

Public Records Policy

In the spirit of open government, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) complies with the Ohio Public Records Act, set forth in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code. The code provides the legal framework for seeking information from Ohio's public offices. This policy will further outline general procedures for requesting public records that BWC maintains.

Public record defined

Not all materials maintained by a state or local office are public records. In accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act, BWC generally regards a public record as the following: Any document, device or item maintained by a public office; created, received or sent by a public office, which documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities; and which does not fall under any exceptions to the Act.

Availability of records within a reasonable time

As the law requires, BWC makes every effort to ensure public records are available for inspection promptly and within a reasonable time period. To this end, prompt and reasonable depend upon:

- o Volume of records requested;
- o Form of the requested records;
- o The proximity of the location where the records are stored;
- o The need for any pre-release review of the records requested;
- o The scope of the request, the ease or difficulty of identifying, compiling, and reviewing potentially responsive records and BWC's operational needs.

Requestor's Rights

A requestor cannot be required to:

- o Disclose his or her identity;
- o Identify the purpose for the request;
- o Submit the request in writing.

However—*subject to the requestor's right to decline*—BWC may ask for this information if it would enable BWC to identify responsive records with greater accuracy and efficiency.

Because Ohio law exempts certain records from public disclosure, BWC reviews potentially responsive records before releasing them. This helps protect exempt information as permitted or required by law. Once BWC receives a request, the public records unit searches for, gathers and reviews responsive records. If necessary, BWC will make appropriate redactions and/or withhold exempt records prior to disclosing the material. In accordance with this process, records will typically not be available the same day BWC receives a request.

Costs

BWC may require the requestor to pay the actual cost for copying, delivering or transmitting the records (including the cost of materials, packaging supplies, postage, etc.). As a general rule, the charge for producing records should be no more than 5 cents per page and \$1 per CD-ROM. In addition, BWC may require the requestor to pay in advance.

Requests/questions

Submit requests and inquiries to:

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
Attention: Legal Division—Public Records Unit
30 W. Spring St. 26th floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-752-9147 | Fax: 614-621-9454
Email: publicrecords@bwc.state.oh.us



Bureau of Workers'
Compensation