

950 CMR 32.00: PUBLIC RECORDS ACCESS

Section

- 32.01: Scope and Purpose
- 32.02: Definitions
- 32.03: General Provisions
- 32.04: Records Access Officers
- 32.05: Additional Records Access Officer Responsibilities
- 32.06: Rights of Access
- 32.07: Copies of Records; Fees
- 32.08: Appeals
- 32.09: Enforcement of Orders
- 32.10: Advisory Opinions

32.01: Scope and Purpose

(1) 950 CMR 32.00 describes the practices and procedures of the Division of Public Records relative to the requirements of governmental entities or political subdivisions of the Commonwealth with respect to disclosure of public records, reporting requirements for certain records access officers and ensuring that disputes regarding access to particular records are resolved expeditiously and fairly. 950 CMR 32.00 shall not limit the availability of other remedies provided by law.

(2) The Division of Public Records is under the supervision of the Supervisor of Public Records. The Supervisor may amend and rescind such rules, forms and orders as are contemplated by the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and as are necessary to carry out their purposes.

(3) The Supervisor of Public Records may authorize exceptions to 950 CMR 32.00 with respect to any specific requirement provided that such exceptions to 950 CMR 32.00 are in conformity with the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws.

32.02: Definitions

For the purposes of 950 CMR 32.00 unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Advisory Opinion. An opinion issued by the Supervisor of Public Records intended to provide guidance on issues related to public records access and retention.

Agency. Any agency, executive office, department, board, commission, bureau, division or authority of the commonwealth that is identified in M.G.L. c. 66, § 6A and c. 4, § 7, clause Twenty-sixth and makes or receives "public records", as defined in 950 CMR 32.02. Agency includes any person, corporation, association, partnership or other legal entity which receives or expends public funds for the payment or administration of pensions for any current or former employees of the commonwealth or any political subdivision as defined in M.G.L. c. 32, § 1.

Business Day. Monday through Friday. Business day does not include Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays, or other weekdays where a custodian's office is closed unexpectedly.

Commercial Purpose. The sale or resale of any portion of the public record or the use of information from the public record to advance the requester's strategic business interests in a manner that the requester can reasonably expect to make a profit including in addition to the foregoing, obtaining names and addresses from the public record for the purpose of solicitation. It does not include gathering or reporting news or gathering information to promote citizen oversight or further the understanding of the operation or activities of government or for academic, scientific, journalistic, or public research or education.

Custodian. Any governmental entity that makes or receives public records.

32.02: continued

Division. Division of Public Records, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Governmental Entity. Any agency or municipality as defined in 950 CMR 32.02. It includes any quasi-governmental agency that is considered a body politic and corporate or public instrumentality. It does not include the legislature and the judiciary.

Municipality. Cities and towns, local housing, redevelopment or similar authorities. A consortium, consolidation or combination of entities within a single political subdivision of the commonwealth or among multiple political subdivisions of the commonwealth shall be deemed a municipality.

Public Record. All books, papers, maps, photographs, recorded tapes, financial statements, statistical tabulations, or other documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by a governmental entity unless such materials or data fall within one or more of the exemptions found within M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, clause Twenty-sixth or other legally applicable privileges.

Records Access Officer. The employee designated within a governmental entity to perform duties described in 950 CMR 32.00 including coordinating a response to requests for access to public records, assisting individuals seeking public records in identifying the records requested, and preparing guidelines that enable requesters to make informed requests regarding the availability of such public records electronically or otherwise.

Requester. Any person or entity seeking to inspect or obtain copies of public records.

Redact. To delete, or otherwise expurgate that part of a public record that is exempt from disclosure under M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, clause Twenty-sixth or other legally applicable privileges from non-exempt material.

Search Time. The time needed to locate and identify, pull from the files, copy and reshelve or refile a public record. However, it shall not include the time expended to create the original record.

