must produce a manual detailing the functions and activities of the Authority, the classes of records held, the manner in which this information can be attained, fees charged and information request and appeals procedures. In addition, Section 16 of the act requires that a manual is produced to detail the rules, procedures, practices, guidelines and interpretations used by the Authority in its decision making processes. These manuals are available online and in printed form on request from the offices of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority.

Where can I learn more about Dublin Docklands?

General information about Dublin Docklands can be attained from Docklands website at www.dublindocklands.ie. In addition you may wish to request a copy of the range of guidance publications produced by the Docklands. A full list of these can be attained from the [Authority Website](#). General requests for information should be directed to the Docklands [via email](#), or directly at;

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52-55 Sir John Rogersons Quay

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