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Government of Canada Department of Communications Gouvernement du Canada Ministère des Communications

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY MANUAL

SUPPLEMENT NO. 1





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Suppl. 1

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY MANUAL

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY MANUAL

SUPPLEMENT NO. 1

Table of Contents

Page

1-1

2-1

2-2

2-5

1-2 to 1-4

2-3 and 2-4

3-1 to 3-6

Subject

Departmental records that may be sensitive under the Access to Information and Privacy Acts

List of sensitive subjects

Handling of sensitive records under the Access to Information and Privacy Acts

Request handling procedures - Chart

Steps for handling formal inquiry

Decision making - Chart

Fees

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1

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GENERAL INFORMATION

- On the Access to Information Act

- On the Privacy Act

DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS THAT MAY BE SENSITIVE UNDER

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACTS

In preparation for the Access to Information and Privacy legislation the departmental officers have been reviewing the records held by this Department.

There are a number of subject areas which would be regarded as possibly exempt or excluded under the new laws. Any record falling into these subject areas will be regarded as potentially sensitive, and will be reviewed by the Corporate Review Panel before any material is released. (See Treasury Board, Access to Information, general information attached)

This Act does not apply to confidences of the Queen's Privy Council of Canada including any cabinet documents such as listed below:

cabinet memoranda discussion papers agenda briefing material draft legislation

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Nor does it apply to published material or material available for purchase by the public.

Please note that any information obtained from a third party, whether the third party is an individual, corporation or an organization, may be subject to an exemption

"third party" - in respect of any request for access to a record under this Act, means any person, group of persons, or organization other than the person that made the request or a government institution. (Access to Information Act)

IST OF SENSITI	IVE SUBJECTS
The following a	subjects, held in the Department, may be "sensitive":
ADVICE TO THE	E MINISTER
BROADCASTING	- competitive positions of applications for broadcasting
- BROADCASTING	POLICY
- BROADCASTING	STRATEGY
	ALLOWANCE PROGRAM - financial info relating to the should be protected.
are submitted	REPORTS - become available for public disclosure once they d to and accepted by the agent who sponsored them. gent can refuse to disclosure contents of all or part of a report.
- CONTRACTOR RI	EPORTS
- COOPERATIVE	UNDERTAKINGS - such as Anik B and Hermes proposal
- COMMON CARRIN	ER SUPPLIED INFORMATION - only aggregated info can be
component ar	YSIS AND IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE - all records under this e related to the business affairs of individual publishers e protected against access by third parties.
- DRAFT LEGISL	ATION OR DRAFT REGULATIONS
- DEFENCE OF C	ANADA
- ECONOMIC INT	ERESTS OF CANADA
- EQUIPMENT AP	PROVAL FOR CERTIFICATION
- EMERGENCY ME	ASURES
	STUDIES AND REPORTS - which merit priority of publication r staff members.
- EXPORT MARKE publishers a	TING ASSISTANCE - records contain information on individual nd should be protected.
- FEDERAL-PROV	INCIAL INFORMATION EXCHANGES
- FOREIGN GOV'	T NEGOTIATIONS

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- GTA CUSTOMER ACCOUNT INFORMATION
 INDUSTRY - financial, commercial, scientific, technical, performance equipment, post approval audit
- INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS
- INTERNAL PROCEEDINGS OF A THIRD PARTY
- LAW ENFORCEMENT
- LICENSING APPLICATION - available unless marked "confidential".
 LEGISLATION - general, objectives, comments from industry, comments from general institutions, comments from the provinces, comments from other groups
- MARKETING PLANNING - only broad data can be released. There can be identification of individuals.
- MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS
- MOVABLE CULTURAL PROPERTY - some certificate of cultural property fi contain information which is exempt.
- NATIONAL DEFENCE AND ALLIED MILITARY ACTIVITIES
- NATO SYSTEMS
- NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOV'T OF CANADA AND U.S. AND/OR OTHER COUNTRIES
- NETWORK PLANNING INFORMATION IN GTA
- OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS
- PERSONAL INFORMATION
- POLICY
- RADAR RESEARCH
- RADIO COMMUNICATIONS
- RADIO OPERATORS - exam questions
- RCMP SYSTEMS - frequency allocations
1-3

- RESEARCH POLICY AND PLANNING RESEARCH PROGRAM RESEARCH WORK IN PROGRESS - may contain third party and commercial valuable material, as well as military information.
- SECURITY exceptions may apply to most material on National Security.
- SOFTWARE PROGRAMS AND DOCUMENTATION
- STRATEGIC PLANNING
- SUPPLIERS INFORMATION proposals, tenders, etc. are received from suppliers and are proprietary to the originator.
- SURVEY FILES
- TECHNICAL INFORMATION
- TECHNICAL REPORTS
- TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS
- TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER INDUSTRY
- TELPAK
- THIRD PARTY records originated by above are exempted.
- TRADE INITIATIVES
- TRAFFIC STUDIES FOR GTA
- VIOLATIONS OF SECTION 3 OF RADIO ACT lists of evidence, copies of warrants, court briefs, etc.

HANDLING OF SENSITIVE RECORDS UNDER THE ACCESS TO

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACTS

In order to preserve the confidentiality of sensitive information and, more importantly, to ensure that only essential copies of sensitive material are filed, it is important that these steps be followed when handling material under the Access to Information and Privacy Acts (ATIP).

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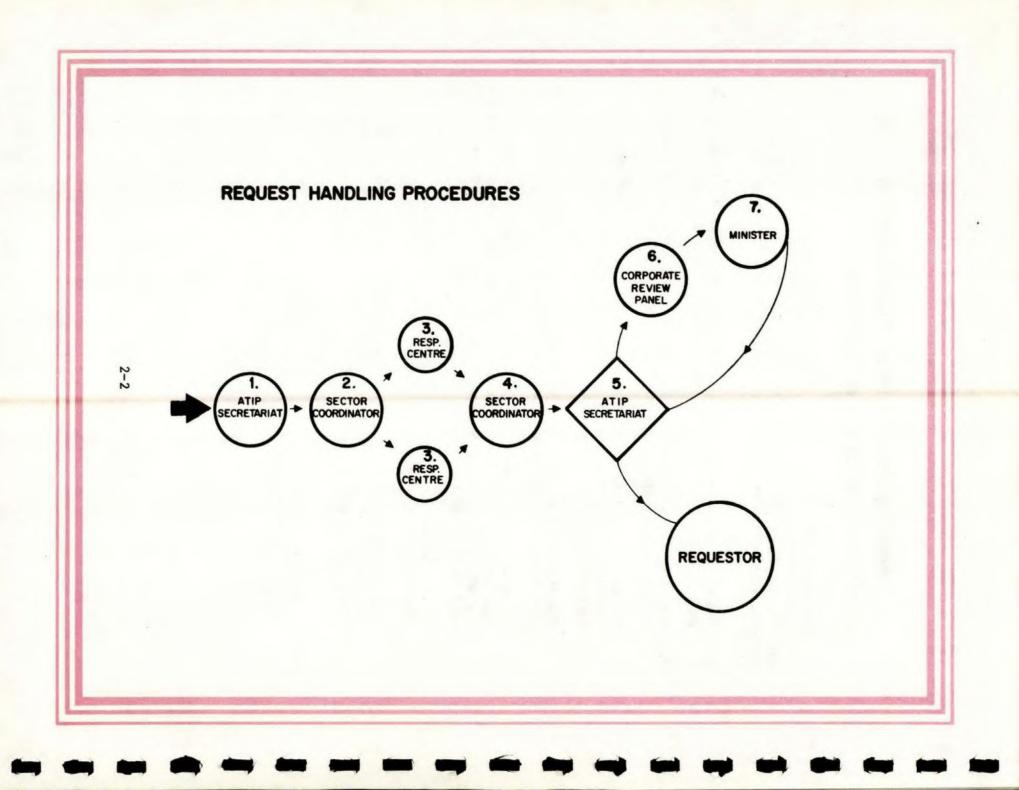
- Copies of sensitive material prepared for the Corporate Review Panel must be returned to the ATIP Secretariat for destruction.
- ATIP Secretariat will retain one file copy of material (as required by the Treasury Board guidelines on ATIP).
- The amended copy to be sent to the inquirer, with sensitive material deleted or blocked-out, will be copied for the ATIP file (as required by the Treasury Board regulations).