Secretary. The Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Segregation Time. The time used to review records to determine what portions are subject to redaction or withholding under M.G.L. c. 4, § 7, clause Twenty-sixth or other legally applicable privileges. Segregation time shall not include time expended to review record for accuracy and correct errors.

Supervisor. Supervisor of Public Records or Supervisor of Records.

Withhold. To hold back from disclosure a record under M.G. L. c. 4, § 7, clause Twenty-sixth or other legally applicable privileges.

32.03: General Provisions

(1) Division Mailing Address and Electronic Mail Address. All communications shall be addressed or delivered to:

Supervisor of Records  
Division of Public Records  
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1719  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108  
or: [pre@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:pre@sec.state.ma.us)

Electronic communication is strongly encouraged and is the preferred method of correspondence.

32.03: continued

- (2) Division Business Hours. The regular hours of the Division are from 8:45 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. each business day.
- (3) Computation of Time. Unless otherwise provided, the computation of time referred to in 950 CMR 32.00 shall begin with the first business day following the date of receipt of any request, regardless of physical form. The computation of time for an oral request shall begin with the day the oral request was made to the custodian.
- (4) Presumptions. In all proceedings pursuant to 950 CMR 32.00, there shall be a presumption that the record sought is public.

32.04: Records Access Officers

- (1) Each agency and municipality shall designate one or more employees as records access officer(s).
- (2) In a municipality, the municipal clerk, or the clerk's designees, or any designee of a municipality that the chief executive officer of the municipality may appoint, shall serve as records access officers.
- (3) The designation of a records access officer shall not be construed to prohibit employees who have been previously authorized by the agency or municipality to make public records or information available to the public from continuing to do so in accordance with 950 CMR 32.00.
- (4) Each agency and municipality shall post in a conspicuous location at its offices and on its website, if any, the name, title, business address, business telephone number, and business email address of each records access officer.
- (5) A records access officer shall:
  - (a) coordinate the custodian's response to requests for access to public records and shall facilitate the resolution of such requests by the timely and thorough production of public records;
  - (b) assist persons seeking public records to identify the records sought;
  - (c) assist the custodian in preserving public records in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and retention schedules;
  - (d) to the extent feasible, provide public records to a requester in electronic format unless the record is not available in electronic form or the requester does not have the ability to receive or access the records in electronic format and if feasible, in the requesters preferred format. In the absence of a preferred format, the records shall be provided in a searchable machine-readable form;

Where the requester is an individual held in custody in any correctional facility, as defined in M.G.L. c. 125, § 1(d), the records access officer shall presume that the requester does not have the ability to receive or access records in usable electronic form;
  - (e) to the extent feasible, furnish the public records by providing reasonable assistance in locating the records on an appropriately indexed and searchable public website;
  - (f) prepare guidelines of the agency or municipality that enable the person seeking access to public records in the custody of the agency or municipality to make informed requests regarding the availability of such public records electronically or otherwise. The guidelines shall include a list of categories of public records maintained by the agency or municipality and such list shall be updated periodically; each agency or municipality that maintains a website shall post the guidelines on its website;
  - (g) a municipal records access officer shall, to the extent feasible, post commonly available public record documents on a website maintained by the municipality. The website copy shall not be deemed the record copy for retention purposes.

32.05: Additional Records Access Officer Responsibilities

- (1) Agency Records Access Officers. The requirements of 950 CMR 32.05(1) shall apply only to agency records access officers.

32.05: continued

(a) agency designation of primary and secondary records access officers; reporting requirements:

1. each agency shall designate one primary records access officer responsible for reporting information to the Secretary pursuant to M.G.L. c. 66, § 6A(e) and 950 CMR 32.05(1)(c).
2. a primary records access officer shall submit a notification of such designation to the Division electronically in a manner determined by the Division.
3. the primary records access officer may notify the secondary record access officers to facilitate reporting such information.
4. the primary records access officer shall electronically notify the Secretary of the designation of secondary records access officers electronically in a manner determined by the Division.
5. the agency shall maintain and update information regarding primary and secondary records access officers electronically, including changes in personnel identified as primary and secondary records access officers, in a manner determined by the Division.

