

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-603
AUGUST 30, 2022**

**Administration and Management
External Inquiries/Internal Audits, NWSPD-1-6**

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PROCEDURES

NOTICE: This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>.

OPR: W/CFO2 (E. DaSilva)
Type of Issuance: Routine

Certified by: W/CFO2 (L. Love)

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 1-603, *Freedom of Information Act Procedures*, dated October 31, 2016. The following content changes were made:

- Section 1: Added language to reference Appendix “A”.
- Section 2: Removed individual name and telephone number.
- Section 2.1: Added reference to NAO and removed language redundancies.
- Section 2.2: Subsection added to reference the AA/DAA role.
- Section 2.3: Removed the individual name; added item “b”.
- Section 2.4: Removed the individual name and telephone number. Added reference to NAO and removed language redundancies.
- Section 2.5: Included reference to NAO and added item “c”.

Other changes:

- To align with NAO 205-14, the terms “FOIAonline System”, and “NWS FOIA Liaison” were made consistent throughout the document.
- Editorial changes made to ensure clear and concise policy guidance and improve readability.
- Appendix A: Updated website links as appropriate.
- Appendix B: Updated list of Points of Contact as appropriate.
- Appendix C: Graphically reformatted the flowchart.

COOLEY.KEVIN.CHRI
STOPHER.1200463826

Digitally signed by
COOLEY,KEVIN.CHRISTOPHER.1
200463826
Date: 2022.08.16 13:35:27 -04'00' 08/16/2022

Kevin Cooley
(Acting) Chief Financial Officer/
Chief Administrative Officer

Date

Freedom of Information Act Procedures

Table of Contents:	Page
1. Purpose.....	2
2. Procedures and Responsibilities	2
2.1 NOAA FOIA Officer.....	2
2.2 NWS Assistant Administrator/Deputy Assistant Administrator	3
2.3 NWS FOIA Officer	3
2.4 NWS FOIA Liaison.....	3
2.5 NWS FOIA Action Offices/Points of Contact (POCs).....	4
3. FOIA Request for Agency Records Originating From or Involving The White House or Congress.....	4

Appendices

A. Useful FOIA Websites	A-1
B. NWS Points of Contact.....	B-1
C. Diagram of FOIA Process	C-1

1. Purpose

This procedural directive provides guidance to all National Weather Service (NWS) personnel for processing requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrative Order 205-14 (see Appendix A, Link 2). Appendix A provides a list of links to FOIA resources (websites, policies, training etc.). Appendix B lists the NWS FOIA Points of Contact. Appendix C illustrates the FOIA process.

2. Procedures and Responsibilities

If a FOIA requests is received directly at an NWS office, the office will immediately contact the NWS FOIA Liaison in the Management and Organization Division of the NWS Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (W/CFO2). In turn, the NWS FOIA Liaison will forward the request to the NOAA FOIA Officer for submission into the FOIAonline System (See Appendix A, Link 6).

2.1. NOAA FOIA Officer

The NOAA FOIA Officer is responsible for:

- a. Forwarding FOIA requests pertaining to NWS to the NWS FOIA Liaison, via the FOIAonline System.

- b. Ensuring replies comply with the response timeframes established by the FOIA procedural requirements.
- c. Other duties as described in the NAO 205-14, Section 5.1, 5.2 and 6.1.

2.2 NWS Assistant Administrator (AA)/Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA)

The NWS AA or the DAA is responsible for:

- a. The duties described in the NAO 205-14, Section 5.3.

2.3 NWS FOIA Officer

The NWS FOIA Officer (CFO/CAO, Director, Management and Organization Division) will:

- a. Sign FOIA response letters when no information is withheld.
- b. Sign the response portion of the Tasker Memorandum.