The exemptions claimed for each deletion must be clearly identified to the inquirer (Treasury Board regulations).

- 4. In order to brief the Minister, or whoever has signing authority, one "entire" copy of the records will be sent for review along with the amended version to be sent to the inquirer. The "entire" copy will be returned to ATIP for destruction.
- If the Minister's office wishes copies of the material, they will be provided with the amended version.

Thus, the originator of the records and the ATIP Secretariat will be the only people who hold sensitive material, as per the Treasury Board guidelines.

NOTE: Personal information must only be stored in identified Personal Information Banks (PIB's) and any request to access that information noted in the bank.



STEPS FOR HANDLING FORMAL INQUIRY (see page 2-2)

ATIP SECRETARIAT

- records the inquiry
- computer searches the records management index
- identifies responsibility centres and sectors holding the requested records
- passes to sector coordinator with computer printout of files identified as relating to the inquiry

2. SECTOR COORDINATOR

- reviews inquiry
- insures identification of responsibility centres is appropriate
- forwards inquiries to responsible officer

3. RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE(S)

- search files to identify requested records
- search other related sources such as databases
- copy all appropriate material relating to request
- identify any material that may be sensitive or subject to an exemption to the best of their knowledge
- forward all material, with notes on interpretation if necessary to sector ATIP coordinator

SECTOR COORDINATOR

- reviews material
- discusses sensitive material with responsibility centre manager
- if appropriate may review with the Legal Services
- forwards complete package, with comments, to ATIP Secretariat

ATIP SECRETARIAT

- coordinates information received from the sector
- prepares material for review by Corporate Review Panel
- consults with other departments if required
- consults with inquirer if required
- prepares response and forwards to requestor
- reviews material to see if an exemption may apply

6. CORPORATE REVIEW PANEL

- approves or denies claims for exemptions for sensitive material
- reviews sensitivity of material requested
- recommends to Minister if material should be released or not, and for what reason
- advises ATIP Secretariat of appropriate response

MINISTER (or his delegated official)

- decides on release or refusal of sensitive material

Other

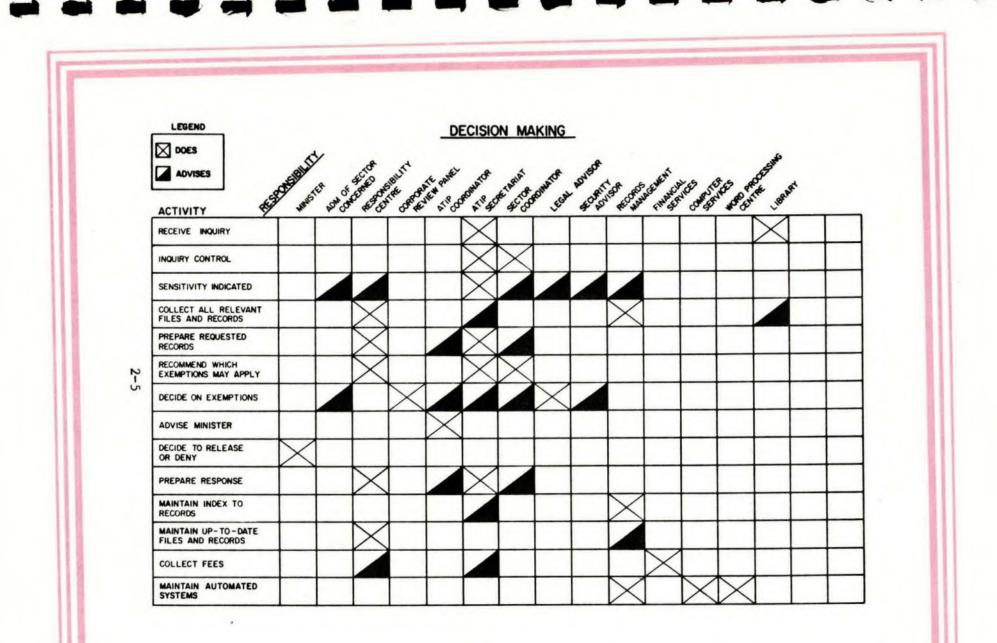
It is the responsibility of each sector to record the amount of time spent on preparing the requested records, and to estimate costs for physical reproduction of the records.

A schedule of fees will be provided to the ATIP Secretariat from Treasury Board. Copies will be made available to sector coordinators.

Forms for recording time and costs will be sent with each inquiry.

All contacts with the inquirer or consultation with other departments will be coordinated through the ATIP Secretariat, according to Treasury Board guidelines.

The ATIP Secretariat has a comprehensive computer system for logging and recording transactions on all inquiries. Sector coordinators need only log in and out requests passed to their responsibility centres. Please do not make or keep copies for your files.



FEES

A) Fee Procedures

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Describes division of responsibility at DOC for calculation, collection and receipt of fees.

B) Fee Policy

Describes the fee structure... i.e. the basic rates for charging and in what circumstances we are to levy a charge

NOTE: A) and B) above, are extracts from Treasury Board policy and regulations.

References: - Administrative Policy Manual, Chapter 410 - Treasury Board Policy Document

A) "FEE PROCEDURES"

Subject: Fees to be charged in respect of an inquiry under the Access to Information and Privacy Acts in accordance with Treasury Board Regulations

> References: - Administrative Policy Manual, Chapter 410 - Treasury Board Policy Document 9E PC 1982-1077

> > - Treasury Board, Access to Information Act, General Information (attached)

The division of responsibility for calculation, collection and receipt of fees is briefly described below.

CHARGING

1) \$5 application fee

- 2) Calculation of fee will be determined by the responsibility Centre who do the search, compile the requested information. Sector coordinators will then complete prescribed form (attached) and forward to the ATIP Secretariat as soon as possible - before search is done if there is a fee to be levied.
- 3) ATIP Secretariat will process and, where more than one sector is involved in compiling the requested information, ATIP Secretariat will calculate, based on advice from sector coordinators, the total amount to be charged.
- Deposit will be collected (if applicable).

ACTION

Mail Room/Finance

Responsibility Centre/Sector Coordinator

ATIP Secretariat will advise requesting party of amount to be charged

ATIP Secretariat/Mail Room/ Finance

- 5) Response package may be:
 - picked up and paid for at a) the same time -- by cheque or money order made payable to the Receiver General for Canada; or
 - b) mailed out provided payment has been received by cheque or money order.
- NOTE: The amount to be paid by requestor may be the balance owing once deposit has been subtracted or, should the deposit represent more than the actual cost, the difference would then be refunded to the requestor.

B) "FEE POLICY"

Subject:

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Fees to be charged in respect of an inquiry under the Access to Information and Privacy Acts in accordance with Treasury Board Regulations

References: -

- Administrative Policy Manual, Chapter 410
 - Treasury Board Policy Document 9E PC 1982-1077
 - Treasury Board, Access to Information, General Information (attached)

1) PAYMENT OF FEES

The Act requires the calculation and payment of fees in accordance with the schedule provided in the Regulations. According to Section 7 of the Regulations, payment is to be assessed subject to waiving, for the following:

- a) the time required to search for, to retrieve or produce the record(s) or to prepare any part of the record(s) for disclosure exceeds five hours ('preparation' indicated the physical activities involved in severing a document to provide the applicant with a copy);
- b) when the records are produced from a machine-readable record in a manner prescribed;
- c) for the reproduction of copies.