(b) agency records access officers shall electronically report to the Secretary the information described in 950 CMR 32.05(1)(c)1. through 9. in a manner determined by the Secretary.

(c) an agency records access officer shall report to the Secretary with respect to written requests for public records and responses to these requests for each calendar year ending December 31<sup>st</sup>:

1. the nature of each request and the date on which each request was received;
2. the date on which a response is provided to the requester;
3. the date on which a public record is provided to the requester;
4. the number of hours required to fulfill the request;
5. fees charged to the requester, if any;
6. records access officer petitions to the Supervisor submitted under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10(d)(iv) and 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g) and (h);
7. requests appealed to the Supervisor under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10A and 950 CMR 32.08(1);
8. the time required to comply with the Supervisor's orders under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10A; and
9. the final adjudication of any associated court proceedings under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10A(d).

(d) the Supervisor may make exceptions to the reporting requirement in 950 CMR 32.05(1)(c) for particular classes of records, such as:

1. certified copies of records;
2. registry of deeds records;
3. incorporation records;
4. vital records;
5. criminal offender record information requested by the offender, representative, or other authorized recipient.

(e) all information must be provided in accordance with 950 CMR 32.05(1) within ten business days of the last day of the calendar year.

(f) an agency shall provide on a searchable website electronic copies, accessible in a commonly available electronic format, of the following types of records, provided that any agency may withhold any record or portion thereof in accordance with state or federal law:

1. final opinions, decisions, orders, or votes from agency proceedings;
2. annual reports;
3. notices of regulations proposed under M.G.L. c. 30A;
4. notices of hearings;
5. winning bids for public contracts;
6. awards of federal, state and municipal government grants;
7. minutes of open meetings;
8. agency budgets; and
9. any public record information of significant interest that the agency deems appropriate to post, such determination to be made by each agency on a case-by-case basis.

32.05: continued

(g) an agency shall post records online pursuant to 950 CMR 32.05(1)(f) as soon as practicable on a website maintained by the agency. The website copy shall not be deemed the record copy for retention purposes. 950 CMR 32.05(1)(f) and (g) shall apply only to records made or received on or after January 1, 2017.

(h) an agency may fulfill the requirements of 950 CMR 32.05(1)(f) and (g) by providing links to other agency websites that provide access to the categories of records described in 950 CMR 32.05(1)(f) 1. through 9.; provided, however, that the website is searchable and provides electronic copies, accessible in a commonly available electronic format.

### 32.06: Rights of Access

#### (1) Requests for Public Records.

(a) requests for public records may be made orally in person to a records access officer or custodian or may be written. Telephone requests may be accepted at the discretion of the records access officer.

(b) requests for public records shall include a reasonable description of the requested record to the records access officer so that he or she can identify and locate it promptly.

(c) written requests may be delivered by a requester to the business address or designated website or email address of a records access officer or custodian:

1. by hand;
2. by mail;
3. by electronic mail; or
4. by facsimile, if custodian has facsimile access.

(d) a records access officer shall not require a particular form be used by requesters, but may make forms available for requesters.

(e) a person shall not be required to make a personal inspection of the record prior to receiving a copy.

(f) calculation of time will commence only for requests that are made in accordance with 950 CMR 32.06(1).

(g) a request for records in which an individual, or representative of the individual has a unique right of access by statutory, regulatory, judicial or other applicable means, shall not be considered a request for public records.

#### (2) Records Access Officer Response to Requests for Records.

(a) a records access officer or designee shall permit inspection or provide or furnish a copy of all public records within the custody and control of the custodian at reasonable times and without unreasonable delay under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10(a).

(b) if applicable, a records access officer shall provide a written response under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10(b) to a request for public records no later than the tenth business day following the receipt of a request notwithstanding the applicability of any petition filed pursuant to 950 CMR 32.06(4).

