How will I be advised of the agency's decision?

The agency must give you a written **notice of decision**. If you are refused access or only given partial access to the documents you applied for, the agency has to give details and reasons to explain why particular documents or parts of documents cannot be released.

If you have requested an amendment to your personal information the agency must also give you written notice of its decision.

Can I ask for a review of the agency's decision?

Yes. You will be advised of your rights of internal and external review in the decision sent to you by the agency. There are no charges for the conduct of reviews.

An Internal Review by the agency is available in the first instance. When the agency advises you of the outcome of the review, you will then be advised of your right and the procedure to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner for an External Review of the agency's decision.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

Further Information

Release of Information Service
East Metropolitan Health Service
Royal Perth Bentley Mount Lawley Group
Armadale Kalamunda Group
GPO Box X2213, Perth, WA, 6847

Telephone: (08) 9224 7023
Email: EMHS.FOI@health.wa.gov.au

Health Information Services
St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospitals
PO Box 1254, Midland, WA, 6936

Telephone: (08) 9462 5250
Email: MI.ROI@sjog.org.au

East Metropolitan Health Service

emhs.health.wa.gov.au

CONSUMER REVIEWED

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Government of **Western Australia**
East Metropolitan Health Service

Freedom of Information



emhs.health.wa.gov.au

Introduction

The Western Australian Freedom of Information Act 1992 (the FOI Act) gives you the right to apply for access to documents held by State public sector agencies which include: government departments; local authorities; statutory authorities; and ministers.

Agencies are required to assist the public with obtaining access to documents at the lowest reasonable cost, and to ensure that personal information held is accurate, complete, up-to-date and not misleading. Your right to apply is not affected by any reasons you have for wishing to obtain access, or the agency's belief as to what your reasons are for applying.

How do I make a Freedom of Information application?

The application must:

- be in writing
- give enough detail to identify the requested documents; or if you apply for an amendment of personal information about yourself you must provide details to show how or why the agency's records are inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading
- give an Australian address, and where possible, a contact telephone number
- include a copy of your current photo identification that includes your signature
- be lodged at the office of the agency that you expect would hold the documents, together with any application fee payable.



Each agency has a person who will coordinate the processing of your application. In the larger organisations, this function is often titled "FOI Coordinator".

What kind of information can I request?

The FOI Act gives every person the right to seek access to documents held by government agencies. Examples of documents that may be accessed under FOI include medical records, reports, policies/guidelines and security footage.

Are there any costs involved?

No fees or charges apply for **personal information** or amendment of personal information about yourself such as medical records or details of employment.

Applications for other documents (i.e. which are **non-personal** in nature) require a **$30 application fee** to be paid when the application is lodged, and there may be other charges imposed by the agency as per the FOI Act.

How long does the agency have to respond to my request?

Once a government agency receives a valid application from you, it has a maximum of 45 calendar days to make a decision. The average time taken by agencies is usually less than this permitted period.

The FOI Act requires the agency to help you with your application if you are having difficulty defining the documents you are seeking. The agency may describe the kinds of documents and records kept to help you narrow the scope of your application. By reducing the scope of your application it will reduce the work for the agency. It will also ensure that the work involved for the agency is reasonable. An agency may refuse to deal with a large request.

Will the agency give me access to all the documents I asked for?

There are 15 exemptions under the Act. Some documents which protect essential public interests may be exempt. Personal information about other people or the commercial or business affairs of others are among those documents which may not be released.

An edited copy of a document may be provided to you if it contains some information considered to be exempt.