



# Shoreline Fire Department

## Public Records Request Guidelines

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### ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS

1. **Public Record** Public records of the Shoreline Fire Department include any writing\* containing information relating to the conduct or performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used or retained by the Department.
  - 1.1 Writing means handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, and every other means of recording any form of communication or representation including, but not limited to, letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combination thereof, and all papers, maps, magnetic or paper tapes, photographic films and prints, motion picture, film and video recordings, magnetic or punched cards, discs, drums, diskettes, sound recordings, and other documents including existing data compilations from which information may be obtained or translated. RCW 42.56.010(4).
2. **Public Record Availability** The Department is committed to providing full access to public records in accordance with the Public Records Act. The Department will provide requestors the fullest assistance and the most timely actions possible while protecting public records from damage and preventing excessive interference with other essential agency functions. RCW 42.56.100.
3. **Location of Records and Hours of Inspection and Copying** Most of the Department's public records are maintained at Department headquarters, Station 61, 17525 Aurora Avenue North, Shoreline, Washington. The Department has field offices in fire stations in various locations. More information about the Department's offices is available at [www.shorelinefire.com](http://www.shorelinefire.com). Public records are available for inspection and copying during the Department's normal office hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Records may be inspected at Department headquarters.
4. **Public Records Officer** The Department's Administrative Director is responsible for serving as a point of contact for public records requests. The Administrative Director oversees the Department's compliance with the Public Records Act although other Department staff members may process public records requests.
5. **Requests for Public Records** Public records may be inspected or copies obtained by members of the public as follows:
  - 5.1 Requests should be made in writing by letter or by completing the [Request for Public Records form](#) and submitting to the Administrative Director in person or via U.S. mail, fax, or e-mail ([publicrecords@shorelinefire.com](mailto:publicrecords@shorelinefire.com)), and shall include the following information:
    - 5.1.1 The name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the person requesting the record.
    - 5.1.2 The time of day and calendar date on which the request is made.
    - 5.1.3 An identification of the records sufficient for the Department to locate them. (NOTE: the purpose of the request need not be disclosed, except when necessary for the Department to determine whether disclosure is exempt. RCW 42.56.080.)
    - 5.1.4 If the matter requested is referenced in a current index maintained by the Department, a reference to the requested record as it is described in such index.

**5.2** The Administrative Director may be contacted as follows:

Administrative Director  
17525 Aurora Avenue North  
Shoreline, WA 98133

Phone: 206.533.6570  
Fax: 206.237.2458  
E-mail: [jbrown@shorelinefire.com](mailto:jbrown@shorelinefire.com)

The Administrative Director may accept requests by telephone or in person. However, if she/he accepts a verbal request, she/he will confirm receipt of the substance of the request in writing.

**5.3** The Department will attempt to assist members of the public in appropriately identifying the public record they are requesting.

**6. Responses to Requests** The Department will process requests in the order allowing the most requests to be processed in the most efficient manner. Within five (5) business days of receiving a request, pursuant to RCW 42.56.520, the Department will either:

- A. Provide the record;
- B. Provide an internet address and link on the Department's website to the record (if the requestor notifies the Department that he/she cannot access the record, the Department will provide a copy or allow the requestor to view a copy on a Department computer);
- C. Acknowledge it has received the request and provide a reasonable estimate of when the record will be available; or
- D. Deny the request.

**6.1** Additional time to respond may be based on the need to clarify the intent of the request, locate and assemble the records, notify third persons or agencies and provide them with the opportunity to seek a court order preventing disclosure where appropriate, and/or determine whether any of the information is exempt. RCW 42.56.520. If the request does not sufficiently identify a public record, the Department will request clarification. If the requestor fails to clarify, the Department will treat the request as having been withdrawn. RCW 42.56.520. If a portion of a record is exempt and the remainder is not, the Department will redact the exempt portion and disclose the remainder.

**6.2** If a requested record contains information that may affect rights of others, the Department may, prior to releasing the record, give notice to such other persons. The notice will give the affected persons the opportunity to obtain a court order preventing or limiting disclosure. RCW 42.56.540.

**6.3** Records may be made available on a partial or installment basis. If an installment is not claimed, the Department will not fulfill the balance of the request. RCW 42.56.120.

**6.4** Requestors must claim or review assembled records within 30 days of the Department's notification that the records are available. The Department will notify requestors of this requirement. If a requestor fails to claim or review the records within 30 days or make other arrangements, the Department may close the request. A subsequent request by the same person for the same record can be processed as a new request. See WAC 44-14-040(6)(b).

**6.5** All denials and redactions of public records will be accompanied by a written statement specifying the reason(s) for the denial or redaction, including a statement of the specific exemption authorizing the withholding of information and a brief explanation of how the exemption applies. Denials of a patient's request for the patient's medical records will comply with the requirements of RCW 70.02.090.

**7. Fees** No fee shall be charged for the inspection of public records. The Department shall charge a fee of \$0.15 per page for providing copies of public records. In the event the Department is requested to mail copies, an additional charge in the amount of the actual or estimated postage shall be made. RCW 42.56.070(7)(a).

- 7.1 The Department may require a deposit of up to 10% of the estimated cost of copying records prior to copying any records for a requestor. RCW 42.56.120.
- 7.2 If the Department releases records on a partial or installment basis, it will charge for each part of the request as it is provided.
- 7.3 Medical Records In accordance with RCW 70.02 and WAC 246-08-400, the Department may charge a clerical fee for searching and handling requests for medical records and a per page copy charge according to the rates established in the pertinent statute or WAC provision concerning the same. RCW 42.56.130.