(c) a records access officer shall not charge a fee for the provision of a public record unless the records access officer responded to the requester within ten business days under M.G.L. c. 66, § 10(b).

(d) if a records access officer intends to provide records, access to such records must be provided no later than the tenth business day following the receipt of a request, unless an extension of time is permitted in a manner consistent with 950 CMR 32.06(2)(i) and (4).

(e) a written request for records, regardless of the form of delivery, will be deemed received on the first business day following receipt the request by the records access officer; an oral request will be deemed received on the day it was made.

(f) a records access officer may delay provision of records until all fees related to such requests are paid in full by the person seeking access to the requested records in accordance with 950 CMR 32.07.

(g) a records access officer shall, when appropriate, suggest a reasonable modification of the scope of the request or offer to assist the requester to modify the scope of the request if doing so would enable the agency or municipality to produce records sought more efficiently and affordably.

32.06: continued

(h) a records access officer may not require the requester to specify the purpose for a request except:

1. when the requested records concern information which may be exempt from disclosure pursuant to M.G.L. c. 4, § 7(26)(n);
2. to determine whether the records are requested for a commercial purpose; or
3. to determine whether to grant a request for a fee waiver.

(i) a records access officer shall identify a reasonable timeframe in which it shall produce the public records sought in a manner consistent with M.G.L. c. 66, § 10(b)(vi), provided that the requester may voluntarily agree to a response date beyond these timeframes.

(3) Denial by Records Access Officer.

(a) a records access officer shall provide written notice by first class mail or electronic mail to a requester of any denial of access to records.

(b) a records access officer shall provide such written notice of denial of access within ten business days of its receipt of a request for public records in accordance with 950 CMR 32.06(2)(b).

(c) such written notice of denial shall include:

1. the date of the request;
2. identification of any records sought that are not within the possession, custody, or control of the agency or municipality the records access officer serves;
3. identification of the agency or municipality that may be in possession, custody or control of the public record sought, if known to the records access officer;
4. identification of any records, categories of records or portions of records that the agency or municipality intends to withhold;
5. identification of any specific exemption to the Public Records Law or common law privilege that applies to the withheld record or records;
6. identification of the applicability of each cited exemption or privilege to each portion of the withheld record or records;
7. identification of any portions of responsive records that the agency or municipality intends to produce; and
8. a statement informing the requester of the right of administrative appeal to the Supervisor under 950 CMR 32.08(1) and the right to seek judicial review of an unfavorable decision by commencing a civil action in the superior court.

(d) where a record has been withheld based on a claim of the attorney-client privilege the records access officer shall provide in its written denial a detailed description of the record, including the names of the author and recipients, and in general terms, the subject matter of the withheld information.

(4) Petition for Modification or Waiver by a Records Access Officer to the Supervisor.

(a) petitions requesting an extension of time to furnish copies of the requested records or waive statutory limits to fees from a records access officer to the Supervisor shall be in writing and delivered to the Supervisor in accordance with 950 CMR 32.03(1). A copy of the petition shall be provided by the records access officer to the requester. The Supervisor shall issue a written determination with findings regarding any such petition within five business days following receipt of a records access officer petition.

(b) petitions filed under 950 CMR 32.06(4) do not affect the requirement that a records access officer shall provide an initial response to a requester within ten business days after receipt of a request for public records, pursuant to 950 CMR 32.06(2)(a) or (b). Failure to comply with 950 CMR 32.06(4) will result in a waiver of the right to assess fees for public records.

(c) all such petitions shall be considered public records both in the custody of the records access officer and the Supervisor.

(d) petitions seeking an extension of time to furnish copies of the requested records must be made by a records access officer within 20 business days after receipt of a request for public records, or within ten business days after the records access officer's receipt of a determination by the Supervisor that a requested record constitutes a public record.

