

FOIA Bulletin Number: 22-02

Subject: Preapprovals for Withholding Certain Categories of Information Contained in Records Requested under the Freedom of Information Act

1. Purpose. This FOIA Bulletin authorizes FOIA personnel to withhold certain preapproved categories of information contained in records released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without further consultation with the Office of the Solicitor (SOL). It supersedes and replaces FOIA Bulletin 20-01.

2. Effective Date. This policy is effective March 15, 2022.

3. Authorities.

- [Title 5 of the United States Code, Section 552](#)
- [43 CFR Part 2, Sections 2.23\(c\) and 2.24\(b\)\(5\)](#)
- [383 DM 15](#)
- [Secretary's Order No. 3371](#)
- [Secretary's Order No. 3378](#)

4. Coverage. This policy applies to all FOIA personnel within the bureaus/offices of the Department (except the Office of Inspector General) and supersedes any conflicting Departmental or bureau/office policies or procedures. Bureaus/offices may issue implementing procedures consistent with this policy if the Departmental FOIA Office (DFO) first reviews and approves all such procedures in writing.

5. Policy. FOIA personnel may withhold the following categories of information without obtaining further consultation with SOL:

- **Under Exemption 5:**
 - Bureau/office conference call numbers and passcodes; and
 - Bureau/office online meeting links for reoccurring meetings.
- **Under Exemption 5 and Exemption 6:**
 - Government credit card numbers.
- **Under Exemption 6:**
 - A particular individual's:
 - a. Social Security number;
 - b. Tribal enrollment number;
 - c. Passport number;
 - d. Airline membership/frequent-flier account number;
 - e. Credit card number;
 - f. Bank account number;
 - g. Age;
 - h. Place of birth;
 - i. Medical information (for example, medical conditions, medical history—including pregnancy status and history—and details of insurance benefits);

- j. Biometric information (for example, x-rays, fingerprints, retinal scan, voice signature, facial geometry, DNA, and genetic information);
- k. Marital status;
- l. Emergency contacts;
- m. Information pertaining to eligibility for retirement (including service computation dates and tenure);
- n. Information pertaining to eligibility for disability preferences;
- o. Financial information, such as credit ratings and personal credit card or financial account numbers;
- p. Appointment for drug testing documented in a Visitor Log;
- q. Personal cellular phone number documented in a Visitor Log; and
- r. Name, if the individual is a minor, documented in a Visitor Log.

6. Responsibilities. In the release letter to the requester, FOIA personnel must identify any preapproved category/categories they utilized (along with the applicable exemption language) and state that the preapproved withholdings were made in consultation with SOL's Division of General Law and the DFO, using language provided by the DFO. If a specific attorney was consulted as to other withholdings in the release and/or the denial of a fee waiver request, the name and title of that attorney must also be included with respect to those determinations, again using language provided by the DFO.

7. Distribution. This policy will be distributed to all FOIA personnel upon issuance. Bureau FOIA Officers are responsible for distributing it to all FOIA personnel new to the Department as part of their orientation materials. This policy will also be made available to all FOIA personnel on the Department's FOIA website accessible at <https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/ocio-solicitor-dfo/SitePages/FOIA-Laws-Regulations-Policies-Procedures.aspx>, which provides additional FOIA resources.

8. Rights and Benefits. This policy is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or FOIA personnel, or any other person.