

STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

61.01.02.M0.01 Public Information

Approved December 3, 2008

Revised October 11, 2011

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Standard Administrative Procedure Statement

The purpose of the SAP is to assist Texas A&M employees with compliance in regard to the Texas Public Information Act and to provide procedures to be used for the management of public information requests and compilation of responses.

Definitions

The terms “Public Information” and “Open Records” are used simultaneously.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Texas Public Information Act designates the Chief Executive Officer of each System member as the Public Information Officer (PIO). The President of Texas A&M University has delegated these responsibilities to the Associate Vice President for University Risk and Compliance (AVP). The AVP has delegated PIO responsibilities to the Director of Open Records. The Public Information Administrator in Open Records is designated as the PIO backup.
- 1.2 The PIO will distribute public information requests to the appropriate Public Information Liaison Coordinator (as defined in Section 2.2) for the purpose of gathering responsive information and the PIO will notify the Public Information Liaison Coordinator on final responses to requestors, as appropriate.
- 1.3 The PIO will notify the Office of General Counsel (OGC) on any requests that may have public relations significance and OGC will notify the Chancellor of these requests as appropriate. OGC has direct access to all requests within the Public Information Database.

- 1.4 The PIO will notify the Office of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications on all requests that may have public relations significance. The Office of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications will notify the President of requests, as appropriate.

2. RECEIPT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

2.1 Manner of Receipt

- 2.1.1 No official format is required, but information must be requested in writing and contain requestor contact information.
- 2.1.2 A governmental body may not inquire into the purpose of a request.
- 2.1.3 All requests received directly by a department, by mail or hand delivery, shall be forwarded immediately upon receipt to the Office of Open Records.
- 2.1.4 Requests made by electronic mail or facsimile transmission must be addressed directly to the PIO. Departments receiving requests directly from the requestor by electronic mail or facsimile transmission should ask the requestor to resubmit the request to the PIO.

2.2 Public Information Liaison Coordinator (PILC)

- 2.2.1 University Colleges, Divisions, and Executive Offices shall appoint a primary and secondary PILC to perform public information related functions.
- 2.2.2 These appointed individuals are formally assigned the role of PILC by the President, Vice President, Dean or Department Head, and annually evaluated on public information related duties written into the position description and performance goals.
- 2.2.3 PILC's are responsible for administering or managing public information requests for departments within the College, Division or Executive Office.
- 2.2.4 PILC's are responsible for notifying appropriate administrators within a College, Division or Executive Office of a request.
- 2.2.5 PILC's are required to complete TAMU PILC on-line training.
- 2.2.6 PILC's are responsible for coordinating responses from the College, Division or Executive Office on public information related issues and routing responses to the TAMU Open Records Office.

2.2.7 PILC's are responsible for training and distributing communication from the TAMU Open Records Office to departmental liaisons within the College, Division or Executive Office.

2.3 Public Information Liaison (PIL)

A PIL is a TAMU employee appointed by the PILC of a College, Division or Executive Office. A PIL is responsible for searching for departmental documents that are responsive to public information requests and routing responsive information to their appointed PILC.

3. RESPONSES TO PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

3.1 The PILC shall provide all documents that are responsive to a request to the Open Records Office by the date indicated on the activity assignment;

3.1.1 Records shall be uploaded to the Public Information database or forwarded electronically (via e-mail, flash drive or CD) when possible.

3.1.2 If necessary to provide hard copies, copies should be single sided and staples removed.

3.1.3 No redactions shall be made to responsive documents.

3.1.4 Responses to multiple items shall be sorted and identified per item.

3.1.5 Concerns regarding release of certain responsive items shall be noted and provided to the Open Records Office with the response.

3.2 If sources for responsive information are known that are not indicated on the request distribution form, the Open Records Office shall be notified as soon as possible.

3.3 A response to a public information request includes responsive documents that exist at the time of a request.

3.3.1 A governmental body is not required to create new documents in response to a request.

3.3.2 A data base, as it exists at the time of a request, is considered an existing document.

3.4 The Open Records Office will assist the PILC with cost estimates as described in System Regulation 61.01.02, Section 4.

3.4.1 The University does not charge for under 50 copies.

- 3.4.2 Cost estimates may be an option if a request will cost more than \$40 to process.
 - 3.4.3 If it is determined that a cost estimate is appropriate, it must be provided to the requestor no later than 10 business days after a request is received.
 - 3.4.4 Cost estimates should be determined by taking a sample section of the responsive information and multiplying the sample by the total number of sections.
 - 3.4.5 Actual work should not be done until the requestor agrees to the cost estimate.
- 3.5 All decisions regarding withholding or releasing records will be made in accordance with System Regulation 61.01.02, Section 5.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy 61.01, *Public Information Act Compliance*
<http://policies.tamus.edu/61-01.pdf>

System Regulation 61.01.02, *Public Information*
<http://policies.tamus.edu/61-01-02.pdf>

Contact Office

For SAP interpretation or clarification, please contact [Open Records](#) at (979) 845-6590 or (979) 862-4571.