

RESPONDING TO A PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST SUGGESTED CHECKLIST

[Water Conservancy Boards must make sure that Board members are familiar with the Public Records Act, **RCW Chapter 42.17**, in order to properly respond to public records requests.]



1. Make sure to **note the date**, or date stamp any requests that you receive in writing the day the request is received. If the request is verbal or a voice message, make a note of the date it was received.
2. Determine if the request you have received is a request for information (such as the Board's mailing address) or whether you have actually received a request for public records.
3. Once you have determined that records have been requested, check if the date of the request is different than the date of receipt by the Board (this usually happens in cases where the request is in the form of a letter sent through the mail). If there is a difference between the date listed on the request and the date it was received by the Board, make sure to explain that in your response letter.
4. After you have determined the actual date that the public records request was received, then figure out when your written response is due. Remember that a response is required within five (5) business days of receipt of the request.
5. **Prepare and issue your written response** within five (5) business days. Your response can either:
 - A. Produce the requested records (for inspection or provide copies if requested);
 - B. Deny access to the records based on a relevant exemption (exemptions relied on must be specifically cited to in your letter);
 - C. Send an initial response which:
 - i. Acknowledges receipt of the public records request, and
 - ii. Provides a reasonable estimate of the time necessary to respond to the request.
6. Determine the appropriate **copying charges** based on RCW 42.17.300. Don't forget that you cannot charge more than fifteen cents (\$0.15) per page.
7. **Keep a record** of your written response and the actual documents that you provided copies of or made available for inspection.

***PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST RESPONSE
EXAMPLE LETTER 1***

[insert date]

[insert name and address]

RE: Public Records Request--*[insert general description of request]*

Dear *[insert name]*:

The *[insert name of county]* Water Conservancy Board (Board) is in receipt of your public records request, dated *[insert date of request]* and received *[insert date request actually received]*. It is our understanding that you have requested copies of *[insert the general description of the records that have been requested]*.

Copies of the records that you have requested will be available for you one (1) week from today's date. Consistent with the Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.17, the Board charges a per page copy fee of ten cents (\$0.10). See RCW 42.17.300. Therefore, upon receipt of *[example: \$5.10 (51 total pages copied)]* the Board will provide you with copies of the records you have requested. After receipt of payment, these copies will be available to you in our office at *[provide relevant address]* or at your request we will mail the copies directly to you.

If you have any concerns or questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

*[insert name of person from the Board responding
and any relevant title]*

**PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST RESPONSE
EXAMPLE LETTER 2**

[insert date]

[insert name and address]

RE: Public Records Request--[insert general description of request]

Dear [insert name]:

This letter is in response to your public records request of [insert date of request] received by the [insert name of county] Water Conservancy Board (Board).

Due to the size and complexity of your request, the records will not be ready for your review until [provide a reasonable estimate of time necessary to gather and produce records]. Please contact me to schedule a date and time for that review. All requests are handled pursuant to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 42.17.

If after your inspection of the records you would like any copies, the Board charges a per page cost for copies, as well as a reasonable charge for reimbursing the Board for its actual costs directly incident to such copying. RCW 42.17.300.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[insert name of person from the Board responding
and any relevant title]

***PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST RESPONSE
EXAMPLE LETTER 3***

[*insert date*]

[*insert name and address*]

RE: Public Records Request--[*insert general description of request*]

Dear [*insert name*]:

This letter is in response to the public records request you made with the [*insert name of county*] Water Conservancy Board (Board) dated [*insert date of request*]. All requests received by the Board are handled pursuant to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 42.17. Please be advised that we do charge fifteen cents (\$0.15) per page for duplication of records, but records may be inspected free of charge. See RCW 42.17.300. Also, RCW 42.17.270 requires that all requested documents must be identifiable.

The records responsive to your request are available for your review. Please contact me in order to schedule a time and date for your inspection of the requested records.

Feel free to contact me if you have any other questions.

Sincerely,

[*insert name of person from the Board responding
and any relevant title*]