

Section 1 – Introduction

The Orcas Island Health Care District (the “District”) is required to adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations for compliance with the Washington State Public Records Act (“PRA”), and to provide access to public records, protect public records from damage and disorganization and prevent excessive interference with other essential functions of the District. The District is also required to protect certain public records from disclosure subject to various legal exemptions.

Section 2 – Policy

This policy establishes the procedures the District will follow to provide for the fullest assistance to persons requesting public documents from the District while protecting public records from damage and preventing excessive interference with other essential District functions.

Except where these guidelines are mandated by statute, the guidelines in this policy are advisory only and shall not impose any affirmative duty on the District. The District reserves the right to apply and interpret this policy as it deems appropriate, and to revise or change this policy at any time. Failure to comply with any provision of this policy shall not result in any liability imposed upon the District other than that required in the PRA.

Section 3 – Definitions

3.1 Public Record

A “public record” includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the affairs of the District or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by the District regardless of physical form or characteristics whether that record resides in the District’s facilities or on District equipment or is in the possession of or resides on the personal equipment of a District Commissioner, executive or employee, except for certain records of volunteers excluded by RCW 42.56.010(3).

3.2 Writing

A “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 any 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. Writing also includes emails, texts, social media postings and databases.

3.3 Identifiable Record

An “Identifiable record” means a record in existence at the time the records request is made and that the District’s PRO or the District’s staff can locate after an objectively reasonable search.

3.4 Exempt Record

An “exempt record” includes all District records that are specifically exempted or prohibited from disclosure by state or federal law.

3.5 Public Records Officer

The “Public Records Officer” or “PRO” is the Superintendent of the District to serve as the point of contact for persons seeking public records. The PRO is responsible for providing the “fullest assistance” to persons requesting public documents, maintaining the public records of the District in a reasonably orderly manner; ensuring that public records are protected from damage or disorganization; and preventing excessive interference with essential functions of the District. The PRO may designate one or more members of the District’s staff to fulfill some or all of the PRO’s responsibilities set forth in this Policy. The PRO shall complete initial public records act training and refresher trainings as required by RCW 42.56.152.

3.6 Office Address

The District’s address for requesting public records is 410 Prune Alley, Unit B, Eastsound, WA 98245 or by mail at P.O. Box 226, Eastsound, WA 98245-0226.

Section 4 – Procedure for Requesting Documents

4.1 Request Format

Requestors are encouraged to use the form available on the District’s website to make public records requests. While there is no specific required format for a public records request, a person requesting public documents (the “requestor”) must provide the District with reasonable notice that the request being made is for public records. If a request is contained in a larger document unrelated to a public records request, the requestor should point out the public records request by labeling the front page of the document as containing a public records request or otherwise calling the request to the attention of the PRO to facilitate timely response to the request.

4.2 Required Information

All public records requests can be initiated in person, by mail, fax or email, addressed to the PRO at the contact information indicated on the District’s website at <https://orcashealth.org/contact-us/>, or through the District’s website at <https://orcashealth.org/public-records-requests/>. All requests, in whatever format, must include the following information:

- A. The requesting person’s name (unless the requestor wishes to remain anonymous) and a mailing address, email address or contact phone number;

- B. The date of the request;
- C. The nature of the request, including a detailed description of the public record(s) adequate for the District personnel to be able to locate the records;
- D. If the request is for a list of names, a statement regarding whether the records are being requested for a commercial purpose; and
- E. Whether the requestor desires copies (hard copy or electronic), or to inspect the requested records in-person.

4.3 Website Requests

The District maintains a website at <https://orcashealth.org/> that contains many of the District's public records and a form at <https://orcashealth.org/public-records-requests/> for electronically requesting a copy of the District's public records. The form is attached as Exhibit A to this policy. Requestors are encouraged to view records available on the website prior to submitting a records request to conserve taxpayer resources.

Requestors are encouraged to use the website form to make public records requests. The District may respond to a request to provide access to a public record by providing the requestor with a link to the District's website containing an electronic copy of that record if it can be determined that the requestor has internet access and the requestor agrees that the request has been satisfied.