2) FEES WHICH CANNOT BE CHARGED

The following fees cannot be charged:

- a) the cost of reviewing documents to determine whether they are exempt or excluded;
- b) maintaining statistics or documentation relating to the administration of the Act;
- c) filing (including filing of requests and refiling of records);
- d) providing of facilities for processing requests or public access; or
- e) shipping.

If fees have been assessed pursuant to subsection 11(4) of the Act notification of the applicant takes place according to the procedures prescribed.

All fees must be paid by the applicant before access is given.

Whenever possible, payment of any substantial sums should be made by certified cheque or money order payable to the Receiver General for Canada.

3) TRANSFERS

To facilitate the administration of application fees, when a request is transferred, the institution that first received the request should indicate to the institution with greater interest that the application fee has been received and deposited into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

4) DEPOSITS

- Fees When payment of fees is required, the applicant shall be informed of the following:
- an estimate of the total costs;
- b) the amount of deposit to be paid (if applicable) before the records are produced or prepared for disclosure;
- c) an indication that the applicant may examine the records in person to save the cost of reproduction;
- an indication that the applicant may specify that only some parts of the record need to be reproduced;
- e) an indication that the applicant has the right to complain to the Information Commissioner if he/she considers the fees to be unreasonable.

Government institutions may require any amount to be paid as a deposit before the search or production of the record is undertaken or the record is prepared for disclosure.

Where the required fees or deposits have not been received by a government institution, the institution should suspend processing the request until thirty days following notification to the individual. As the requestor has the right to complain to the Information Commissioner about the fees within one year following the request, government institutions should be prepared to resume processing requests, at a later date.

* If the deposit paid (based on the estimated cost) exceeds the actual cost of providing access, government institutions shall refund the portion paid in excess by the applicant.* Deposits are also to be refunded if the fees are waived by the government institution at a later stage in processing.

5) WAIVER

Subsection 11(6) provides for a discretionary waiving or reduction of fees by the government institution. This decision should be based on a consideration of the public interest arising from the waiver or reduction of fees and whether or not the information has traditionally been made available without charge.

The circumstances of the application and the applicant's reasons for seeking information are not proper factors for an institution to consider when reviewing an access request but should be taken into consideration when faced with a fee waiver decision so that individuals of limited financial means are not placed in a position of unfair disadvantage. The concept of 'general public benefit' is subject to individual agency determination, using the following considerations as guidelines:

- a) the significance of the benefit;
- b) the size of the public benefited ('general public' is interpreted as a substantial part of the public);
- c) private interests of the individual which the release may further; and
- d) likelihood that a tangible public goodwill be realized (agencies may invite the requestor to explain how the information sought would produce benefits for the general public).

In view of the costs involved in administering fees, <u>*government</u> institutions should waive the requirement to pay fees if the amount payable is less that \$25*, where the amount is the result of charges for the production or reproduction of records.

In order to capture data relating to the cost of administering the Act, *government institutions shall record the amount of fees waived for each request* (where applicable).

GENERAL INFORMATION

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ON

THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

AND

THE PRIVACY ACT

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Access to Information Act		o Information Act	
		GENERAL INFORMATION	
	Α.	Outline of the Act	1
	в.	Introduction	5
	с.	Exemptions	9
	D.	Fees	13
	E.	Complaints	15
	F.	Confidential Business Information	17
	G.	Federal Employees Responsibilities	21
	Н.	Access Register	23
	I.	Access to Information Request Form	25
	J.	Government Institutions	27

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Outline of the Act

Section	Subject	Explanation	
1-2	Title and purpose	Gives a general statement of the intent of the Act.	
3	Interpretation	Gives definitions of key terms.	
4	Application	States who has the right of access.	
5	Publications	Requires the publication of the Access Registe and a bulletin.	
6-10	Access requests	Specifies the form requests are to be in; the time limits for response; the basis for extension of time limits; the basis for transferring a request; and, the form that refusal of access is to take.	
11	Fees	Stipulates the upper limit for the application fee; the other costs which are collectible; and, provides for the waiver of fees at the discretion of the head.	
12	Granting access the (translation)	Provides for the method of giving access and language it is to be given in.	
13-24	Exemptions	Gives the grounds upon which access can be denied and whether they are mandatory or discretionary. The exemptions are:	
		 13. information obtained in confidence from other governments 14. federal/provincial affairs 15. international affairs and defence 16. law enforcement and investigations 17. safety of individuals 18. economic interests of Canada 19. personal information 20. third-party information 21. advice 22. testing procedures and audits 23. solicitor-client privilege 24. statutory prohibitions. 	
25	Severability	Requires the disclosure of non-exempt parts of records.	

Section	Subject	Explanation
26	Material to be published	Provides for refusal of disclosure for material which will be published.
27	Transitional provision	Allows refusal of disclosure of older records over a three-year transition period.
28-29	Third-party interventions	Requires institutions to notify third parties of intention to disclose and allows third parties to make representations to the head.
30-31	Complaints to the Information Commissioner	Specifies the grounds for complaints and the form they can take.
32-40	Activities of the Information Commissioner	Provides for the investigation of complaints by the Commissioner; specifies the form of reporting on findings and recommendations; requires the Commissioner to make annual reports to Parliament; and, allows the Commissioner to make special reports.
41-53	Review by the Federal Court	Sets out the conditions under which a person or a third party can apply for review by the Court; stipulates who may appear as a party to the review; lays the burden of proof on the government institution; and, specifies the nature of the order of the Court in specific circumstances.
54-66	Office of the Information Commissioner	Permits the appointment of an Information Commissioner and establishes the Office of the Information Commissioner.
67	Offences	Creates an offence for any person obstructing the Information Commissioner in the performance of his or her duties.
68-69	Exclusions	Excludes certain material from the application of this Act including confidences of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.
70	Designated Minister	Sets out the duties and functions of the designated Minister.
71-73	Administrative procedures	Requires institutions to create reading rooms for manuals; requires institutions to report annually to Parliament; and, permits the head to delegate authority.

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Section	Subject	Explanation
74	Protection	Provides protection from civil proceedings or from prosecution for the head or duly authorized persons.
75	Review by Parliament	Requires Parliament to review the Act after three years.
76	Binding on the Crown	Makes the Act binding on Her Majesty in right of Canada.
77	Regulations	Gives the power to make regulations and amend Schedule I.

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Access to Information

Introduction

What is the Access to Information Act?

The Access to Information Act is the law that gives any Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada the right to examine or obtain copies of records of a federal government institution except in limited and specific circumstances.

How is this different from before?

Prior to the Act being in place you did not have a <u>right</u> to information contained in federal government records, although you might have been provided with information on a voluntary basis. Now, if you request information and it is not exempted or excluded, the government institution must provide you with access to it. The burden of proving that information is exempt rests with the institution.

When should I use the Access to Information Act to obtain information?

You should use the Act to obtain information when you believe the information is contained in government records and is not available to you through the published material of an institution, when an informal request has not secured the information you wanted, or when you want to exercise your legal right for whatever reason. Many government institutions operate extensive information services such as libraries, public affairs offices and regional information centres whose major purpose is to provide information to the public free of charge. These services will continue to operate and do not necessitate the use of the Access to Information Act.

Can anybody get information under the Act?

You have a right to access to government records if you are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada.

What information can I get?

