

Electronic Release of FOIP Response Packages

Data, Information and Privacy Services Division, Policy and Administration

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ELECTRONIC RELEASE OF FOIP RESPONSE PACKAGES STANDARD

Contents

Standard Statement 3

Authority 3

Scope 3

Standard Description 3

Standard Specification 3

Compliance 4

References and Supporting Resources 4

Standard Statement

Consistent practices related to the electronic release of response packages requested under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* support the modernization of FOIP services and increase efficiencies.

Authority

- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

Scope

This standard is applicable to FOIP staff operating in, or on behalf of, Service Alberta (including, but not limited to, Government of Alberta employees, contractors, volunteers, appointees, interns, and students working with Service Alberta).

NOTE: Employees of other Government of Alberta departments and/or public bodies (e.g., agencies, boards, and commissions) operating in Alberta are encouraged (but not required) to align with this standard.

Standard Description

This standard supports implementation of the FOIP Act clarifying the Government of Alberta's position regarding the electronic release of FOIP response packages.

Standard Specification

As per the FOIP Act:

6(1) An applicant has a right of access to any record in the custody or under the control of a public body, including a record containing personal information about the applicant.

Because the FOIP Act specifies neither the format nor the method for provision of a FOIP response package to an applicant, electronic release (e.g., a PDF sent via email) is an option that is available to applicants.

The preferred format for the electronic release of a FOIP response package is a Portable Document Format (PDF) format. If an alternate electronic format is required, the appropriate approvals must be obtained.

Email is the preferred method for facilitating the electronic release of FOIP response packages. Certain barriers may limit and/or prevent electronic release of FOIP response packages to applicants (e.g., email attachment size limit)—in these circumstances, FOIP staff must collaborate with the applicant to determine the appropriate course of action. Internal approval may be necessary for alternate arrangements.

Both the FOIP response package and the outgoing email to which the FOIP response package is attached are official records, and must be managed as such. Confirmation of an applicant receiving an electronically released FOIP response package (e.g., an email response, delivery verification of encrypted digital storage device, etc.) must be retained whenever possible and managed as part of the case file.

ELECTRONIC RELEASE OF FOIP RESPONSE PACKAGES STANDARD

FOIP response packages, regardless of format or the method by which they are provided to applicants, are considered Government of Alberta content, and must be managed in accordance with the relevant content management policy instruments.

Compliance

Consequences of non-compliance with this standard could result in the loss of information, damage to Government of Alberta's reputation, exposure of Albertans to harm and/or incurrence of unnecessary costs. Depending on the severity of non-compliance:

- either informal or formal requests and/or follow-ups may be made by Data, Information and Privacy Services Division, Corporate Internal Audit Services, Cybersecurity Services, Office of the Information Privacy Commissioner, and/or Public Service Commission; and
- legislated disciplinary action (i.e., [Public Service Act](#)) may be taken

References and Supporting Resources

- [Data and Information Security Classification](#)
- [Document Naming Conventions](#)
- [Safeguarding Government Information Guide](#)