

[AD115001Z](#)

Making Public Records Available

This policy applies to all departments.

We define **public record** as any writing which contains information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function.

We define **writing** as any form of communication or representation, including documents, pictures, computer tapes or disks, and sound recordings.

We define **incidental** Public Records requests as requests where state or federal law is cited and the records are readily available.

1. Whatcom County Complies with the Public Records Act ([RCW 42.56](#)).


2. County Executive Designates Public Records Officer

The County Executive will designate a Public Records Officer to oversee compliance.

3. Whatcom County Makes Public Records Available Upon Request

The Public Records Officer receives requests on [County form](#) , by letter, email or orally. He or she documents oral requests.

Whatcom County makes public records available for inspection and access subject to the following conditions:

- Dated request includes name, address, contact information of requester. ([FRM AD415001A](#) )
- Description of public records adequate to locate the records.
- Inspection and copying occurs on county premises during normal business hours.
- Public records may not be removed, disassembled, or altered.
- We will not disclose lists of individuals for commercial purposes.
- For large requests, copies may be provided in installments.

Whatcom County provides space to inspect records.

Whatcom County makes records available during normal business hours, excluding holidays.

4. Whatcom County Charges for Copies and Mailing

Whatcom County follows the Unified Fee Schedule.

Black & white copies:	\$0.15 per page
Mailing:	Actual cost of postage & container
Other media:	Actual cost of production

Whatcom County may require a deposit of up to 10% for the estimated costs of copying all the records selected by the requester and may require full payment before providing the records.

Whatcom County will not charge for retrieval or inspection of public records.

The Department Head will establish and follow rules for records management in their department. The Department Head will designate a contact for Public Record Requests.

The Department Head or designee will respond to incidental requests and maintain a log of such requests and submit it quarterly to the Public Records Officer.



6. Public Records Officer Tracks and Responds to Requests

The Public Records Officer will:

- Track all requests for public records.
- Respond to all requests within five business days.
- Coordinate review of records.
- Close complete, withdrawn or abandoned requests.

6. Public Records Officer Exempts Appropriate Records from Disclosure

The Public Records Officer will apply exemptions from the law:

1. Documents exempted by Public Records Act ([REF AD515001A](#) )
2. Documents exempted by other statutes ([REF AD515001B](#) )
3. If the Public Records Officer withholds a record, he or she will state the specific exemption and explain why the record or a portion of the record is being withheld.

7. Public Records Officer Protects the Rights of Others

If requested records contain information that may affect rights of others, before providing the records, the Public Records Officer will give notice and allow time for action by the other parties.

8. Public Records Officer Receives Petitions of Denial of Public Records

The Public Records Officer shall receive and promptly provide the petition and any other relevant information to the Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney.

9. Prosecuting Attorney Reviews Petitions of Denial of Public Records

Within two business days, the Prosecuting Attorney or designee will consider the petition and affirm or reverse the denial.

Once published, approved policies and procedures are in force. A.S. Managers will introduce policies and procedures in writing and request input from users. Ninety days after initial publication A.S. Managers will evaluate results and may recommend changes to the A.S. Director. (This policy revised and posted 6/30/06).

Whatcom County Administrative Policy - AD115001Z Making Public Records Available

Topic: [Public Records](#)

Effective Date: 7/1/06

Approved by: Dewey Desler

Cancels: AD157001Z

See Procedures:

AD215001A - [Responding to Requests for Disclosure of Public Records](#)

See Related Form and References:

[AD415001A](#), [AD515001A](#), [AD515001B](#), [AD515001C](#)