**8. Exemptions from Public Inspection and Copying**

8.1 Certain public records are exempt in whole or in part from public inspection and copying. RCW 42.56.230 through RCW 42.56.480 contain a number of exemptions. RCW 42.56.070(9) prohibits the Department from disclosing lists of individuals for commercial purposes. Public records are also exempt if any other statute exempts or prohibits disclosure. RCW 42.56.070(1). Requestors should be aware of the following list of exemptions that may restrict the availability of public records. This list is not exhaustive.

- RCW 42.56.230(2) Personal information in files maintained for employees, appointees, or elected officials to the extent disclosure would violate their right to privacy.
- RCW 42.56.240(1) Specific intelligence information and specific investigative records compiled by investigative, law enforcement, and penology agencies, the nondisclosure of which is essential to effective law enforcement or for the protection of any person's right to privacy.
- RCW 42.56.250(1) Test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data used to administer a license, employment or academic examination.
- RCW 42.56.250(2) All applications for public employment, including the names of applicants, resumes, and other related materials submitted with respect to an applicant.
- RCW 42.56.250(3) Residential addresses, residential telephone numbers, personal wireless telephone numbers, personal electronic mail addresses, social security numbers, and emergency contact information of employee or volunteers of a public agency, and the names, dates of birth, residential addresses, residential telephone numbers, personal wireless telephone numbers, personal electronic mail addresses, social security numbers, and emergency contact information of dependents of employees or volunteers of a public agency that are held by any public agency in personnel records.
- RCW 42.56.250(5) Investigative records compiled by an employing agency conducting a current investigation of a possible unfair practice under chapter 49.60 RCW or of a possible violation of other federal, state, or local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment.
- RCW 42.56.290 Preliminary drafts, notes, recommendations, and intra-agency memorandums in which opinions are expressed or policies formulated or recommended are exempt, except that a specific record is not exempt when publicly cited by an agency in connection with any agency action.
- RCW 42.56.070(1); RCW 5.60.060(2)(a); RCW 42.56.290; CR 26(b)(4) Attorney-client privileged communications and attorney work product.
- RCW 42.56.420 Vulnerability assessments and national security information
- RCW 43.43.830 -.840; WAC 446-20-300 Background checks
- RCW 5.60.060 Privileged communications
- RCW 5.60.070 Court-ordered mediation records
- RCW 42.56.600; RCW 7.07 Mediation communications under the Uniform Mediation Act
- RCW 7.69A Child victims and witnesses
- RCW 10.97 Criminal Records Privacy Act
- RCW 13.60.020 Missing children information

RCW 18.04.405	Confidentiality of information gained by CPA
RCW 26.26.450	Confidentiality of genetic testing
RCW 26.44	Records of child abuse and neglect
RCW 27.53.070	Records identifying the location of archaeological sites
RCW 40.14	Preservation and destruction of public records
RCW 42.23.070	Municipal officer disclosure of confidential information prohibited
RCW 46.52	Traffic records
RCW 48.62.101	Local government insurance transactions
RCW 50.13	Employment security records
RCW 51.28.070	Worker's compensation records
RCW 51.36.060	Physician information on injured workers
RCW 68.50.105	Autopsy reports
RCW 68.50.320	Dental identification records
RCW 42.56.360(2); RCW 70.02	Medical Records
RCW 70.05.170	Child mortality records
RCW 70.24	Public health records
RCW 70.96A.150	Alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs
RCW 71.05	Mental health records
RCW 71.34	Mental health treatment of minors
RCW 71A.14.070	Records regarding developmental disability
RCW 74.34.095	Abuse of vulnerable adults – investigations and reports
RCW 82.32.330	Disclosure of tax information
42 USC § 290dd-2	Confidentiality of Substance Abuse Records
42 USC 405(c)(2)(vii)	Limits on Use and Disclosure of Social Security Number
42 USC § 12112	Americans with Disabilities Act
42 CFR Part 2	Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records
45 CFR 160-164	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

**8.2** In accordance with RCW 42.56.070(1), the Department reserves the right to delete identifying details when it makes available any public record where disclosure would be an invasion of personal privacy protected by RCW 42.56.

## **9. Review of Denials**

**9.1** Any person who objects to the denial of a request to inspect or copy a public record may petition for a prompt review of such decision by submitting a written request for review.

**9.2** Upon receipt of a written request for review of a decision denying inspection or copying of a public record, the employee to whom the request was submitted shall refer it to Fire Chief. The Fire Chief shall immediately consider the matter and either affirm or reverse the denial. The final decision shall be rendered to the individual who requested the record within two (2) business days after the denial of the request.

**9.3** Administrative remedies shall not be considered exhausted until the Department has returned the request with the decision or until a period of two (2) business days has elapsed since the denial of the request.

**10. Records Index** The Department has available to all persons a current index that provides identifying information as to the records maintained by the Department.

**11. Protection of Records** In order to protect public records from damage and disorganization and prevent excessive interference with other essential Department functions, the following requirements are adopted pursuant to RCW 42.56.100.

**11.1** Public records must be inspected in the presence of a designated Department employee.

- 11.2** Requestors may not remove public records from a viewing area.
- 11.3** Public records may not be marked, altered, or defaced by a requestor.
- 11.4** Access to file cabinets, shelves, and other Department storage areas is restricted solely to Department personnel.