

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT



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What is the FOIA?

- Title 5 United States Code Section 552a
- Federal law that establishes the public's right to request existing records from Federal government agencies.





Who can file a FOIA request?



Who can file?

- Any “person”, including:
 - U.S. citizens,
 - foreign nationals,
 - organizations, and universities,
 - businesses, and state and local governments.
- Exception – DoD components which are part of the intelligence community are precluded from releasing records responsive to requests made by any foreign government or international government organization.



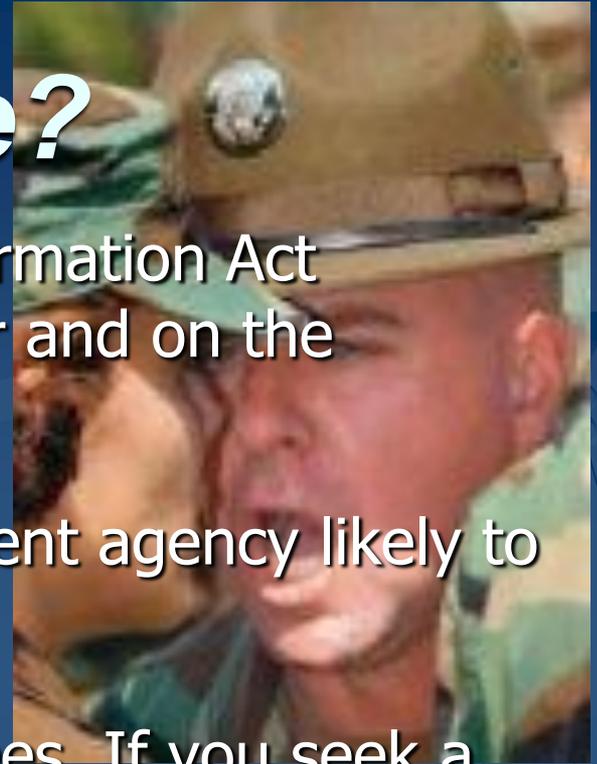
What is a record?

- The product(s) of data compilation, such as all books, papers, maps, and photographs, machine readable materials, including electronic form or format, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics,
- Made or received by an agency of the United States Government under law in connection with the transaction of public business and in possession and control at the time the request is made.



How do I file?

- Label your request “Freedom of Information Act Request,” preferably within the letter and on the envelope
- Address the request to the Government agency likely to have the information you seek
- State willingness to pay applicable fees. If you seek a fee waiver, provide a justification.
- Describe the specific records you are requesting in enough detail so that they can be located with a reasonable amount of effort.



What are the FOIA exemptions?

- Records (or portions of records) will be disclosed unless that disclosure harms an interest protected by a FOIA exemption.
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- The nine FOIA exemptions are cited in the Act as 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(1) through (b)(9):





Questions?