The Act gives you access to information contained in federal government records. These records come in many forms and include letters, memos, reports, photographs, films, microfilms, and computerized data. The government has developed an <u>Access Register</u> which contains descriptions of government records, their probable location and other information which will likely assist you in identifying precisely which records you wish to see.

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What information can't I get?

There are two sets of conditions that limit your right to obtain information by using the Act: exemptions and exclusions.

The Act lists a number of exemptions which are intended to provide protection for particular kinds of information, the release of which could cause an identifiable harm or would be contrary to the law. These exemptions protect such information as information on national security or trade secrets.

In addition, certain information is excluded from the scope of the Act. This includes material which is already available to the public, such as publications and library or museum material, and material which is directly connected with the operation of Cabinet, such as Cabinet documents and minutes or records of decision. And finally, the Act cannot give you access to records which are outside the control of the federal government, such as records maintained by provincial or municipal governments or by private institutions such as banks and credit bureaus.

How do I get access?

The <u>Access Register</u> and Access Request Forms are located in public libraries and government information offices in major population centres and in some 2,700 postal stations. They contain detailed instructions on how to identify, as precisely as possible, the information you are looking for, how to get assistance, if necessary, and how to apply for access. If you are not able to consult an Access Register or fill out a form you may write directly to the appropriate government institution clearly stating that you are requesting information under the Access to Information Act.

Is there anybody who can help me?

You can contact the Access Co-ordinator of the appropriate department, either in person, by telephone, or by letter. (All Access Co-ordinators are listed in the <u>Access Register</u>.) The Co-ordinator will assist you, at no charge, in identifying the records you wish to see. If you ask for assistance by letter, include as much information as you can to identify the records you are looking for, and ensure that you provide sufficient information to enable an official to send you a reply.

Will it cost anything?

There is an application fee of \$5 which must be submitted with your request. You also have to pay for time in excess of five (5) hours spent in processing your request, as well as for any copying and computer processing time, If the costs are considerable you will be notified before they are incurred, and you may be asked to make a deposit.

How long will it take?

The government institution has 30 days to respond to your request. If the request is for a large number of records or is complicated, the institution can extend the time limit but it must inform you that it has done so.

What can I do if I'm not satisfied?

The government has established the Office of the Information Commissioner to deal with complaints about the operation of the Act. You have the right to complain to the Commissioner if you believe you were wrongly denied access to information, or if the response took too long, or cost too much. If, after complaining to the Information Commissioner, you are still unable to get access to the information you want you may then take your case to the Federal Court.

How can I be sure that personal information about me is not released to anyone else?

The Access to Information Act prohibits disclosure of records that contain personal information unless the individual to whom it relates has consented to disclosure, or the information is already publicly available, or the disclosure is in accordance with conditions set out in the Privacy Act. For more information on the protection and disclosure of personal information please read the brochure on the Privacy Act.

How is the government going to handle all this and make sure it works?

Each institution is responsible for implementing the legislation. This entails providing a description of their records for inclusion in the Access Register, designating an officer to act as Access Co-ordinator, establishing facilities for the review of manuals and documents, and processing access requests. The head of every government institution is required to submit an annual report to Parliament on the administration of the Act. A list of the names and addresses of all institutions covered by the Act is available on request. ,

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Access to Information

Exemptions

The Access to Information Act contains clauses that make some information exempt from access. Each is intended to prevent the release of information which could cause an identifiable harm or would be contrary to law.

The exemptions can be mandatory or discretionary. A mandatory exemption means any information coming under the exemption must be withheld. In the case of a discretionary exemption, the head of a government institution has discretion in deciding whether or not records should be disclosed, even if they contain information which may technically qualify for exemption.

The Act also provides for "severability". This provision means that a record, as a whole, cannot be exempted from access just because some part of it contains exempt information. The government institution is obliged to disclose as much information as can reasonably be severed from the exempt portion.

Mandatory Exemptions

- information obtained in confidence from foreign, provincial, or municipal governments or their institutions or organizations (Section 13);
- confidential information obtained by the RCMP in performing police services for a municipality or province (Subsection 16(3));
- personal information (Section 19);
- information supplied by outside sources, e.g. trade secrets of industry or business, which could adversely affect their operations, their competitive, financial, or negotiating positions (Section 20); or
- information covered by confidentiality clauses in existing statutes, e.g. Section 241 of the Income Tax Act (Section 24).

Discretionary Exemptions

- information which could injure the conduct of federal/provincial affairs if released (Section 14);
- information which could injure the conduct of international affairs, the defence of Canada or her allies, or the detection, suppression or prevention of subversive or hostile activities if released (Section 15);
- information obtained in the course of a lawful investigation, information on investigative techniques, information injurious to law enforcement or the security of penal institutions (Subsection 16(1));
- information expected to facilitate the commission of an offence (Subsection 16(2));
- information which could threaten the safety of individuals if released (Section 17);
- trade secrets or financial, commercial, technical, or scientifically valuable information belonging to the government (paragraph 18(a));.
- information which could prejudice the competitive position of a government institution if released (paragraph 18(b));
- scientific or technical research information which could deprive a government employee of priority of publication if released (paragraph 18(c));
- information which could, if released, injure the financial interests of the government, or its ability to manage the economy, or result in an undue benefit to any person (paragraph 18(d));
- advice or recommendations developed by or for an institution or a Minister, accounts of consultations or deliberations between officials and a Minister or his staff, negotiating plans or positions, unimplemented personnel management and administrative plans (Section 21);
- information which would prejudice the use or result of tests or audits if released (Section 22); or
- information protected by solicitor-client privilege, e.g. legal advice, (Section 23).

The above list provides a plain language description of information exempted from the right of access under the Access to Information Act. It is for your general guidance only. For the precise wording of the exemptions and any exceptions to them, please refer to the sections of the Act shown in brackets after each exemption.

If you believe that records you have requested have been wrongly exempted from disclosure, you may lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner. If, following an investigation by the Information Commissioner you are still not satisfied, you may complain to the Federal Court.

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Access to Information

Fees

There is an application of fee of \$5 payable at the time the request is made.

The Act also allows the government to prescribe certain other fees for providing information under the Act. However, the majority of straightforward requests for information will probably cost the requestor nothing more than the application fee since there is no charge for:

- a) obtaining copies of records which contain information about yourself;
- b) the first 5 hours needed by staff to search for and retrieve a record;
- c) most costs less than \$25.00;
- d) postage and handling;
- e) examining a record instead of receiving a copy of a document;
- f) time taken by staff to review a document in order to decide whether or not it will be released; or
- g) any overhead costs.

In the case of complex requests or requests for large amounts of material there may be additional charges when the actual costs exceed the \$25.00 limit.

These charges are:

- a) search and preparation fees of \$2.50 per quarter hour per person for time spent over the initial free 5 hours;
- b) reproduction fees of:

photocopying	25¢ per page
microfiche duplication	40¢ per fiche
16mm microfilm duplication	\$12 per roll
35mm microfilm duplication	\$14 per roll
microform to paper	25¢ per page
magnetic tape-to-tape duplication	\$25 per roll;

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 c) fees for the production of records from computers of \$16.50 per minute for computer time and all locally attached devices and \$5 per quarter hour per person for programming time when hardcopy records do not already exist.

The head of the institution can waive or reduce any or all fees which would normally be payable when, for instance, the information requested is normally provided without charge or when it is considered to be in the public interest to do so.

Access to Information

Complaints

The Access to Information Act contains provisions for making complaints regarding the operation of the Act to the Information Commissioner.

However, it is hoped that most problems can be resolved through discussions between officials and the applicant. It is important therefore, to ensure, through discussion if necessary, that:

- (a) the government institution properly understands the nature and extent of the request; and
- (b) the applicant is aware of all the time and cost implications of his/her request.

