

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (GENERAL) REGULATIONS, 2026

Arrangement of Regulations

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, 2017
(NO. 1 OF 2017)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (GENERAL) REGULATIONS, 2026

The Minister, in exercise of the powers conferred under section 57 of the Freedom of Information Act, 2017, makes the following Regulations —

PART I - PRELIMINARY

1. Citation.

These Regulations may be cited as the Freedom of Information (General) Regulations, 2026.

2. Interpretation.

In these Regulations —

“**Act**” means the Freedom of Information Act, 2017;

“**chief officer**” has the meaning assigned under section 2 of the Act;

“**electronic register**” means the electronic system used by an information manager to keep a record and status update of applications for information;

“**format medium**” means the form in which a record has been requested;

“**information manager**” means the person appointed under section 46 of the Act;

“**relevant filing system**” means the filing system of a public authority.

PART II - RIGHT OF ACCESS

3. Application for access to record.

(1) An application made under section 7(1) of the Act for access to a record shall —

- (a) be in the form as set out in the Second Schedule; and
- (b) accompanied by a copy of a government issued identification such as a driver's licence, national insurance card, valid passport or voters card.

(2) Upon the receipt of an application, the information manager shall —

- (a) record —
 - (i) the type of government issued identification and the identification number,
 - (ii) the format medium;
- (b) assign a reference number to the application;
- (c) record the date of receipt of the application; and
- (d) any other information that the information manager considers necessary.

- (3) An application referred to under paragraph (1), shall —
 - (a) be submitted through the online system;
 - (b) be delivered to the address of the information manager;
 - (c) if sent by electronic mail, be sent to an electronic address specified by the public authority or information manager; or
 - (d) be sent in any other manner as determined by the information manager.
- (4) Where an applicant is unable to complete a written application, the information manager shall assist in the completion of the application form.
- (5) The information manager shall record and store the information from the application referred to under paragraph (1), in the electronic register.

4. Acknowledgement of receipt of application.

- (1) An officer in a public authority to whom an application is given or transmitted shall accept it and pass it to the information manager as soon as practicable but not later than three working days from the date of receipt.
- (2) Within ten days after the date of receipt of an application that meets the requirements under section 7(2) of the Act, the information manager shall send the applicant a letter of acknowledgement as set out in the First Schedule.

5. Provision of access.

- (1) An authenticated copy of a record listed in the Act shall be provided to the applicant by the information manager as soon as practicable but no later than fourteen days after the date of payment of any applicable fees.
- (2) Where a person is given access to a record or part thereof, the information manager may require that the person be given —
 - (a) an opportunity to examine the record or part thereof, if the record or part thereof is —
 - (i) so lengthy that reproduction of the record or part thereof may unreasonably interfere with the operations of the public authority,
 - (ii) in a form that does not readily lend itself to reproduction, or
 - (iii) prohibited by or under an Act of Parliament from being copied; and
 - (b) a copy of the record or part thereof, if the record or part thereof —
 - (i) forms a disclosable part of a record for which disclosure may otherwise be refused under the Act and from which it cannot reasonably be severed for examination, or
 - (ii) is in a form that does not readily lend itself to examination.
- (3) Where access to a record is given in the form of an opportunity to examine the record, the information manager shall —
 - (a) provide reasonable facilities for the examination;
 - (b) set a time for the examination that is convenient for the public authority and the applicant; and
 - (c) ensure that the applicant is supervised at all times during the examination.

6. Location of record.

- (1) An information manager shall take reasonable efforts to locate a record that is the subject of an application for access.
- (2) Where an information manager is unable to locate the record, the information manager shall make a record of the efforts in the electronic register.

7. Access to records during working hours.

The preparation of records by a public authority for the purpose of granting access and the inspection, viewing or listening to or collection of copies of records shall be done during the working hours of the public authority unless otherwise authorised by the chief officer.

8. Transfer of request.

Where an application is transferred to another public authority, the information manager shall —

- (a) within ten days, notify the applicant of the transfer; and
- (b) provide the applicant with the contact information of the public authority where the application was transferred and the information manager of that authority.

