

Public Records Requests
CHARLESTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST PROCEDURE

Purpose:

Members of the public are entitled to access to public records pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Access to Public Records Act (R.I. General Laws 38-2 et. seq. "APRA"). The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate public access and inspection of public records in a prompt and efficient manner and to provide access to public records within a reasonable period of time. It should be noted that under APRA certain documents or information are not public where disclosure is exempt, is unlawful or constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

Public Records Requests:

Requests for access to public records must be made at the Charlestown Police Department between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays, (excluding government holidays) or electronically at records_request@charlestownpolice.org.

Public record request forms also may be faxed to 401-213-6941.

To insure prompt and efficient access to public records in a reasonable amount of time, a "Public Records Request Form" must be completed. If the requesting party declines to complete the Public Records Request Form, staff will fill out the form, including the date, time and substance of the request to keep as a record and to insure conformance with APRA timeframes.

APRA provides that the Town has ten (10) business days to respond to an access to public records request or to be granted an extension for good cause. Documents responsive to the request will be compiled up to the date and time of receipt. If the request is denied, the denial will be made in writing and will state the specific reason(s) for the denial and will indicate the procedure(s) for an appeal.

It should be noted APRA does not require the Town to reorganize, consolidate, or compile data not maintained in the format requested.

Exempt Records:

Any reasonably segregable portion of a public record that is exempt shall be available after the deletion of information which is the basis of any exclusion and does not violate the intent of APRA.

Public Posting of Record Requests and Responses:

In order to provide access to issues that may be of interest to the general public, the Town may store documents on its website and/or internet link. The Town may refer records requests to the website and/or internet link for any documents already publicly posted and responsive to the request. Completed requests for public records and the responses may also be publicly posted.

Fees & Charges:

The Town may estimate a fee as established under APRA for responses in excess of ten (10) pages and/or one (1) hour of search, retrieval and segregation of exempt and non-exempt information. The charge for copies of public records on 8.5 X 11 inch or 8.5 X 14-inch one-sided paper in black ink, is fifteen cents (\$0.15) per page or as established under APRA. All other reproductions (color copies, photographs, maps, electronic data processing records, computer stored data, etc.) will be provided at actual costs. If records are mailed, the postage and cost of mailing materials will also be charged. Multiple requests from the same entity within a thirty (30) day period will be considered as a single request for the total calculation of allowable charges.

The requester will be required to pay the estimated cost in advance and prior to any records search or reproduction. If the actual total cost is less than the estimate the requester will be reimbursed the difference. If the actual cost exceeds the estimate, records gathered to that point will be forwarded as responsive to the request along with a revised estimate. The records search will be suspended until payment is received for the revised estimate.

There will be no charge for viewing or downloading any public record posted on the Town's website and/or internet link. There will be no charge for record responses of ten (10) pages or less [unless such charge(s) is specifically defined outside of APRA], impacting only (1) municipal department that requires less than one (1) hour of personnel time to search, retrieve, reproduce and segregate exempt and non-exempt information.