## 32.06: continued

(e) a petition for extension of time described in 950 CMR 32.06(4)(d) shall include a brief narrative detailing why an extension of time is necessary. Upon a showing of good cause, the Supervisor may grant a single extension. For an agency, such extension may not exceed 20 business days from the date of the grant of the extension by the Supervisor. For a municipality, such extension may not exceed 30 business days from the date of the grant of the extension by the Supervisor.

(f) if, when reviewing a petition for extension of time described in 950 CMR 32.06(4)(d), the Supervisor determines that the request is part of a series of contemporaneous requests that are frivolous or designed to intimidate or harass, and the requests are not intended for the broad dissemination of information to the public about actual or alleged government activity, the Supervisor may grant a longer extension or relieve the custodian of its obligation to provide copies of the records sought.

(g) petitions seeking a waiver of statutory limits to fees assessed to segregate and/or redact public records must be made within ten business days after receipt of a request for public records.

(h) a petition seeking a waiver of statutory limits to fees described in 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g) must be made in accordance with the following:

1. any records access officer may petition the Supervisor to charge for time spent segregating or redacting records.
2. only a municipal records access officer may petition the Supervisor for permission to charge fees in excess of the maximum hourly rate of \$25 per hour for time required to comply with a request.
3. records access officers shall not petition the Supervisor seeking a waiver associated with the provisions of 950 CMR 32.07(2)(l)1. and (m)1.
4. a records access officer shall respond to a request within five business days of receipt of the Supervisor's determination regarding a petition submitted under 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g).

32.07: Copies of Records: Fees(1) Copies of Paper and Electronic Records.

(a) upon request, a requester shall be entitled to receive in hand, by mail, by facsimile or electronically one copy of a public record or any desired portion of a public record.

(b) as an alternative to obtaining copies of records from a records access officer a requester shall be permitted, to the extent feasible, and at reasonable times:

1. view and inspect records prior to obtaining copies; or
2. use a personal device such as a camera or portable scanner to copy records.

(c) the records access officer shall presume that a requester prefers copies provided in machine-readable electronic form, when electronic form is available, unless the requester specifies an alternative preference.

(d) the records access officer must provide electronic records in native form when possible.

(e) when designing or acquiring an electronic record keeping system or database the records access officer in cooperation with the custodian shall ensure, to the extent feasible that:

1. newly acquired or implemented electronic record keeping systems or databases are capable of providing data in a commonly available electronic, machine readable format; and
2. the newly acquired or implemented electronic record keeping system allows for information storage and retrieval methods permitting retrieval of public portions of records to provide maximum public access.

(f) furnishing a segregable portion of a public record shall not be deemed to be creation of a new record. This applies to a responsive record in the form of an extract of existing data, as such data exists at the time of the request and is segregable from nonresponsive and exempt data.

(2) Fees.

(a) a records access officer may assess a reasonable fee for the production of a public record except those records that are freely available for public inspection, subject to the provisions of 950 CMR 32.04(5)(d). A records access officer is encouraged to inform a requester of the availability of records online to avoid delays and fees associated with the provision of public records.