2.4 NWS FOIA Liaison

In addition to the duties described in the NAO 205-14, Sections 5.4 and 6.2, the NWS FOIA Liaison will:

- a. Notify the NOAA FOIA Officer if a FOIA request was misdirected or incorrectly assigned to NWS.
- b. Maintain a log of FOIA requests to include:
 - (1) NOAA FOIAonline assignment number.
 - (2) Name of requester, receipt date, due date.
 - (3) NWS person/office assigned the FOIA action.
 - (4) A brief description of the FOIA request.
- c. If the scope of the information requested is broad, contact the requester for clarification and/or to narrow the scope of the request.
- d. Coordinate with NOAA General Counsel to determine what information is releasable and what information should be withheld under the FOIA exemptions, and redirect information covered by the Privacy Act.
- e. Notify the NOAA FOIA Officer if a partial or full denial is recommended:
 - (1) Before initial denial is issued, request the action-office to provide recommendation on withholding.
 - (2) Ensure recommendation identify what action-office considers discretionary disclosure and explains why such disclosure is not appropriate.
 - (3) Ensure recommendation documents the concurrences obtained.
 - (4) Present questions about proposed denials to NOAA FOIA Officer.
- f. Ensure denials are signed by the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Weather Services or the Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.
- g. Submit completed response letter and any attachments to the NOAA FOIA Officer, via FOIAonline.

- h. Ensure checks or money orders received for processing FOIA requests are made payable to the United States Treasury, identified by FOIA number, and sent to the NOAA FOIA Officer.
- i. Provide input to the NOAA FOIA Officer for “FOIA Annual Report to Congress.”
- j. Provide copies of records to the NOAA FOIA Officer when three or more requests are received for the same information.
- k. Coordinate and ask for advice from General Counsel on non-routine or sensitive FOIA requests.
- l. In the event of a FOIA appeal, provide the DOC or NOAA FOIA Officer with a copy of records released and redacted/withheld citing which exemptions apply for withholding information.

2.5 NWS FOIA Action Offices/Points of Contact

In addition to the duties described in the NAO 205-14, Section 5.5, NWS FOIA Action Offices/Points of Contact will ensure their offices complete the following:

- a. Search for records and required information to respond to FOIA requests.
- b. Provide the NWS FOIA Liaison with good-faith fee estimate information (estimate of how many search hours at what grade/step, and how many pages of responsive records are anticipated).
- c. Provide the NWS FOIA Liaison with recommendation on discretionary disclosure and explain why such disclosure is not appropriate.
- d. Respond to assigned FOIA requests in a manner allowing the NWS FOIA Liaison to honor the required response times.
- e. Advise the NWS FOIA Liaison if an extension to the suspense date is needed.
- f. Notify the NWS FOIA Liaison if a FOIA request was misdirected or incorrectly assigned.

3. FOIA Requests for Agency Records Originating From or Involving The White House or Congress

- a. FOIA requests received by NWS directly from the originator for agency records that originated in or involve the White House will be forwarded to the NOAA FOIA Officer by the NWS FOIA Liaison to assign to NWS or the appropriate line office.
- b. FOIA requests from a Congressional Office will be processed as a regular FOIA request. If it is a FOIA request from a member of Congress on behalf of a Congressional Committee, it will be processed through Legislative Affairs.

APPENDIX A

USEFUL FOIA WEBSITES

1. NOAA FOIA Home Page (Overview/Filing a FOIA Request):
 - <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/information-technology/freedom-of-information-act>
2. NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 205-14:
 - <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/administration/nao-205-14-freedom-of-information-act>
3. List of FOIA Exemptions:
 - <http://www.noaa.gov/foia-exemptions>
4. FOIA Reading Room (List and links to FOIA Policies):
 - <http://www.noaa.gov/foia-reading-room>
5. Department of Justice FOIA Resources Homepage:
 - <https://www.justice.gov/oip/foia-resources>
6. FOIAonline Website:
 - <https://www.foiaonline.gov/foiaonline/action/public/home>
7. NOAA FOIA Program (Training and Tutorials):
 - <https://sites.google.com/a/noaa.gov/foia/training-and-tutorials>

APPENDIX B

NWS FOIA Points of Contact

(As of June 2022)

