

Freedom of Information Act

July 4, 2015 was the 49th anniversary of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the law that embodies the Federal Government's commitment to public accountability through transparency.

On July 10, the U.S. Department of Justice's [Office of Information Policy announced](#) the launch of a new pilot program at seven agencies designed to test the feasibility of posting online FOIA responses so that they are available not just to the individual requester, but to the general public as well.

NARA is participating in the pilot for FOIA requests for the operational records that NARA creates as a federal agency, which are managed by NARA's Office of General Counsel. FOIA requests for NARA's archival records from federal agencies and at Presidential Libraries, as well as the records controlled by NARA's National Personnel Records Center are not included in this pilot project. For privacy reasons, NARA will not post online any FOIA responses to requests in which individuals seek access to information about themselves. NARA began posting all FOIA releases for operational records in August 2015.

WHAT IS A FOIA CASE NUMBER?

When you make a request for certain documents from any Federal, State, County, or Local agency, including the National Archives, that request is assigned a case number. You must know this National Archives FOIA number in order to search for the record in the Online Catalog.

For more information about FOIA at NARA see <https://ogis.archives.gov/>

WHAT TYPES OF RECORDS ARE IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES ONLINE CATALOG TODAY FOR WHICH FOIA REQUESTS HAVE BEEN GRANTED?

- White House Emails
- White House Photo System
- White House Worker and Visitor Entry System

SUMMARY OF THE NINE FOIA DISCLOSURE EXEMPTIONS :

**In other words, you can't see a document if it meets one or more of these tests.
For more details see: <http://www.foiadvocates.com/exemptions.html>**

1. National defense or foreign policy information properly classified pursuant an Executive Order. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(1).
2. Documents "related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(2).
3. Documents "specifically exempted from disclosure by statute" other than FOIA, but only if the other statute's disclosure prohibition is absolute. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3).
4. Documents which would reveal "[t]rade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4).
5. Documents which are "inter-agency or intra-agency memorandum or letters" which would be privileged in civil litigation. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5).
6. Documents which are "personnel and medical and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6).

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7. Documents which are "records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes," but only if one or more of six specified types of harm would result. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7). Roughly:
 1. ...reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings
 2. ...information that would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication
 3. ... information that would constitute unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 4. Information which could reasonably be expected to reveal the identity of a confidential source
 5. ...information which would reveal techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions or that would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions ...
 6. ...information which could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.
8. Documents which are related to specified reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of agencies which regulate financial institutions. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(8).
9. Documents which would reveal oil well data. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(9).