



We work with the people who work the land.

Natural Bridge SWCD Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy

September 17, 2025

The Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) §2.2-3700 of the Code of Virginia, *as* amended; ensures the people of the Commonwealth ready access to public records in the custody of a public body or its officers and employees, and free entry into meetings of public bodies wherein business of the people is being conducted.

1. Requests for records can be made by U.S. Mail, fax, e-mail, in person, or over the phone — FOIA does not require that you use any particular method to convey your request. FOIA does not require that your request be in writing, nor do you need to specifically state that you are requesting records under FOIA.
2. While not required, it is encouraged and may be helpful to both the requestor and the District to put requests in writing. This allows a record of requests to be created. It also gives a clear statement of what records are being requested, so that there is no misunderstanding over a verbal request.
3. Requests must identify the records being sought with "reasonable specificity." This is a common-sense standard. It does not refer to or limit the volume or number of records that are being requested; instead, it requires requests be specific enough so that the district can identify and locate the records being sought.
4. Requests must ask for existing records or documents. FOIA allows for the inspection or copy of records; it does not apply to a situation where general questions are asked about the work of the District, nor does it require the District to create a record that does not exist.
5. Requestors may choose to receive electronic records in any format used by the District in the regular course of business. For example, if records are being requested that are maintained in an Excel database, those records may be received electronically, via e-mail or on a flash drive, or by printed copy.
6. The District must respond to requests within five working days of receiving them. "Day One" is considered the first workday after the request is received. The five-day period does not include weekends, holidays, or other days when the District is closed for business.
7. FOIA allows the District to require requestors to provide their name and legal address.
8. FOIA requires that the District make one of the following responses to requests within the five-day time period:
 - Requested records are provided in their entirety.
 - All requested records are withheld because all of the records are subject to a specific statutory exemption. If all of the records are being withheld, a response must be sent in writing. That writing must identify the volume and subject matter of the records being withheld, and state the specific section of the Code of Virginia that allows the District to withhold the records.
 - Some of the requested records are provided and some are withheld. The District cannot withhold an entire record if only a portion of it is subject to an exemption. In that instance, the District may redact the portion of the record that may be withheld, and must provide the remainder of the record. The District must provide a written response stating the specific section of the Code of Virginia that allows portions of the requested records to be withheld.




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- The District informs the requestor in writing that the requested records cannot be found or do not exist (the District does not have the records requested). However, if the District knows that another public body has the requested records, the District must include contact information for the other public body in their response to the requestor.
 - If it is practically impossible for the district to respond to a request within the five-day period, the District must state this in writing, explaining the conditions that make the response impossible. This will allow seven additional working days to respond, giving a total of 12 working days to respond to the request.
9. If a request for a very large number of records is made, and the District feels that we cannot provide the records within 12 working days without disrupting our other organizational responsibilities, the District may petition the court for additional time to respond. However, FOIA requires that the District make a reasonable effort to reach an agreement with the requestor concerning the production of the records before a court proceeding is requested to ask for more time.

FOIA REQUEST FEE SCHEDULE

- 1) Staff time: Requestors will be charged for actual time spent by District staff to access, duplicate, supply, or search for the requested public records, calculated in 15-minute increments, at the employee's normal hourly rate. Fees may be waived for requests that take less than 30 minutes to complete.
 - 2) Print and copy fees: The per page charge for copies and print-outs is based on the actual estimated cost of reproduction/printing per page as determined periodically. Fees may be waived for five pages or fewer.
 - 3) Staff may require a deposit, not to exceed the amount of the estimate, for any request estimated for result in a fee of \$200 or more.
10. If a requestor owes the District money from a previous FOIA request that has remained unpaid for more than 30 days, the District may require payment of the past-due bill before it will respond to a new FOIA request.


Robert G. Deyo, Chairman

Date: 9-17-25