

EPA Classification No.: CIO 2171-P-01	CIO Approval Date: 1/24/2008
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*Issued by the EPA Chief Information Officer,
Pursuant to Delegation 1-19, dated 07/07/2005*

INFORMATION ACCESS PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE

This procedure identifies specific requirements, processes, and supporting documents that EPA uses to implement the Information Access policy.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This procedure will apply to all data and information products created or arranged for the purpose of providing access to EPA staff and/or the public.

This specifically excludes correspondence, whether electronic or paper, and records of telephone conversations, and documents that fall under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions (Refer to EPA 1550 Freedom of Information Act Manual Chapter 7 for details). When access to information, as it is collected or maintained, is restricted by any authorized Federal or State requirements for confidentiality, privacy, national defense, or enforcement sensitivity, or other authorized purpose, the information will be processed (e.g., aggregated, summarized, or characterized) as appropriate to provide access while meeting requirements for restriction. These procedures will adhere to restrictions on the release of Confidential Business Information and to legislation such as the Privacy Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act, which establish restrictions and penalties for the improper release of information.

3. AUDIENCE

The audience for this procedure includes all EPA offices and regions, including contractors and grantees operating on behalf of EPA or using EPA funding sources.

4. BACKGROUND

Providing access to information is crucial to EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment. Access to environmental information facilitates public participation in environmental protection.

All Federal Agencies, including EPA, must address the issue of information access and continually address social and technological changes in how the public accesses information. It is important for EPA to address these issues to ensure that all generations to come have access to EPA's information.

5. AUTHORITY

CIO Policy 2171.0 Information Access Policy

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6. PROCEDURES

Program offices across EPA issue requirements, procedures, and supporting documentation on how to provide access to information. This document identifies existing resources that serve as "procedures" for each statement (identified below by A., B., C., etc.) in EPA's Information Access Policy.

Access to government information is essential in order for EPA employees to accomplish EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment and for citizens to be informed about their environment. It is EPA policy that all applicable Agency information products regardless of format (e.g., electronic (including the Internet), paper, etc. with exceptions noted under Section 2, Scope and Applicability) will be created, collected, maintained, and managed in a manner which will promote access.

- A. The Agency will provide an array of information products and services targeted to its customers (both internal and external). These products may be in electronic and/or hard copy formats.
 - B. The epa.gov Web site communicates the fullest array of Agency information, including: general information, program actions and activities, regulations, data, science and educational materials. EPA publications posted on the epa.gov Web site will adhere to this policy, the Web Governance and Management Policy, and other applicable EPA policies.
 - CIO Policy 2180.0 Web Governance and Management Policy [09/07/2006]
 - C. EPA will provide permanent access, in either electronic or non-electronic format, to EPA information products depicting EPA's environmental mission activities (i.e., EPA Records Schedule 250a), that are published **electronically (born digital)** and will ensure that these documents are inventoried, stored, retrieved and, as appropriate, made available to internal and external audiences.
 - Procedures for Digitizing and Dispersing Library Collections - <http://intranet.epa.gov/epahqirc/natlibra/transition.htm>
 - EPA Publication Numbering System - <http://www.epa.gov/nscep/nscep-codes.htm>
 - Form to Request an EPA Publication Number - http://cincinnati.epa.gov/services/nscep/nscep_form.asp
 - National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) - <http://www.epa.gov/nscep/>
 - CIO Policy 2183.0 Access to Current and Outdated Information on EPA's Web Site Policy [12/06/2004]
 - EPA Records Web page - <http://www.epa.gov/records/>
 - EPA Records Schedule 250 - <http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/sched/250.htm>
 - D. EPA will provide permanent access, in either electronic or non-electronic format, to EPA information products depicting EPA's environmental mission activities (i.e., EPA Records Schedule 250a), that are published **in hard copy** and will ensure that these documents are inventoried, stored, retrieved and, as appropriate, made available to internal and external audiences.
 - Procedures for Digitizing and Dispersing Library Collections - <http://intranet.epa.gov/epahqirc/natlibra/transition.htm>
 - EPA Publication Numbering System - <http://www.epa.gov/nscep/nscep-codes.htm>
 - National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) - <http://www.epa.gov/nscep/>
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- CIO Policy 2183.0 Access to Current and Outdated Information on EPA's Web Site Policy [12/06/2004]
- EPA Records Web page - <http://www.epa.gov/records/>
- EPA Records Schedule 250 - <http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/sched/250.htm>

E. Agency publications, as appropriate, will be digitized into the Agency's electronic repository for information products.