While this approach will cover most situations, there will inevitably be some where an informal resolution of the differences is not possible and the applicant will complain to the Information Commissioner about some aspect of the request.

Grounds for Complaints

Under the Access to Information Act, a person may complain to the Information Commissioner on the following grounds:

- (a) access to a record, in whole or in part, has been denied;
- (b) a fee that the person considers unreasonable has been required;
- (c) the person considers that the time limit for complying with a request for access has been unreasonably extended;
- (d) the person was not given access in the official language of his/her choice or was not given access in that language within an appropriate period;
- (e) the person is dissatisfied with the Access Register or any other publication relating to Access; or
- (f) a person wishes to complain about any other matter relating to requesting or obtaining access under the Act.

Process

There are a number of specific steps that take place in handling a complaint. These are:

- 1. The complainant (or a representative e.g. a lawyer) makes a complaint in writing to the Information Commissioner (within one year if the complaint relates to an access request).
- 2. The Information Commissioner investigates the complaint using the powers conferred upon him or her by the Act (e.g. power to summon persons, to examine records, etc.). During the investigation the Commissioner must hear representations from any of the parties involved in the complaint, including any third party where that person or organization has an interest in the disclosure or restriction of the information.
- 3. If the Commissioner finds that the complaint is justified, he/she reports the findings of the investigation and any appropriate recommendation to the institution. The Commissioner can request that the institution give him/her notice within a specified time of any action to be taken to implement the recommendations or reasons why it won't be taken. The Commissioner also informs the complainant of the findings, as well as any third parties who may be involved.

Appeal to the Federal Court

If the Commissioner does not find the complaint about the denial of access to a record to be valid and the complainant is dissatisfied with this decision, he/she may take the case to the Federal Court within 45 days after receiving the Commissioner's report. The complainant may also take the case to the Court if the Commissioner has recommended that the government institution disclose the information and the institution, which is not bound to act according to the recommendation of the Commissioner, still refuses. It is not possible, however, to appeal any of the other grounds for complaint to the Court. In those cases the complainant has no further recourse if the Commissioner decides against him or her.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Office of the Information Commissioner Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1H3

Telephone: (613) 995-2410

Confidential Business Information

The Access to Information Act contains a provision for exempting certain types of third-party * information from access. Specifically, the government must not disclose to an applicant;

- (a) trade secrets of a third party;
- (b) confidential information of a financial, commercial, scientific or technical nature supplied by a third party;
- (c) information which, if released, could result in material financial loss or gain to or could prejudice the competitive position of a third party; or
- (d) information which, if released, could interfere with contractual or other negotiations of a third party.

The exceptions to the exemption are:

- (i) the government cannot refuse to disclose the results of product or environmental testing unless the testing was done as a service and for a fee;
- (ii) the third party consents to disclosure; or
- (iii) the disclosure would be in the public interest as it relates to public health, public safety or the protection of the environment.

This exemption and the exceptions protect the information of third parties while recognizing the existence of the public interest in knowing some of that information. It requires that government institutions balance the potential injury to the third party against the public interest for disclosure. The Act ensures that both the applicant and third parties have the opportunity to present their views by establishing a system of notifications and appeals at each stage of the access procedure.

Requests

When an institution has received an access request for thirdparty information and the institution, upon weighing the rights of the third party for confidential treatment against the public interest in

*Third party is defined as any person, group of persons or organization other than the requestor or a government institution.

access, decides that it will release the information, it must notify the third party that it intends to disclose the information. The third party has 20 days in which to make representations to the head of the institution as to why the information should not be disclosed. If the institution decides, after hearing the representations, to disclose the information, it must inform the third party of this decision. It cannot, however, release the record to the applicant until the third party has been given an opportunity to appeal this decision to the Federal Court if they so choose.

Complaints

If the institution has received a request for third-party information and decides not to release the information, the applicant can complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner must notify the institution that he/she has received a complaint. As soon as the institution learns that a complaint involving third-party information has been made, it must advise the Information Commissioner of the existence of any third party. The Information Commissioner must give the third party a chance to make representations if they so choose. If the Information Commissioner recommends that the information be disclosed and the head of the institution decides to comply with the recommendation, the head must notify the third party before doing so and must not release the information until the third party has had an opportunity to appeal to the Federal Court.

Court Review

If an institution notifies a third party, after that party has made representations to the institution, that it intends to release information and the third party believes this information should be exempt, the third party has 20 days to apply to the Court for a review of the matter. If an applicant is appealing to the Court a decision by the institution to exempt third-party information, the head of the institution must notify the third party that the appeal has been made. The third party can appear as a party to the Court review of the matter.

Access to Information

Federal Employees Responsibilities

The Access to Information Act introduces three new basic principles into the relationship between government and the public:

- (a) the public has a legal right of access to information in government records;
- (b) the government may refuse to grant access but its authority to do so is limited to the circumstances described in the Act as exemptions;
- (c) any decision by a government institution to refuse access to information can be reviewed by the Information Commissioner and, ultimately, by the Federal Court.

The Access to Information Act is intended to complement, not replace, existing procedures for the dissemination of government information. The public will be encouraged to use these informal channels to obtain information; however, there will be circumstances when the informal procedures do not produce the required information or the applicant simply wishes to exercise his or her right. In cases such as these the request will be made and responded to according to the provisions of the Access to Information Act and will involve certain responsibilities for the government institution, its managers and employees.

Access Co-ordinator

Each Department and agency has appointed an official to coordinate the implementation of the Act. This official, called the Access to Information Co-ordinator, is key to the operation of the Act and is responsible for:

- informing other employees of the provisions of the Act and instructing them in the procedures to be used in responding to access requests;
- receiving and tracking requests by ensuring that adequate records are kept, fees paid and deadlines met;
- referring the request to the appropriate manager for review and evaluation if necessary;

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- coordinating inter-departmental consultation when necessary;
- ensuring that applicants and third parties are notified as required; and
- ensuring that proper authorization of disclosure is obtained before any documents are released.

Managers

Managers of programs or functions may, from time to time, have responsibilities in relation to the Act. These are:

- locating records in their program or function area that are required to fulfil a request;
- reviewing the records for exempt information and recommending its disclosure or non-disclosure as the case may be; and
- notifying the Access to Information Co-ordinator of any Access to Information requests that are received directly from the public.

All Employees

In addition to managers, all employees have responsibilities relating to the Act. Their primary responsibility is to ensure that all programs are documented and that all relevant material is maintained on files which can be accessed by other employees, so that all potential documents can be reviewed when responding to a request. Managers may ask some employees to identify potential information to respond to a request and to carry out reviews for exempt material.

Reading Rooms

The Act calls for the establishment, within two years, of facilities where the public may inspect any manuals used by employees of the institution in administering or carrying out programs or activities. These facilities, referred to as Reading Rooms, can most logically be placed in units, such as a library, which are already geared for service to the public. At the same time, the Reading Rooms can encourage informal access to government information as well as providing assistance in seeking formal access.

Senior Management

The head of a government institution bears the ultimate responsibility for decisions arising out of implementation of the Act. However, many responsibilities are delegated to designated managers within the institution. These are:

- ensuring that the entry in the Access Register is accurate and up-to-date;
- ensuring that the records management system is comprehensive and accessible;
- establishing systems and procedures for dealing with access requests efficiently and effectively;
- developing departmental policies for dealing with specific kinds of records; and
- deciding on the disclosure or non-disclosure of information that is technically exempt taking into account the recommendation of the manager.

In addition to the above responsibilities, the Act contains two provisions which are important to federal employees. The first of these is that "No person shall obstruct the Information Commissioner or any person acting on behalf or under the direction of the Commissioner in the performance of the Commissioner's duties and functions under the Act." This means that all employees are obliged to co-operate with the Office of the Information Commissioner in carrying out any investigation they are undertaking.