4.4 Written Requests

Written public records requests may be submitted to the District at its mailing address at P.O. Box 226, Eastsound WA 98245-0226.

Section 5 – Response to Requests

5.1 Request Log

Upon receipt of a request, the District will assign it a tracking number and log it in the request log, noting the identity of the requestor if provided by the requestor, the date the request was received, and the text of the original request.

5.2 Response to Requests

The District will process requests in the most efficient manner as the PRO deems appropriate. The PRO or designee will evaluate the request according to the nature of the request, volume, and availability of requested records. Within five (5) business days of receiving a request, the PRO or designee will:

- A. Provide a copy of the record(s) or provide the internet address and link where the records can be found on the District's website if the requestor can access the records electronically; or,

- B. If the records cannot be provided within five (5) business days, acknowledge that the request has been received and provide a reasonable estimate of the time the District will need to complete the entire request; or,
- C. If all or a portion of the request is unclear, acknowledge receipt of the request and ask the requestor for clarification of any unclear portion of the request while providing a reasonable estimate of the time it will take to respond to the clear portion of the request (if the entire request is unclear then the District shall notify the requestor that it will not respond to the request if it is not clarified); or,
- D. Deny the request.

5.3 Failure to Respond

If the District does not respond to a request within five (5) business days, the requestor should contact the PRO to determine the reason for the failure to respond including verifying the District received the request.

5.4 Additional Time

Additional time to respond may be needed based on the need to clarify the records sought by the request, to locate and assemble the records, to redact confidential or exempt information, to prepare a withholding index, to notify third parties or agencies affected by the request and provide those parties/agencies with the opportunity to seek a court order preventing disclosure where appropriate, and/or to consult with the District's legal counsel about whether the records are exempt from disclosure. The PRO should briefly explain the basis for the time estimated to respond. Should an extension of time be necessary to fulfill the request, the PRO will provide a revised estimate and explain the changed circumstances that make it necessary.

5.5 Scope of Request

In order to conserve taxpayer resources, if the District receives requests for public records identified in terms of "any and all documents related to" or similar language, the PRO will ask the requestor to help narrow the scope of the documents being sought in order to expedite the District's response and/or reduce the volume of potentially responsive documents. If the requestor is unable or unwilling to narrow the scope of the request, the PRO is allowed to err on the side of producing more rather than fewer documents in response to such a broad, general request. When a request uses a phrase such as "all records relating to", the PRO may interpret the request to be for records which directly and fairly address the topic. District staff shall not be obligated to interpret such a broad, general request in order to decipher which specific documents may be of interest to the requestor and the PRA does not allow a requestor to search through the District's files for records which cannot be identified or described to the District.

5.6 Commercial Purposes

The District is not authorized to provide lists of individuals for commercial purposes. Requestors will be required to submit sufficient information for the District to determine

whether release of records is prohibited. Depending on the circumstances or information provided the District may ask for additional information.

5.7 Unclear or Incomplete Requests

If the requestor fails to clarify an unclear request within thirty (30) working days, and the entire request is unclear, the District will treat the request as having been abandoned or withdrawn. If the requestor does not provide all of the information required by Section 4.2, the PRO shall respond to the request to the extent feasible and consistent with the law.

5.8 Personal Information

If the public record contains information that may affect the rights of others, the District may, prior to providing the records, give notice to those whose rights might be affected and provide them with a copy of the public records request to allow the party to seek relief pursuant to RCW 42.56.540. The District may take the above into account when providing an estimate of when the records will be available. Nothing in this policy is intended to, nor does it, create any right to such notice.

5.9 Providing Records in Installments

When the request is for a large number of records, the District may provide access for inspection and copying in partial installments if the PRO reasonably determines that it would be practical to provide the records in that way. The PRO may ask a requestor to prioritize the records he or she is requesting so that the most important records may be provided first. If the requestor does not contact the PRO within thirty (30) working days to arrange for the review of an installment after it is made available, the District may deem the request abandoned and may stop fulfilling the remainder of the request. When the requestor has found the records he or she is seeking, the requestor should advise the PRO that the requested records have been provided and the remainder of the request may be cancelled.