32.07: continued

- (b) if fees are being assessed, a records access officer shall provide a written, itemized, good faith estimate of any fees that may be charged to produce the records prior to complying with a public records request within ten business days.
- (c) the reasonable fee for reproduction shall not exceed the actual cost of reproducing the record.
- (d) a fee shall not be assessed for time spent segregating or redacting records unless such segregation or redaction is required by law or approved by the Supervisor under 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g) and (h).
- (e) the charge for black and white paper copies or printouts of records of any size susceptible to ordinary means of production shall not exceed .05¢ per page, for both single and double-sided black and white copies or printouts.
- (f) a records access officer shall not assess a copying fee for electronic copies or copies of public records transmitted *via* facsimile.
- (g) the actual cost of any storage device or material provided to a person in response to a request for public records may be included as part of the fee.
- (h) for copies of public records not susceptible to ordinary means of reproduction, the actual cost incurred in providing a copy may be assessed.
- (i) a records access officer shall assess no fee greater than the lowest hourly rate of a person capable of compiling, segregating, redacting and reproducing a requested record, subject to the requirements of 950 CMR 32.07.
- (j) a records access officer may assess the actual cost of postage to mail copies of public records, provided:
  1. the requester specifically requests that records be mailed or is unable to receive copies in person; and
  2. the records access officer shall charge the lowest cost available for such mailings, at the discretion of the requester.
- (k) Waiver of Fees. Records access officers may waive or reduce the amount of any assessed fee upon a showing that:
  1. disclosure of a requested record is in the public interest;
  2. the request for records is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester; or
  3. the requester lacks the financial ability to pay the full amount of the reasonable fee.
- (l) Agency Records Access Officers.
  1. an agency records access officer shall not assess a fee for the first four hours of time spent searching for, compiling, segregating, redacting and reproducing a requested record.
  2. an agency records access officer shall not assess a fee for time spent segregating and redacting a requested record unless such segregation or redaction is required by law or approved by the Supervisor under 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g) and (h).
  3. an agency records access officer shall assess no fee of more than \$25 per hour for the cost to comply with a request for public records.
- (m) Municipal Records Access Officers.
  1. a municipal records access officer shall not assess a fee for the first two hours of time spent searching for, compiling, segregating, redacting and reproducing a requested record in a municipality with a population of over 20,000.
  2. a municipal records access officer in a municipality with a population of 20,000 persons or fewer may assess a fee for the first two hours of time spent compiling, segregating, redacting and reproducing a requested record, provided:
    - i. population data shall be determined by the decennial U.S. Census; and
    - ii. it shall be the burden of the municipal records access officer to provide population data information in responses in which it seeks to assess such fees.
  3. a municipal records access officer shall assess no fee of more than \$25 per hour for the cost to comply with a request for public records unless approved by the Supervisor under 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g) and (h).
  4. a municipal records access officer shall not assess a fee for time spent segregating and redacting a requested record unless such segregation or redaction is required by law or approved by the Supervisor under 950 CMR 32.06(4)(g) and (h).



## 32.07: continued

(n) Failure to Pay Fee. A records access officer may provide written notice denying access to public records to a requester who has failed to compensate the custodian for previously produced public records, provided:

1. a fee estimate for a previous request was prepared in compliance with 950 CMR 32.00 and the requester agreed to pay the previous fee;
2. the written notice details the reasons for denial, including an itemized list of any balances attributed to previously produced records.

32.08: Appeals(1) Appeal to the Supervisor.

(a) 950 CMR 32.08 shall not apply to records in which an individual, or a representative of the individual, has a unique right of access to the record through statutory, regulatory, judicial or other applicable means.

(b) a requester may petition the Supervisor for failure by a records access officer to comply with a requirement of 950 CMR 32.00.

(c) an oral request, while valid as a public record request, shall not be the basis of an appeal under 950 CMR 32.08.

(d) petitions for appeal of a response by a records access officer must be made within 90 calendar days of the date of the response by a records access officer.

(e) petitions for appeal of a failure to respond within the timeliness requirements of 950 CMR 32.00 must be made within 90 calendar days of the request.

(f) all petitions for appeal shall be in writing and shall specifically describe the nature of the requester's objections to the response or failure to timely respond.

(g) requesters shall provide to the Supervisor complete copies of all correspondence associated with the petition, including:

1. a complete copy of the letter by which the request was made, including in the case of electronic communications all header information indicating time, date, subject, sender and recipient email addresses; and
2. a complete copy of all written responses associated with requests subject to the petition for appeal, including in the case of electronic communications all header information indicating time, date, subject, sender and recipient email addresses.

(h) in petitioning the Supervisor, the requester shall provide a copy of such petition to the records access officer associated with such petition.

(i) if the requester's petition for appeal is related to a previous appeal to the Supervisor, the requester's petition shall refer to the previous appeal number.

(j) petitions under 950 CMR 32.08 received before 4:00 P.M. shall be opened on the day of receipt. Petitions received after 4:00 PM shall be opened on the following business day.