9. Withdrawal of application.

An application shall be deemed to have been withdrawn, if the applicant fails within thirty days of receipt of the notification of fees —

- (a) to respond to the notice;
- (b) to set an appointment for inspection; or
- (c) to present himself at the public authority to receive copies of the record.

10. Unreasonable and substantial diversion of resources.

- (1) Before a public authority makes a decision to refuse access pursuant to section 9(c) of the Act, and on the basis that the request would unreasonably and substantially divert the public authority's resources, the information manager shall notify the applicant in writing —
 - (a) of the reasons for the proposed refusal; and
 - (b) ask the applicant to [narrow] the request.
- (2) The written notification sent under paragraph (1), immediately suspends the thirty-day period referred to under section 7(4) of the Act, until the date when the applicant agrees to [narrow] the request to such extent as may be agreed by the public authority.

PART III - INTERNAL REVIEW

11. Procedure of Internal Review.

- (1) An application for internal review shall —

- (a) for exempt records under sections 17, 18 or 20 of the Act, be made to, and conducted by, the Minister; and
 - (b) for any other matter, be made to, and conducted by, the chief officer.
- (2) The Minister or chief officer who has direct or indirect interests in an internal review matter shall disclose the nature of such interest and shall not participate in the internal review or any question relating to the matter.
- (3) An applicant who is not satisfied with the decision of an internal review made under paragraph (1), may make an appeal to the Information Commissioner.
- (4) An applicant who is not satisfied with the decision or Order of the Information Commissioner may make an appeal to the Supreme Court.

PART IV - INFORMATION MANAGER

12. Functions of information managers.

The functions of the information manager are to —

- (a) ensure persons who are applying for access to personal information prove their identity;
- (b) conduct interviews with applicants to ensure that the appropriate records are located;
- (c) ensure that applicants are fully informed of the status of their applications;
- (d) inform applicants when it is known that a record is already published and if requested provide information as to where the information can be accessed or provide access to that information;
- (e) monitor the inspection of records;
- (f) make a record of all applications for access as required by these Regulations and maintain an electronic register for the public authority of all applications granted;
- (g) coordinate throughout the public authority the information required to be published under section 5 of the Act;
- (h) transfer applications to other public authorities after consultation with the appropriate information manager on the functions and duties of the public authority and the existence or otherwise of the records required by the applicant in that public authority;
- (i) assist applicants who —
 - (i) has a mental illness,
 - (ii) has a learning disability,
 - (iii) is elderly,
 - (iv) is disabled, or
 - (v) is unable to read or write English.
- (j) authenticate copies of records in the manner authorised by the Attorney-General in accordance with section 10(4) of the Act; and

- (k) examine records to which access has been applied for to determine whether the records shall not be released in the public interest.

13. Delegation of functions.

- (1) An information manager may delegate any of his responsibilities as he considers necessary but shall remain accountable for the discharge of such responsibilities.
- (2) Any complaint against the information manager in relation to the service provided by the information manager that is not a matter which is subject to internal review, shall be referred to the chief officer of the public authority.

14. Shared information manager.

A public authority may agree with one or more other public authorities to appoint one information manager.

15. Register.

- (1) The information manager shall keep a register of applications in electronic form.
- (2) The register shall include —
 - (a) an application or reference number;
 - (b) the name of the applicant;
 - (c) the date of the application or a subsequent date;
 - (d) a summary of the applicant's request;
 - (e) the date the notification was sent to the applicant;
 - (f) a summary of the information provided;
 - (g) where the application was refused, the reasons for the refusal; and
 - (h) whether an appeal was filed and the outcome of the appeal.