5.10 Electronic Records

The process for requesting electronic public records is the same as the process for requesting paper public records. When a requestor requests records in an electronic format, if technically feasible, the PRO will provide the nonexempt records or portions of such records that are reasonably locatable in an electronic format that is used by the District and is generally commercially available; or will provide the records in a format that is reasonably translatable from the format in which the District keeps the record. The District may provide customized access under RCW 42.56.120 if the request would require the use of information technology expertise to prepare data compilations or provide customized electronic access services when such compilations and customized access services are not used by the District for other agency purposes. The District may charge a fee consistent with RCW 42.56.120 for such customized access.

5.11 No Duty to Create Records

This policy does not require the District to answer written questions, summarize data or information, create new public records, or provide information in a format that is different

from original public records; however, the District may in its discretion, create such a new record to fulfill the request where it may be easier for the District to create a record responsive to the request than to collect and make available voluminous records that contain small pieces of information responsive to the request. If the District is considering creating a new record instead of disclosing the underlying responsive records, or creating new records from a database, it should obtain the consent of the requestor to ensure that the requestor is not actually seeking the underlying responsive records, and describe any customized service charges that may apply.

5.12 No Duty to Provide Information

This policy does not require the District to respond to requests for information, research, opinions or advice. Requests for information, research, opinions, advice, or similar requests will not be responded to pursuant to this policy.

5.13 No Duty to Supplement Responses

The District is not obligated to hold current records requests open to respond to requests for records that may be created in the future. Responsive records are limited to those records in existence as of the date the request was received by the District. A new request must be made to obtain later-created public records.

5.14 No Duty to Respond to BOT Requests

The District is not obligated to respond to a records request that it reasonably believes was automatically generated by a computer program or script if the District has already received one or more requests from the requestor during the preceding twenty-four (24) hours.

5.15 Fees

The District adopts the statutory default copying costs set forth in RCW 42.56.120 (as amended from time to time) because it would be unduly burdensome for the District to calculate, adopt and impose actual copying costs for public records requests. The District's public records fee schedule is set forth on Exhibit B attached hereto, a copy of which will be maintained by the District on its website at <https://orcashealth.org/public-records-requests/>. No sales tax will be charged on copies made by the District at its facilities. If the District sends the public records to an outside vendor for copying, the District will charge the actual fees incurred, provided having the outside vendor copy the records is quicker and less expensive than having District staff make the copies. Fees may be waived if fewer than 25 copies are made, or less than 25 pages are scanned. Payment of fees is required prior to release of records unless other arrangements have been made.

5.16 Deposit

The District may require a deposit of up to ten percent (10%) of the estimated cost of copying records, including any customized service charges, prior to copying any records for a requestor. The District may also require payment of the remainder of the cost or charges before providing the records, or the payment of the costs of copying an installment before providing that installment.

5.17 Closing Abandoned, Withdrawn or Unpaid Requests

If the requestor withdraws the request, fails to provide clarification for a request, fails to fulfill his or her obligation to inspect the records within thirty (30) days of notice that the records are available for inspection, fails to retrieve records from the District at the District office or provided through electronic file transfer, or fails to pay the deposit, installment payment or final payment for the requested copies, District personnel will close the request. District personnel will document closure of the request and the conditions that led to closure and, unless the District has already indicated in previous correspondence that the request would be closed under the above circumstances, notify the requestor that the request has been closed.

5.18 Completion and Closure of Requests

When the PRO or designee has completed his or her search for requested records, the PRO will indicate to the requestor that the District has completed a reasonable search for the requested records and made any nonexempt records that it located available for inspection and copying. If no records were discovered, the PRO should describe, in general terms, the locations searched.

The PRO should document closure of the request via written letter to the Requester which sufficiently summarizes the District's processing of the request and clearly notifies the Requester that the District does not intend to provide any further records in response to the request and that the one-year statute of limitations has begun to run. The closure letter should provide a reasonable amount of time in which the Requestor should contact the District with questions regarding the request and/or to allege records were missed or wrongfully withheld.