The second provision is that civil or criminal proceedings cannot be taken against an employee of an institution "for the disclosure in good faith of any record or any part of a record pursuant to this Act or for any consequences that flow from such disclosure, or for the failure to give any notice required under this Act if reasonable care is taken to give the required notice." While this provision provides some protection to employees it only does so when the employee has been authorized to disclose information under the Act.

In order to meet these conditions it is necessary for all employees to understand their responsibilities and for management to have established the systems and procedures for responding to access to information requests.

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Access to Information

Access Register

The Access to Information Act requires the government to produce a series of publications, bulletins, forms and brochures to assist the public in exercising their rights under the Act.

The major publication under the Access to Information Act is the Access Register. It is organized in chapters, one for each federal institution and any related agencies. Each chapter contains:

- (a) a description of the organization and responsibilities of the institution including details on the programs and functions of each division or branch;
- (b) a description of all classes of records under the control of the institution in sufficient detail to facilitate the exercise of the right of access under the Act;
- (c) a description of all manuals used by employees for the purpose of carrying out any program or activity; and
- (d) the title and address of the appropriate officer to whom requests for access to records should be sent.

The Access Register is available in public libraries and government information offices in major population centres and in some 2,000 postal stations in rural areas.

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	Access to Inf	ormation Request Form		
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Access to Information

Government Institutions

Departments and Ministries of State

Department of Agriculture Ottawa, Ontario KIA OC5

Department of Communications Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C8

Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0C9

Ministry of State for Economic Development Ottawa, Ontario KlA 1E7

Department of Employment and Immigration Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0J9

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0E4

Department of the Environment Ottawa, Ontario KlA OH3

Department of External Affairs Ottawa, Ontario KIA OG2

Department of Finance Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0G5

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E6

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0H4

Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Department of Insurance Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH2

Department of Justice Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH8 Department of Labour Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0J2

Department of National Defence Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0A6

Department of National Health and Welfare Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0K9

Department of National Revenue Ottawa, Ontario KIA OL5

Department of Public Works Ottawa, Ontario KIA OP6

Department of Regional Economic Expansion Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0M4

Ministry of State for Science and Technology Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1A1

Department of the Secretary of State Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0M5

Ministry of State for Social Development Ottawa, Ontario KlA 1G3

Department of the Solicitor General Ottawa, Ontario KIA OP8

Department of Supply and Services Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0S5

Department of Transport Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON5

Department of Veterans Affairs Ottawa, Ontario KlA OP4

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Other Government Institutions

Advisory Council on the Status of Women Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H1

Agricultural Products Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5

Agricultural Stabilization Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C5

Anti-Dumping Tribunal Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0G5

Atlantic Development Council St. John's, Newfoundland AlA 1N5

Atlantic Pilotage Authority Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1M5

Atomic Energy Control Board Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9

Bank of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G9

Bilingual Districts Advisory Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM5

Board of Trustees of the Queen Elizabeth II Canadian Fund to Aid in Research on the Diseases of Children Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0W9

Bureau of Pension Advocates Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P4

Canada Council Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8

Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5W5

Canada Employment and Immigration Commission Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J9 Canada Labour Relations Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0X8

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3K5

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1H6

Canadian Commercial Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1E9

Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C8

Canadian Dairy Commission Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0Z2

Canadian Film Development Corporation Montreal, Quebec H4Z 1A8

Canadian Forces Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0A6

Canadian Government Specifications Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1H2

Canadian Grain Commission Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1B2

Canadian Human Rights Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1E1

Canadian International Development Agency Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Canadian Livestock Feed Board Montreal, Quebec H3X 3J4

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Canadian Penitentiary Service Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0P9

Canadian Pension Commission Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P4

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON2

Canadian Saltfish Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E6

Canadian Transport Commission Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0N9

Canadian Unity Information Office Ottawa, Ontario KlP 6G6

Crown Assets Disposal Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KlG 3J8

Defence Construction (1951) Limited Ottawa, Ontario KIA OK3

The Director of Soldier Settlement Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0P4

The Director, The Veterans' Land Act Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0P4

Economic Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V6

Energy Supplies Allocation Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E4

Farm Credit Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KlP 6J9

Federal Business Development Bank Montreal, Quebec H2Z 1R1

Federal Mortgage Exchange Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0M2

Federal-Provincial Relations Office Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0A3

Fisheries Prices Support Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E6

The Fisheries Research Board of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E6

Foreign Investment Review Agency Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6A5

Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 3L4

Great Lakes Pilotage Authority, Ltd. Cornwall, Ontario K6H 5R9

Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KlC 1C7

Immigration Appeal Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OKI

International Development Research Centre Ottawa, Ontario KIG 3H9

Laurentian Pilotage Authority Montreal, Quebec H2Z 1S8

Law Reform Commission of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0L6

Medical Research Council Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0W9

Merchant Seamen Compensation Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0J2

Metric Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C9

The National Battlefields Commission Quebec, Quebec GlR 2L7 National Capital Commission Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6J6 National Design Council Ottawa, Ontario K1A OH5 National Energy Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A OE5 National Farm Products Marketing Council Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S3 National Film Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0M9 National Harbours Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON6 National Library Ottawa, Ontario KlA ON4 National Museums of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A OM8 National Parole Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA OR1 National Parole Service Ottawa, Ontario KIA OP9 National Research Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KlA OR6 Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Ottawa, Ontario KIA OR6 Northern Canada Power Commission Edmonton, Alberta T6C 4J8 Northern Pipeline Agency Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4

Northwest Territories Water Board Yellowknife, Northwest Territories XIA 2R3 Office of the Co-ordinator, Status of Women Ottawa, Ontario KlA 1C3 Office of the Correctional Investigator Ottawa, Ontario KlP 5W5 Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0S5 Pacific Pilotage Authority Vancouver, British Columbia V6E 2T9 Pension Appeals Board Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3H9 Pension Review Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0P4 Petroleum Compensation Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0E4 Petroleum Monitoring Agency Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0E4 Prairie Farm Assistance Administration Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0C5 Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Ottawa, Ontario KlA OH5

Office of the Comptroller General

Ottawa, Ontario KlA 1E4

Privy Council Office Ottawa, Ontario KlA OA3

Public Archives Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON3

Public Service Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA[°] OM7 Public Service Staff Relations Board Ottawa, Ontario KlP 5V2

Public Works Land Company Limited Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM2

Regional Development Incentives Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH5

Restrictive Trade Practices Commission Ottawa, Ontario KlN 8V3

Royal Canadian Mint Ottawa, Ontario KlA OG8

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Ottawa, Ontario K1A OR2

The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Ottawa, Ontario K1R 5A3

Science Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5M1

The Seaway International Bridge Corporation Limited Ottawa, Ontario K1R 5A3

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Ottawa, Ontario KlR 5A3

Standards Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8

Statistics Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIA OT6

Statute Revision Commission Ottawa, Ontario K1A OH8

Tariff Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0G7

Tax Review Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A OM1 Textile and Clothing Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH5

Treasury Board Secretariat Ottawa, Ontario KIA OR5

Uranium Canada Limited Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E4

War Veterans Allowance Board Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island ClA 8M9

Yukon Territory Water Board Whitehorse, Yukon Territory YIA 3V1



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Treasury Board Conseil du Trésor du Canada

Privacy Act



GENERAL INFORMATION

Α.	Outline of the Act	1
в.	Introduction	5
с.	Exemptions	9
D.	Complaints	11
E.	Index of Personal Information	13
F.	Personal Information Request Form	15
G.	Government Institutions	17



Privacy

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Outline of the Act

Section	Subject	Explanation
1-2	Title and purpose	Gives a general statement of the intent of the Act.
3	Interpretation	Gives definitions of key terms.
4-6	Collection, retention and disposal of personal information its	Stipulates the conditions for collecting personal information and the requirements regarding
		future retention and disposal.
7-9	Use and disclosure of personal information	States the purposes for which personal information can be used; gives all the conditions under which personal information <u>may</u> be disclosed to a person other than the individual to whom the information relates; and, requires the institution to maintain a record of such dis- closure or use.
10	Personal information banks	Requires institutions to organize
their		the personal information under
		control into banks.
11	Publications	Requires the government to publish an index of personal information and stipulates the information to be included in the index and its distribution.
12	Rights	Gives the right to individuals to request access to personal information and to request that corrections be made to that information.
13-16	Access requests	Specifies the form requests are to be in; the time limits for response; the basis for extension of time limits; and, the form that refusal of access is to take.
17	Granting access (translation)	Provides for the method of giving access and the language it is to be given in.