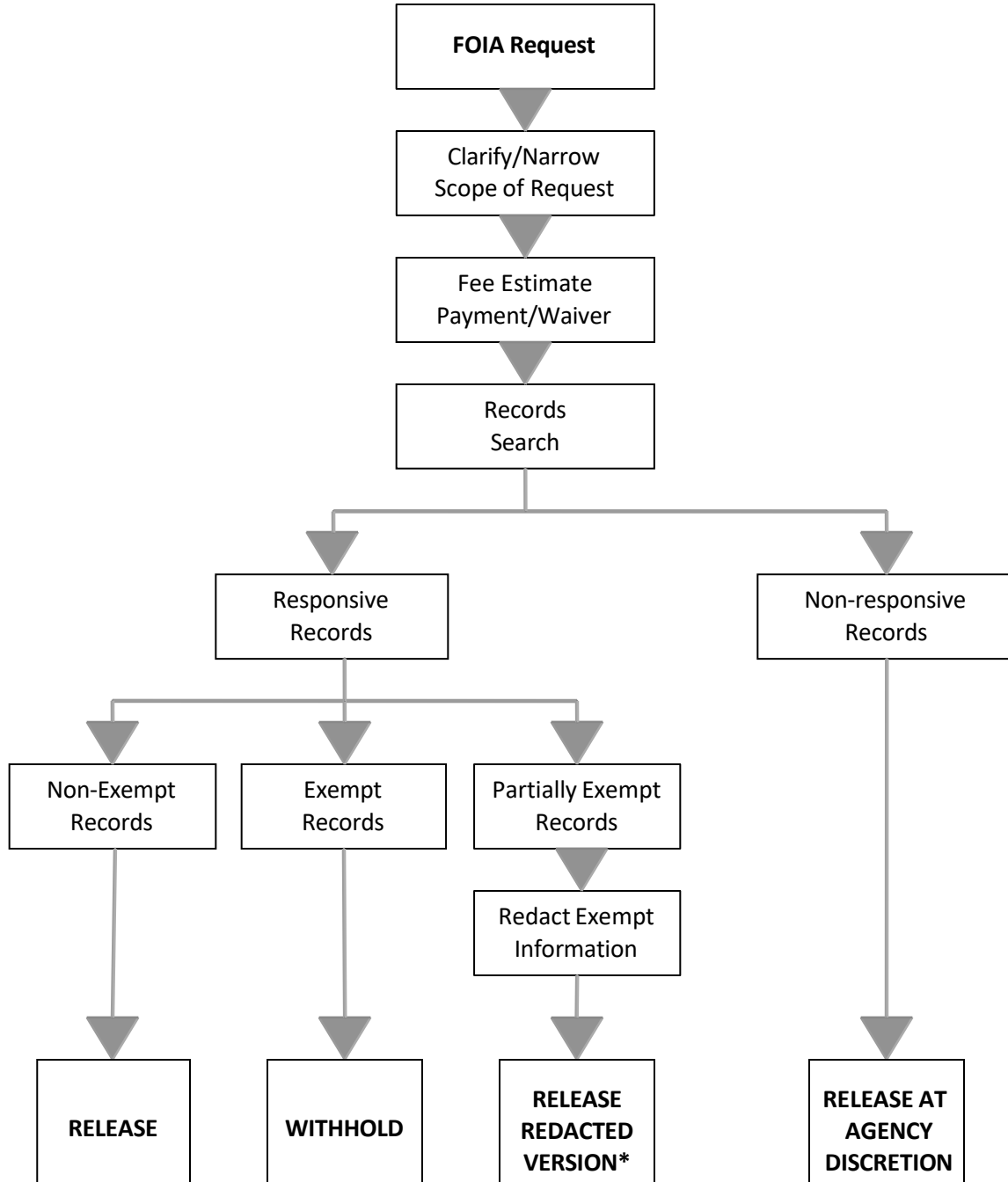
ORGANIZATION	POC (ALTERNATE)	PHONE NUMBER
W/AFSO	Allison Allen	(301) 427-9848
W/CP	David Michaud	(301) 427-9787
W/DISS	Michelle Mainelli	(301) 427-9760
W/NCEP	Mike Farrar	(301) 683-1315
W/OWP	Tom Graziano	(301) 427-6904
W/OBS	Ajay Mehta	(301) 427-9778
W/OF	Tim Greten	(301) 427-9677
W/OSTI	Steve Smith	(301) 427-9495
W/AR	Scott Lindsey	(907) 271-5126
W/CR	Ken Harding	(816) 268-3131
W/ER	Jason Tuell	(631) 244-0101
W/PR	Ray Tanabe	(808) 725-6000
W/SR	Mike Coyne	(817) 978-1000
W/WR	Grant Cooper	(801) 524-6295

Up-to-date list of FOIA Points of Contact: NWS Organization Structure:

<https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/nws-insider/about-nws/org-chart>

APPENDIX C

Diagram of FOIA Process



* Requestor may appeal.