- Procedures for Digitizing and Dispersing Library Collections - <http://intranet.epa.gov/epahqirc/natlibra/transition.htm>

F. EPA will comply with requirements for submitting publications (both hardcopy and born digital) to the Government Printing Office (GPO) and/or the National Technical Information Service (NTIS).

- Assistant Administrator Charles L. Grizzle memorandum, "Printing Control Officer Dissemination Role", March 28, 1991.

G. The Agency will follow the requirements for EPA's Publication Numbering System to ensure that all applicable EPA publications whether electronic (including born digital), paper or other format are easily identified and tracked by a (unique) EPA publication number.

- EPA Publication Numbering System - <http://www.epa.gov/nscep/nscep-codes.htm>
- National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP) - <http://www.epa.gov/nscep/>

H. The Agency will adhere to its Customer Service and Public Access Standards when serving all external and internal customers.

- CIO Standard 2170-S-01 Customer Service and Public Access Standards

I. The Agency will make its electronic data and information products, which fall under the definition of "electronic and information technology" as defined by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, accessible to people with disabilities.

- CIO Policy 2130.0 Accessible Electronic and Information Technology Policy [04/05/2006]

J. The Agency will provide appropriate access for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), to the extent resources allow, as well as consider ways to address other access barriers the public may face in obtaining information such as lack of Internet access.

- Web Council Best Practices "Translating Web Content into Alternate Languages" - <http://yosemite.epa.gov/OEI/webguide.nsf/standards-guidance/translation>

K. Information products will adhere to the EPA Information Quality Guidelines, EPA product review requirements and/or peer review requirements for scientific and technical documents, as applicable.

- EPA's Information Quality Guidelines (IQG) <http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/informationguidelines/>
- Communications Product Development and Review (Product Review) - <http://www.epa.gov/productreview/>
- Peer Review Program - <http://www.epa.gov/peerreview/>

L. The Agency will strive to ensure, as appropriate, that all information products resulting from a

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contract, an IAG (interagency agreement) or a grant, are made publicly available. Agency contracts, assistance agreements and grants will require that final deliverables, as defined in Records Schedule 258, be submitted, at a minimum, in electronic format.

- EPA Records Web page - <http://www.epa.gov/records/>
- EPA Records Schedule 258 - <http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/sched/258.htm>

M. All new and enhanced data systems, data collections, and databases will be designed with consideration of the need to permit and facilitate public access to that information.

- EPA's Information Quality Guidelines (IQG)
<http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/informationguidelines/>

N. The Agency will provide, where available, information on the uses and limits of each data product released to the public. The information provided may describe the Agency's purpose for collecting the data, the source of the data, the documented quality of the data, the Agency's application of the data, and limitations or cautions in using the data. The Agency may issue a disclaimer against using the data for other than the purpose intended, to minimize the risk of misinterpretations of the information.

O. The Agency will encourage and facilitate the exchange of data and information across EPA programs and with Federal and State agencies.

- EPA's Information Quality Guidelines (IQG)
<http://www.epa.gov/QUALITY/informationguidelines/>

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Please refer to CIO Policy 2171.0 Information Access Policy

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to CIO Policy 2171.0 Information Access Policy

9. DEFINITIONS

Please refer to CIO Policy 2171.0 Information Access Policy

10. WAIVERS

There are no waivers from this procedure. Please refer to Scope and Applicability (Section 2) for exclusions and types of information products that are not covered by the Information Access Policy or Procedure.

11. RELATED POLICIES, STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

Not applicable.

12. MATERIAL SUPERSEDED

Not applicable.

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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For further information about this Policy, please contact the Policy and Program Management Branch of the Information Access Division in Office of Information Analysis and Access, Office of Environmental Information.



Molly A. O'Neill Assistant Administrator
and Chief Information Officer
Office of Environmental Information