16. Freedom of Information Unit.

- (1) The Freedom of Information Unit is established in accordance with section 33 of the Act.
- (2) The responsibilities of the Freedom of Information Unit are to —
 - (a) monitor the Freedom of Information Unit National Implementation Plan;
 - (b) conduct comprehensive training of the public sector;
 - (c) deliver ongoing presentations and briefings for public bodies and external stakeholders;
 - (d) provide general advice on interpretation of the law and areas of common concern for public bodies;
 - (e) identify and make recommendations on shortcomings in implementation;
 - (f) facilitate preparation of a Freedom of Information Unit Users' Manual and other guidance materials for public bodies;
 - (g) develop and implement, public education and awareness campaigns;
 - (h) hold public forums to obtain feedback on the freedom of information implementation;

- (i) consult and coordinate with information managers from different public authorities;
 - (j) collect and analyze the statistics relating to the Freedom of Information Unit for the purposes of reporting to the office of the Information Commissioner;
 - (k) provide secretariat support to the Freedom of Information Unit Steering Committee (referred to as “Steering Committee” or “Committee”) which includes —
 - (i) preparing and circulating agenda and relevant documents for meetings of the Committee, and
 - (ii) taking minutes of meetings of the Committee and circulating the minutes to the members of the Committee within two weeks of each meeting; and
 - (l) coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the decisions of the Committee.
- (3) The functions of the Steering Committee are to —
- (a) track and monitor progress under the Freedom of Information Unit National Implementation Plan and ensure achievement of milestones under the plan;
 - (b) identify implementation challenges of specific agencies and recommend solutions to address them;
 - (c) facilitate the development of regulations and the formulation of prescribed forms;
 - (d) review laws inconsistent with the Act and recommend necessary reforms;
 - (e) monitor and make proposals for sound record management practices in public authorities;
 - (f) identify and evaluate an appropriate information technology system for freedom of information or facilitate the creation of [suitable] software for monitoring and tracking requests;
 - (g) audit and make proposals for the upgrade of government websites to enable the provision of information in electronic formats by public authorities;
 - (h) develop a strategy for comprehensive training and awareness of freedom of information across the public sector;
 - (i) develop a communication strategy to increase public awareness and education campaigns; and
 - (j) seek input from non-governmental organizations, members of the media, the private sector and the general public on concerns, viewpoints and needs related to freedom of information and assistance with public awareness campaigns.

FIRST SCHEDULE

(regulation 4)

LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dear [Name]

Re: Acknowledgement Letter for -----

Reference No.

This letter is to acknowledge the receipt of your application dated [insert date of application]. Your application was received on [insert date of receipt].

Your letter has been forwarded to the respective department and your request shall be processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, 2017.

The public authority will undertake the necessary research in order to respond to your request within thirty days. You will be duly informed regarding the progress of your request.

Please quote the reference number above in any future correspondence. Due to the volume and nature of requests, the public authority is unable to respond to any correspondence concerning on-going applications without the reference number.

If you have any queries, please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Information Manager

[Name, address, e-mail address and telephone number]

SECOND SCHEDULE

(regulation 3)

APPLICATION FORM**1. Application made to: (name of Public Authority)**

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2. Details of Applicant:

☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ Miss. ☐ Mr.	
Surname:	Given Name:
Middle Name:	Business Address:
Home Phone:	Work Phone:
Email:	Mobile Phone:
Mailing Address:	Fax:

3. The record(s) I request are: (please attach additional pages if necessary)

Note: Please state all information available to you which will assist us in filling your request quickly. For example, if known, state the name or type of document; or subject-matter to which it relates; or the period and/or geographic area to which the information relates, any relevant date, or any other identification of the document.

1	
2	
3	

4. Do you wish for your request to be expedited?

☐ Yes (please include explanation below)	☐ No

5. I would like to receive the copy(ies) in the following format:

☐ Photocopy	☐ Electronic mail (e-mail)
☐ Transcript	☐ USB flash drive

☐ Other (<i>please specify</i>)	
Number of copies:	

6. How would you like to receive the record(s)?

<i>Note: If provision of copies in the requested format is unavailable, an alternative format, as may be agreed between the parties, will be made available, payment will be required before copies are made</i>		
I want physical copies of the record (s) to be:		
☐ Delivered ☐ Available for pick up		☐ I want to insert/view/listen to the record(s) ☐ I want to have the record(s) emailed
SIGNATURE:		DATE:
<i>INTERNAL USE ONLY</i>		
Date Received:	Reference No:	Verification of Identity: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Type of Identification:		Identification No:

Made this day of , 2026.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL