



IN REPLY TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
National Human Resources Management Center
Denver Federal Center, Building 50
Denver, CO 80225-0047

1278 (HR-250) P

September 23, 1997

EMS Transmission

Instruction Memorandum No. HR-97-023

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To: All BC, HR, RS, and Special National Projects and Initiatives Employees

From: Director, National Human Resource Center

Subject: Implementing the Recommendations of the DOI Freedom of Information Act
(FOIA) Reinvention Lab

The purpose of this memorandum is to implement the FOIA policies and procedures recommended by the Department of the Interior's National Performance Review's FOIA Reinvention Lab. The Department has charged IRM organizations with the responsibility for establishing comprehensive information policies to improve the use and dissemination of agency information through information technology.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Department recommends that FOIA operations, Information Resource Management (IRM) and Records Management policy be combined into one organization to facilitate the management of all information (automated information and paper records).

The National Human Resource Management Center, Information Resources Management Group (HR-250) will have the responsibility for providing overall policy on access issues for the three Centers, and for coordinating Centers' FOIA requests. Pat Day will serve as the Centers' FOIA Coordinator and Records Administrator. Pat was formerly BLM's Arizona State Office and National Training Center Records Administrator and has been the team lead for the Department's NPR FOIA Reinvention lab.

- **FOIA Procedures**

All FOIA requests received in the mail will be forwarded to the FOIA Coordinator. If an office receives a FOIA request directly from the requestor, that office must immediately hand-carry or

fax a copy of the request to the FOIA Coordinator for processing. The FAX number for FOIA requests is (303) 236-0711. The FOIA Coordinator will log in the request, assign a control number and will hand-carry or fax the request to the action office.

- **Action Office Responsibility**

The NPR Reinvention report highly encourages the action office to make a courtesy call to the requester to clarify the request. Often requesters have no knowledge of what information exists or how to get it. A call to the requester may help narrow the scope of the request and make our job much easier. The action office will perform the necessary research and prepare the response to the requester. The FOIA Coordinator can provide template letter examples and will help the action office in preparing the response letter.

- **Tracking Costs**

The action office must track the time spent processing the request. This information is reported in the Annual FOIA report to Congress and is needed if we must bill the requester.

- **Signing Authority**

The FOIA Coordinator will surname all responses to ensure that we have followed the proper format that we have answered the request fully, and that an exemption does not cover the records provided in the response. DOI recommends that the most knowledgeable employees (charged with FOIA responsibility) be the signers of the FOIA response letters. The following delegations will apply for the Centers:

Interim FOIA Responses: The FOIA Coordinator or action office Group Administrator may sign interim FOIA responses that clarify fee issues and scope of the FOIA request, and request extensions.

FOIA Responses Releasing Records: The action office Group Administrator may sign responses when we release records and no exemptions apply.

Denials, Fee Waivers or National Interest: The Center Directors will sign those FOIA requests that may be of national interest or high visibility and those requests which deny records or fee waivers. The FOIA Coordinator will evaluate the FOIA request to ascertain if the above criteria apply. All responses containing FOIA exemptions (denials) will be coordinated with the Regional Solicitor.

If you need additional information or assistance regarding FOIA procedures, Privacy Act or Records Administration policies, please contact Pat Day at 236-6362, FAX 236-0711 or

Laura Davis at 236-6578. Pat will be presenting informal training/information sessions to Center employees in the next few months.

Signed
Phyllis O'Neill
Acting Director

Authenticated
Darlene Robitaille
Secretary

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