

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES
GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS: CALIFORNIA
PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (GOVERNMENT CODE section 6250 et seq.)

The Public has a general right to inspect and/or obtain copies of public records maintained by state and local agencies pursuant to the Public Records Act (PRA). While many records are accessible, the PRA as well as other statutes may preclude disclosure of records, including but not limited to, confidential records such as medical records, records containing private information about other people, trade secrets, advice from Department lawyers, and records prepared in connection with pending litigation. The Department may need to review requested records to determine if an exemption applies before a record may be inspected or copied.

Request for Inspection or Copies of Public Records: A request should be sufficiently specific and focused to enable identification, location, and retrieval of the public records sought. If a request is not specific and focused, Department staff will: (1) assist the requester to identify public records that are responsive to the request or to the purpose of the request, (2) describe the information technology or physical location in which the public records exist, and (3) provide suggestions for overcoming any practical barriers to disclosure of the public records sought. The Department does not supplement responses to previous requests when new records are created or received. A separate request must be submitted each time records are sought.

To insure accuracy in responding to a request for public records, the Department encourages all requests to be submitted in writing, by facsimile or by electronic mail. Requests can also be made orally, by telephone or in person at a public counter in one of our offices. You do not need to disclose who you are, or why you want the records. Please direct all requests to: [The DHCS Public Records Portal](#) or Department of Health Care Services, Office of Legal Services, ATTN: PRA Request, P.O. Box 997413, MS 0012, Sacramento, CA 95899-7413.

Response Time: Public records in the possession of the Department which are not exempt from disclosure shall be available for inspection during the normal business hours of the Department (8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday). If the request seeks inspection of numerous records, a mutually agreeable time shall be established for the inspection. Departmental functions will not be disrupted to permit inspection of records, and records will not be available for inspection during periods when the records are required by Department personnel in the performance of their duties. Records will not be removed from the possession of the Department. A Department employee will be present during the inspection of records to prevent the loss or destruction of records.

If you personally visit an office location and the request cannot be filled within 10 calendar days of receiving your request, the Department will let you know that up to 14 additional calendar days may be needed to research your request. By the end of this 14 day period, the Department will notify you whether and when records will be produced. If some or all of the records you requested cannot be released because they are considered confidential under law, the Department will let you know in general what type of records they are and why they are confidential.

Fees: There is no charge to just inspect records. There is no charge for records copied using equipment you bring to the Department. The Department can make copies for you if it is practicable to do so. Some of the Department's offices, such as the Office of Regulations, cannot provide copying service due to the amount of records and volume of requests. If the Department makes the copies, the fee is 10 cents (\$0.10) per page. If you want copies of electronic records the Department can put on a CD or DVD, the cost is one dollar (\$1.00) for each CD or DVD. If your request requires the Department to do special computer programming, perform data extraction, or construct a custom report, you will need to pay for the actual cost of time the Department spends on the project, as well as the cost of any special supplies or services used. You will need to pay either by check or money order before the Department commences with work. If you want copies mailed, the Department will not charge for first class mail. If you want copies sent by any other method, or if special handling is involved, the Department will charge you for the cost. You will only have to pay the fees mentioned here if the total is more than five dollars (\$5.00).

These guidelines shall be posted in a conspicuous place at every public counter in all Department of Health Care Services offices and a free copy shall be provided upon request.