Section	Subject	Explanation	
18	Exempt banks	Specifies the conditions under which banks may be designated as exempt from access.	
19-28	Exemptions	Gives the grounds upon which access can be denied and whether they are mandatory or discretionary. The exemptions are:	
		 personal information obtained in confidence from other governments federal provincial affairs international affairs and defence law enforcement and investigations security clearances personal information about individuals sentenced for an offence safety of individuals information about another individual solicitor-client privilege medical records. 	
29-30	Complaints to the Privacy Commissioner	Specifies the grounds for complaints and the form they can take.	
31-40	Activities of the Privacy Commissioner	Provides for the investigation of complaints by the Commissioner and specifies the form of reporting on findings and recommendations; provides for the review of exempt banks and Sections 4 to 8 of the Act and specifies the form of reporting findings and recommendations; requires the Commissioner to make annual reports to Parliament; and, allows the Commissioner to make special reports.	
41-52	Review by the Federal Court	Sets out the conditions under which an individual or the Commissioner can apply for review by the Court; stipulates that the Commissioner may appear as a party to the review; lays the burden of proof on the government institution; and, specifies the nature of the order of the Court in specific circumstances.	
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Section	Subject	Explanation
53-67	Office of the Privacy Commissioner	Permits the appointment of the Privacy Commissioner and establishes the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.
68	Offences	Creates an offence for any person obstructing the Privacy Commissioner in the performance of his or her duties.
69-70	Exclusions	Excludes certain material from the application of this Act including confidences of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.
71	Designated Minister	Sets out the duties and functions of the designated Minister.
72-73	Administrative procedures	Requires institutions to report annually to Parliament; and, permits the head to delegate authority.
74	Protection	Provides protection from civil proceedings or from prosecution for the head or duly authorized persons.
75	Review by Parliament	Requires Parliament to review the Act after three years.
76	Binding on the Crown	Makes the Act binding on Her Majesty in right of Canada.
77	Regulations	Gives the power to make regulations and amend the schedule.

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Privacy

Introduction

What is the Privacy Act?

The Privacy Act is the law that gives you access to information about you held by the government, protects your privacy by preventing others from having access to it, and gives you some control over its collection and use.

How is this different from before?

Part IV of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which has been in place since March 1, 1978, provided limited protection of privacy and limited access to personal information. The Privacy Act, using part IV as a base, expands on it by giving you access to more information about yourself and by making more specific the uses to which personal information can be put and thereby enhancing the protection of your privacy. It also covers the collection, retention and disposal of personal information as well as expanding the powers of the Privacy Commissioner to carry out investigations.

I ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

Do I have to use the Privacy Act to get access to my files?

No. Government institutions are ready to let you view most files which contain information about you without a formal access request. However, in the case of sensitive records, you may have to use the Act to obtain access to some information.

What information is the government likely to have about me?

The government collects information from you on a wide variety of subjects to carry out its programs and operations. Some of the systems are well known, (such as income tax and family allowance), and pertain to large numbers of people. Other systems relate only to specific groups such as veterans or the unemployed. The personal information collected can include such items as race, religion, marital status, fingerprints or educational or medical history.

Where is this information kept?

The government has organized most of its records on individuals into 'personal information banks'. These are listed by department or institution in the <u>Index of Personal Information</u> which is available to the public in public libraries and government information offices in major population centres and in some 2,000 postal stations in rural areas. The Index also lists classes of records which can contain personal information although they are not personal information banks as such.

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Can I see all the information the government has about me?

Most people will be able to obtain copies or examine all the information about themselves. However, the government has designated some personal information banks as exempt banks (mostly containing information relating to national security or law enforcement) and you may not be able to see any of the information in them. In addition, the Act allows information in other banks to be exempt from disclosure for a number of reasons such as protecting the safety of an individual or solicitor-client privilege.

How do I go about getting access to my files?

You must apply in writing to the institution that has the records you are interested in. Application forms are available with the <u>Index of Personal Information</u>. You must provide sufficient information about yourself for identification purposes to ensure that personal information is not released to the wrong individual. You should check the <u>Index of Personal Information</u> to find out the kind of identification you may be required to produce. If you are aware of personal information contained in a document not in a personal information bank, you can seek access to that also.

What can I do if there is information on my files that I think is untrue or misleading?

You can request that the information on file be corrected. If the institution refuses to make the correction, you can have a notation attached to the information showing the correction you wanted made. You can also require the institution to inform anyone who has used this information that a correction was made, or requested but not made. Institutions receiving such notifications are required to maintain them on the appropriate records.

What can I do if I am denied access to my files?

You can complain to the Privacy Commissioner who will investigate the complaint and make recommendations to the institution as to the validity of the denial of access. If the Privacy Commissioner recommends that you be given access and the institution still refuses you can appeal to the Federal Court, which can compel disclosure under certain circumstances.

Is there any fee for all this?

There is authority in the Act for charging fees but at the present time none have been prescribed.

II PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

How does the Act protect my privacy?

The Privacy Act protects your privacy in two ways. Firstly, it sets out the conditions for the collection, retention and disposal of personal information and secondly, it provides a use and disclosure code for the protection of this information. The access provisions of the Act also ensure that you can verify for yourself the accuracy of the records containing information about you.

What are the rules regarding collection?

Government departments or agencies should collect personal information only when it relates directly to a program or activity of the institution. The information has to be collected from you, whenever possible, and you must be informed of the purpose for which it is being collected at the time that it is collected.

How long is it kept?

Government institutions are required to schedule the retention and disposal of personal information - i.e. the information in each personal information bank will be kept for a stipulated period of time and no longer. Information used to make a decision concerning you must be kept for a minimum of two years after the last time it was used so that you have a chance to obtain access to it to check it for accuracy, relevance, completeness and timeliness. The schedule for disposing of information in each personal information bank is given in the <u>Index of</u> Personal Information entry for that bank.

What can the government use personal information for?

Except under specific conditions, the government can only use information for the purpose for which it was collected, unless it obtains your consent to use it otherwise. The descriptions of the personal information banks in the <u>Index of Personal Information</u> include statements of the uses to which the information can be put.

When can it be disclosed?

Personal information about you can only be disclosed to someone else with your consent or when one or more of the criteria set out in the Act are met. These criteria, which permit the disclosure of information but do not require it, are as follows.

Personal information may be disclosed:

(a) for the purpose for which it was collected or for a use consistent with that purpose;

- (b) to comply with another Act of Parliament;
- (c) to comply with a legal document such as a warrant or subpoena;
- (d) to the Attorney General of Canada for use in legal proceedings;
- (e) to an investigative body (e.g. RCMP or Military Police) to enforce a law;
- (f) to a province, foreign state or international body, for the purpose of administering or enforcing a law when an agreement or arrangement exists between the Government of Canada and the third party;
- (g) to a Member of Parliament to assist a constituent when the information relates to the constituent;
- (h) to carry out an audit;
- (i) to the Public Archives for archival purposes;
- (j) for statistical or research purposes if the researcher provides a written undertaking that information provided will not be further disclosed;
- (k) to assist Native people in the preparation of claims;
- to collect a debt owed to the government or to make a payment owed by the Crown to an individual;
- (m) to further the public interest; or
- (n) to benefit the individual to whom the information relates.

