

FOIA Section of the DHS Cabinet Report to the White House
Submission Guidelines
(updated August 4, 2006)

The Chief Privacy Officer memo, February 9, 2005, is the reference for the submission requirement. Every Friday, components must report significant FOIA activities for the past working week to the Privacy Office (P.O.). The Privacy Office FOIA leadership integrates the information into its weekly report to the White House Liaison. Negative reports are required.

Guidelines for submissions:

1. Submit items by e-mail within the text of the e-mail, no attachments.
2. Submit, with one exception (see 3(l) below), **ONLY INCOMING** FOIA requests and appeal information.
3. Select FOIA requests for submission if one of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The FOIA request relates to a Presidential or agency priority;
 - b. The FOIA requester or requested documents will garner media attention or is receiving media attention;
 - c. The FOIA request is for documents associated with meetings with prominent elected, business, and/or community leaders;
 - d. The FOIA request is for congressional correspondence;
 - e. The FOIA request is from a member of Congress;
 - f. The FOIA request is from a member of the media;
 - g. The FOIA request is from a member of an activist group, watchdog organization, special interest group, etc.;
 - h. The FOIA request is for documents associated with a controversial or sensitive subject;
 - i. The FOIA request is for documents associated with a senior official of the component;
 - j. A FOIA appeal if it meets one of the "a" through "i" criteria;
 - k. It is a FOIA request and not a Privacy Act request;
4. Items listed above in 3 are suggestive and not exclusive – exercise prudent judgment and submit items that reflect the spirit and intent of this report. If in doubt, please submit.
5. The Director, Departmental Disclosure and FOIA, may not include submission that leaves the Privacy Office.

Unless the Item 3 criteria is met, do not report the following (not an exhaustive or exclusive list):

1. requests for contracts or grants
2. requests for "A" files
3. requests for FOIA logs
4. requests for incident reports (including boating incidents, etc.)
5. requests for budget documents
6. requests for genealogy documents
7. 3rd party requests for personnel training or employee records

Format for submitting FOIA items to the weekly report:

1. Identify the requester's name, city and state
2. Identify the requester by affiliation (private citizen, organization membership, etc.)
3. Identify your component as the receiving component (in the case of transfers within DHS, the initial component receiving the request will report the item)
4. Provide a brief description of any lesser-known organization's mission (a Google search usually provides sufficient info)
5. Spell out all acronyms and use the component's full name
6. Provide a brief summary of the requested records

Sample format:

On April 10, **Jonathan Tamez**, an **attorney** from Phoenix, Arizona, requested from US-VISIT biometric and admission records on behalf of his client.

On April 11, **Elliot Spagat**, with ***The Associated Press***, Washington, D.C. bureau, requested from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) copies of the data dictionary (i.e., table of contents) for the Enforcement Case Tracking System database, which maintains a record of Border Patrol apprehensions.