(2) Dispositions of Appeals.

(a) the Supervisor shall issue a written determination regarding any petition submitted in accordance with 950 CMR 32.08(1) not later than ten business days following receipt of the petition.

(b) the Supervisor may deny an appeal for, among other reasons if, in the opinion of the Supervisor:

1. the public records in question are the subjects of disputes in active litigation, administrative hearings or mediation;
2. the request is designed or intended to harass, intimidate, or assist in the commission of a crime;
3. the public records request is made solely for a commercial purpose;
4. the requester has failed to comply with the provisions of 950 CMR 32.08(2).

(c) upon a determination by the Supervisor that a violation has occurred, the Supervisor shall order timely and appropriate relief.

(3) Hearings and Conferences.

(a) the Supervisor may conduct a hearing pursuant to the provisions of 801 CMR 1.00: *Standard Adjudicatory Rules of Practice and Procedure*. The decision to hold a hearing shall be solely in the discretion of the Supervisor.

32.08: continued

1. said rules shall govern the conduct and procedure of all hearings conducted pursuant to 950 CMR 32.08.
  2. nothing in 950 CMR 32.08 shall limit the Supervisor from employing any administrative means available to resolve summarily any appeal arising under 950 CMR 32.00.
- (b) the Supervisor may order conferences for the purpose of clarifying and simplifying issues and otherwise facilitating or expediting the investigation or proceeding. The decision to hold a conference shall be solely in the discretion of the Supervisor.
- (4) In Camera Inspections and Submissions of Data.
- (a) the Supervisor may require an inspection of the requested record(s) in camera during any investigation or any proceeding initiated pursuant to 950 CMR 32.08.
  - (b) the Supervisor may require the records access officer to produce other records and information necessary to reach a determination pursuant to 950 CMR 32.08.
  - (c) the Supervisor does not maintain custody of documents received from a records access officer submitted for an in camera review. The documents submitted for an in camera review do not fall within the definition of public records. M.G.L. c. 4, § 7(26).
  - (d) upon a determination of the public record status of the documents, they are promptly returned to the custodian, and no copies shall be retained by the Supervisor.
  - (e) any public record request made to the Division for records being reviewed in camera would necessarily be denied, as the office would not be the custodian of those records.
  - (f) attorney-client privileged records voluntarily submitted to Supervisor:
    1. a records access officer may voluntarily submit documents to the Supervisor for in camera review;
    2. such submission shall not waive any legally applicable privileges claimed by the agency or municipality.
- (5) Custodial Indexing of Records.
- (a) the Supervisor may require a records access officer or custodian to compile an index of the requested records within the context of a public records appeal under 950 CMR 32.08.
  - (b) said index shall be a public record and shall meet the following requirements:
    1. the index shall be contained in one document, complete in itself;
    2. the index shall adequately describe each withheld record or redaction from a released record;
    3. the index must state the exemption or exemptions claimed for each withheld record or each redaction of a record; and
    4. the descriptions of the withheld material and the exemption or exemptions claimed for the withheld material must be sufficiently specific to permit the Supervisor to make a reasoned judgment as to whether the material is exempt.
  - (c) nothing in 950 CMR 32.08 shall preclude the Supervisor from employing alternative or supplemental procedures to meet the particular circumstances of each appeal.

32.09: Enforcement of Orders

A records access officer shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to comply with an order of the Supervisor. If a records access officer fails to comply with an order issued by the Supervisor, the Supervisor, upon the Supervisor's initiative, may notify the Attorney General to ensure compliance.

32.10: Advisory Opinions

Advisory opinions from the Supervisor may be requested. However, it shall be in the Supervisor's discretion whether to issue an advisory opinion. The Supervisor has and will continue to provide a staff member on call every day during regular business hours to offer informal information to any person, whether a requester or custodian.

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

950 CMR 32.00: M.G.L. c. 66, § 1.