The PRO or designee shall note in the request log a description of each record that was provided and each record that was redacted or withheld and the reasons for redacting or withholding, along with the date of the final disposition of the request.

5.19 Later Discovered Records

If, after the District has informed the requestor that it has provided all available records, the District becomes aware of additional responsive documents existing at the time of the request, it will promptly inform the requestor of the additional documents, including a brief explanation of the circumstances and provide the nonexempt records on an expedited basis.

Section 6 – Inspection of Records

6.1 Time of Inspection

For requests which the requestor indicates a desire to inspect the records in-person, the PRO shall process such request as any other request, including but not limited to (i) searching for and compiling responsive records, and making any redactions and accompanying exemption log if applicable to the responsive records. Once the responsive records have been compiled and properly reviewing for exemptions, the

PRO will notify the requestor that the records are available for inspection and copying at the District Office by prior arrangement Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding the lunch hour (Noon – 1:00 p.m.) and excluding legal holidays. District personnel and the requestor should make mutually agreeable arrangements for time(s) of inspection and copying.

6.2 Space for Inspection

To the extent possible, the PRO shall promptly provide space to inspect public records at the Office Address.

6.3 Oversight of Inspection

The District deems it necessary, in order to comply with the PRA's mandate to protect public records, to require that inspections of public records be conducted in the presence of the PRO or designated staff. The District will make every effort to provide staff to oversee the expeditious inspection of public records without unduly compromising or unreasonably interfering with the essential functions of the District. All assistance necessary to help requestors locate and inspect particular responsive records shall be provided by the PRO, provided that the giving of such assistance does not unreasonably disrupt the daily operations of the PRO or other duties of any assisting employee(s). In accommodating a request for public records inspection, the District may consider the size of the request, the ease with which the requested records can be made available for inspection, and special accommodations requested by the requestor in order to inspect the records, the availability (schedule) of the requestor to conduct the inspection, the availability of District staff to observe the inspection, the time constraints on staff availability imposed by other current District business, and any other relevant circumstance.

6.4 Copying of Inspected Records

After inspection is complete, the requestor shall indicate which documents he/she wishes to have copied using a non-permanent method of marking the desired records as approved by the PRO. The PRO will arrange for copying, calculate any copying costs applicable to the records and notify the requester of any costs due.

Section 7 – Exempted Records

7.1 Public Records Exempt from Public Disclosure

The District is not required to permit public inspection and copying of records for which public disclosure of the record is prohibited, restricted or limited by state law or federal statute or regulation, including but not limited to those exemptions within RCW 42.56.230 - RCW 42.56.680; RCW 5.60.060(2)(a); RCW 70.02 et. seq.; RCW 39.26.030(2); RCW 19.108 et. seq.; and RCW 43.70.050(2). The District's failure to list an exemption in this section 7.1 shall not affect the effectiveness of the exemption. The PRO may also seek sufficient information from the requestor to determine if a statute or court order may prohibit disclosure.

7.2 Denial of Request Due to Exemption

All denials of requests for public records will be accompanied by a written statement specifying the reason(s) for the denial, including a statement of the specific exemption authorizing the withholding of the record and a brief explanation of how the exemption applies to the record withheld. If only a portion of the record is exempt from disclosure, the PRO will redact the exempt portion and provide the remainder of the record with an explanation of the reason for redacting portions of the record.

7.3 Mechanism for Review of Denial

Any person who objects to the denial of a public records request may petition in writing to the PRO for a review. The petition shall include a copy of or reasonably identify the written statement by the PRO or designee denying the request. The PRO shall provide a copy of the petition and any other relevant information to the individual designated by the District's Board, who shall perform a review and either affirm or reverse the denial as promptly as possible but in any event within two (2) business days of the District's receipt of the petition, unless otherwise agreed by the District and the requestor.

7.4 Judicial Review of Denial

A requestor may seek judicial review of any denial two (2) business days after the District denies a request regardless of any petition to review the denial.

