

# Office of Public Works

## Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 and (Amendment) Act 2003

### *What is Freedom of Information?*

The Freedom of Information Act, 1997 commenced on 21 April 1998 and the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act came into force on 11 April 2003. This Act gives you the right to access records held by Government Departments and certain public bodies. You do not have to give a reason as to why you want to see any records. The Government Department or body must give you an explanation if you are not given what you ask for. A decision on your application must normally be made within 4 weeks.

### *What can I ask for?*

You can ask for the following records held by Government Departments or certain public bodies:

- Any records relating to you personally, whenever created
- All other records created after 21 April, 1998
- A "record" can be a paper document, information held on computer, printouts, maps, plans, microfilm, microfiche, audio-visual material, etc.

### *Do I have to pay for information under FOI?*

There are two types of charges that apply under the Freedom of Information Act:

- **Fees that accompany a request for a record:**

A fee of €15 must accompany a request for records other than records containing only personal information relating to you. A reduced fee of €10 applies in relation to such a request if you are a medical cardholder. Neither fee applies if the request is for personal information relating to you. If claiming a reduced application fee, the request must also be accompanied by

- The Medical Card registration number
- The name of the issuing Health Board
- Your consent to the verification of these details with that Health Board.

- **Fees/deposits in relation to the cost of search and retrieval and copying of records released:**

You can also be charged for the time spent finding records that are to be given to you, and for any photocopying costs incurred by the public body in providing material to you. Such costs are very unlikely to arise in the case of personal information. You cannot be charged for the time spent on deciding whether or not to grant your request.

### ***Can I appeal against the decision?***

**Yes.**

- If you are not satisfied with the decision on an FOI request, you may ask the Department or body for an "internal review" of the decision. A request for an internal review has to be made within 20 working days of notification of initial decision. A more senior officer will review your application. You will be told the result of this review within 3 weeks.
- If you are not satisfied with the decision on "internal review" or if you do not receive a reply (a non-reply will be deemed as a refusal), you may appeal to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

### ***Is there a charge for appealing a decision of a public body?***

- A fee of €75 must accompany most applications for internal review of a decision of a public body. A reduced fee of €25 applies if you are a medical cardholder. There is no fee for internal review applications concerning only personal information relating to oneself or in relation to a decision to impose a fee or deposit.
- A fee of €150 must accompany most applications for review by the Information Commissioner. A reduced fee of €50 applies if you are covered by a medical card or in relation to a review concerning certain third party information. There is no fee for review applications concerning only personal information relating to oneself or in relation to decisions to impose fees or deposits.

### ***For Further Information***

Further information on Freedom of Information, including a full list of bodies covered by the Act, together with addresses and contact numbers, is available at <http://www.foi.gov.ie>. The Freedom of Information Act 1997 and the Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act 2003 are available from the Government Publications Sales Office, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. For further information concerning FOI requests to the Office of Public Works, you may contact Ms. Adrienne O'Driscoll (ph.046 9426124) or Ms. Joan Murphy (ph. 046 9426125).

*Please use BLOCK letters*

### DETAILS OF APPLICANT

**Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number(s):**

**Business:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Information

Before you are given access to personal information relating to yourself, you may be asked to provide proof of your identity i.e. Birth Certificate, Driving Licence, Passport or other form of identity.

### Form of Access

My preferred form of access is:

1. To receive copies of the records by post
2. Other\_\_\_ Please specify

### DETAILS OF REQUEST

In accordance with Section 7 of the FOI Act, 1997 I request access to records, which are:

*(Please tick as appropriate)*

1. Personal
2. Non-Personal

(In the space provided below ***please describe the records as fully as you can***, as this will assist the OPW's FOI Unit in dealing with your application. If you are requesting personal information, please state precisely in whose name those records are held. You will not normally be given access to personal information of another person unless you have obtained the written consent of that person. ***If you require more space to complete your description of the records please attach a separate page.***)

If you are submitting a non-personal FOI request, an up-front fee of €15.00 or a reduced fee of €10.00 if you are a medical cardholder must accompany your request. Your request will not be processed without an up-front fee.

If claiming a reduced application fee, the request must also be accompanied by

- The Medical Card registration number
- The name of the issuing Health Board
- Your consent to the verification of these details with that Health Board.

I request the following records:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your application should be addressed to:**

Freedom of Information Unit,  
Office of Public Works,  
Jonathan Swift Street,  
Trim,  
Co. Meath.  
Phone: 046 9426124/6125  
Fax: 046 9438459  
E-mail: [foiunit@opw.ie](mailto:foiunit@opw.ie)

If you require any assistance in completing this form please contact the above Unit. The Unit is also available to provide assistance to persons with a disability to exercise their rights under the FOI Act; e.g. accepting oral requests from requesters who are unable to read, print and/or write due to their disability, enabling the requester to inspect or have records explained to him or her.