Section 8 – Preservation of Public Records

No member of the public may remove a public record from the District Office or other location where the records are being inspected. No member of the public may remove a public record from a viewing area, disassemble, or alter, fold, mark, deface, tear, damage or destroy any public record. Public records maintained in a file jacket or binders, or in chronological order, may not be dismantled except for the purpose of copying, and then only by District staff. Copies of public records may be copied only on District copying equipment unless other arrangements are made by the PRO. No food or drink will be permitted during the inspection of public records. Access to file cabinets, shelves and other District storage areas is restricted to authorized District staff.

Section 9 – Organization of Public Records

The District has determined that maintaining an index of records would be unduly burdensome for the District's staff and could interfere with the District's operations and has adopted a resolution stating its findings and providing that an index of records will not be maintained. The District has directed the Superintendent to maintain the District's records in reasonable order and to post any indexes that the District creates on its website.

Section 10 – Retention of Records

The District is not required to retain all records it creates or uses. However, the District will follow RCW Chapter 40.14, Preservation and Destruction of Public Records, in the

retention and destruction of public records. The Secretary of State, State Archives Committee approves a general retention schedule for local agency records that is common to most agencies. The retention schedule for local agencies is available at www.sos.wa.gov/archives. Retention schedules for documents vary based on the content of the record.

The District shall not alter or destroy any records responsive to a pending public records request or related to a litigation hold.

Section 11 – Loss of Right to Inspect

Inspection shall be denied, and the records withdrawn by the PRO if the requestor, when reviewing the records, acts in a manner which will damage or substantially disorganize the records or interfere excessively with other essential functions of the District.

Section 12 – Disclaimer of Liability

Neither the District nor any Commissioner, officer, employee, official or custodian shall be liable, nor shall a cause of action exist, for any loss or damage based upon a release of public records if the person releasing the records acted in good faith in attempting to comply with this policy and/or the PRA. This policy is not intended to expand or restrict the rights of disclosure or privacy as they exist under state and federal law. Despite the use of any mandatory terms such as “shall”, nothing in this policy is intended to impose mandatory duties on the District beyond those imposed by state and federal law.

Policy Adopted July 3, 2018

Policy Amended November 6, 2018

Policy Amended October 7, 2024



**Exhibit A
Public Records Request Form**

Requester's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Describe the records you are requesting and provide any additional information to help locate the records, such as author, recipient, title, and pertinent dates. Attach additional pages if necessary:

After requested records are retrieved, I would like to:

- Inspect the records (no charge)
- Pickup hard copies
- Receive hard copies via mail
- Receive electronic copies via email; or
- Other (specify: _____)

I understand that there will be a fee for records delivered to me. See the fee schedule posted at <https://orcashealth.org/public-records-requests/>.

If my request is for a list of individuals, I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington that the information obtained through this request will not be used for commercial purposes.

_____/_____
Signature / Date

Orcas Island Health Care District Fee Schedule

Orcas Island Health Care District Fee Schedule	
Inspection:	
No fee	Inspection by requester in-person at District office.
No fee	Requester accessing or downloading records the office routinely posts on the District website.
Copies:	
15 cents/page	Photocopy of paper records, or printed (paper) copies of electronic records (applies if requester asks for paper copies).
10 cents/page	Electronic copy of scanned paper records (applies if paper copies must be scanned in order to produce in electronic format).
5 cents for each 4 electronic files or attachments	Uploaded to email, cloud-based data storage service, or other means of electronic delivery.
10 cents/gigabyte	Transmission of public records in an electronic format or for the use of agency equipment to send the records electronically
Actual cost	Digital storage media or devices (<i>list</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD • DVD • Thumb drive • Other
Actual cost	Postage or delivery charges – Specific amount based upon postage/delivery charges for specific mailings or deliveries.
<p>↑ <i>Copy charges above may be combined to the extent more than one type of charge applies to copies responsive to a particular request.</i></p>	
Actual cost	Customized Service Charge - requires the use of information technology expertise to prepare data compilations, or provide customized electronic access services when such compilations and customized access services are not used by the agency for other agency purposes (cost is in addition to any above fees for copies).