Government institutions are required to retain a record when personal information in a personal information bank is used for a purpose which is different from the uses set out for that bank. They must attach this record to the personal information in the bank.

Government institutions can, and do, have their own policies to prohibit the disclosure of personal information even when disclosure is permitted under the law.

Privacy

Exemptions

The Privacy Act contains clauses that make some personal information exempt from access. Each is intended to prevent the release of information which could cause an identifiable harm or would be contrary to law.

The exemptions can be mandatory or discretionary. A mandatory exemption means any information coming under the exemption must be withheld. In the case of a discretionary exemption, the head of a government institution has discretion in deciding whether or not records should be disclosed, even if they contain information which may technically qualify for exemption.

In addition to the exemptions, the Privacy Act allows some personal information banks to be declared exempt banks when they contain predominantly exemptible personal information which relates to international affairs and defence, or law enforcement and investigation. None of the personal information in an exempt bank may be disclosed except at the discretion of the head of a government institution.

Although the Privacy Act does not provide for "severability" as the Access to Information Act does, it is the policy of the government to apply the principle when appropriate. This means that a record, as a whole, cannot be exempted from access just because some part of it contains exempt information. The government institution is obliged to disclose as much information as can reasonably be severed from the exempt portion.

Mandatory Exemptions

- information obtained in confidence from foreign, provincial, or municipal governments or their institutions or organizations (Section 19); or
- confidential information obtained by the RCMP in performing police services for a municipality or province (Subsection 22(2)).

Discretionary Exemptions

- information which could injure the conduct of federal/provincial affairs if released (Section 20);
- information which could injure the conduct of international affairs, the defence of Canada or her allies, or the detection, suppression or prevention of subversive or hostile activities if released (Section 21);

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- information obtained in the course of a lawful investigation, information injurious to law enforcement or the security of penal institutions (Subsection 22(1));
- information which could threaten the safety of individuals if released (Section 25);
- information protected by solicitor-client privilege, e.g. legal advice (Section 27);
- information for security clearances if disclosure of that information could reveal the source of the information (Section 23);
- information requested by an individual under sentence, which could disrupt the imprisonment, parole or mandatory supervision of that person or could reveal the source of information (Section 24);
- information about another individual unless the disclosure is prohibited by any other Section of the Act in which case the exemption is mandatory (Section 26); or
- medical records of an individual where disclosure would not be in the best interests of the individual (Section 28).

The above list provides a plain language description of information exempted from the right of access under the Privacy Act. It is for your general guidance only. For the precise wording of the exemptions please refer to the sections of the Act shown in brackets after each exemption.

If you believe that records you have requested have been wrongly exempted from disclosure, you may lodge a complaint with the Privacy Commissioner. If, following an investigation by the Privacy Commissioner you are still not satisfied, you may complain to the Federal Court.

Complaints

The Privacy Act contains provisions for making complaints regarding the operation of the Act to the Privacy Commissioner.

However, it is hoped that most problems can be resolved through discussions between officials and the applicant. It is important therefore, to ensure, through discussion if necessary, that:

- (a) the government institution properly understands the nature and extent of the request; and
- (b) the applicant is aware of all the time and cost implications of his/her request.

While this approach will cover most situations, there will inevitably be some where an informal resolution of the differences is not possible and the applicant will complain to the Privacy Commissioner about some aspect of the request.

Grounds for Complaints

Under the Privacy Act, individuals may complain to the Privacy Commissioner on the following grounds:

- (a) they believe that personal information about themselves was improperly used or disclosed;
- (b) they were denied access, in whole or in part, to personal information about themselves;
- (c) they believe that the necessary steps to correct errors or omissions in information about themselves are not being taken;
- (d) they consider that the time limit for complying with a request for access has been unreasonably extended;
- (e) they were not given access in the official language of their choice;
- (f) they are dissatisfied with some aspect of the <u>Index of Personal</u> Information;
- (g) they wish to complain about any other matter relating to the collection, retention and disposal of personal information; the use and disclosure of personal information; and requesting or obtaining access to personal information.

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Process

There are a number of specific steps that take place in handling a complaint. These are:

1. Initiation

The complainant (or a representative - e.g. a lawyer) makes a complaint in writing to the Privacy Commissioner. The Commissioner can agree to accept oral complaints if he/she chooses.

2. Investigation

The Privacy Commissioner investigates the complaint using powers conferred upon him or her by the Act (e.g. power to summon persons, to examine records, etc.). During the investigation the Commissioner must hear representations from any of the parties involved in the complaint.

3. If the Commissioner finds that the complaint is justified, he/she reports the findings of the investigation and any appropriate recommendation to the institution. The Commissioner can request that the institution give him/her notice within a specified time of any action to be taken to implement the recommendations or reasons why it won't be taken. The Commissioner also informs the complainant of the findings.

Appeal to the Federal Court

If the Privacy Commissioner does not find the complaint about the denial of access to a record to be valid and the complainant is dissatisfied with this decision he/she may take the case to the Federal Court within 45 days after receiving the Commissioner's report. The complainant may also take the case to the Court if the Commission has recommended that the government institution disclose the information and the institution, which is not bound to act according to the recommendation of the Commissioner, still refuses. It is not possible, however, to appeal any of the other grounds for complaint to the Court. In those cases the complainant has no further recourse if the Commissioner decides against him or her.

The Privacy Commission may be contacted at:

The Office of the Privacy Commisioner, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 1H3

Telephone: (613) 995-2410

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	Personal Info	ormation Request Form		
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STEP 1: Privacy A using the appropria listed in t	Decide whether of Act. You may decid e procedures requi ate government in the Index of Person	use this form to request access to personal or not you wish to submit a request und le to request the information informally, w red by the Act, through the local office stitution or through the Privacy Co-ord hal Information. Copies of the Index are av ices in rural areas and government inform	ler the requesting a rithout bank descri of the your own linator information railable requesting o nation making a rec	as under the Privacy Act. access, and include any additional information indicated in the ption to locate the information you are seeking, or to veri- identity. Indicate whether you wish to receive copies of the access. Indicate whether you wish to receive copies of the access. There is no application fee for quest under the Privacy Act. end the request to the person identified in the Index as the
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Signature

Français au verso

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Date

TBC 350-58 (83/2)

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Privacy

Government Institutions

Departments and Ministries of State

Department of Agriculture Ottawa, Ontario KIA OC5

Department of Communications Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C8

Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0C9

Ministry of State for Economic Development Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1E7

Department of Employment and Immigration Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0J9

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4

Department of the Environment Ottawa, Ontario K1A OH3

Department of External Affairs Ottawa, Ontario KIA OG2

Department of Finance Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E6

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0H4

Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Department of Insurance Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H2

Department of Justice Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H8 Department of Labour Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J2

Department of National Defence (including the Canadian Forces) Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0A6

Department of National Health and Welfare Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Department of National Revenue Ottawa, Ontario KIA OL5

Department of Public Works Ottawa, Ontario K1A OP6

Department of Regional Economic Expansion Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0M4

Ministry of State for Science and Technology Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1A1

Department of the Secretary of State Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0M5

Ministry of State for Social Development Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1G3

Department of the Solicitor General Ottawa, Ontario KIA OP8

Department of Supply and Services Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0S5

Department of Transport Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON5

Department of Veterans Affairs Ottawa, Ontario K1A OP4

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Other Government Institutions

Advisory Council on the Status of Women Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H1

Agricultural Products Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C5

Agricultural Stabilization Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C5

Anti-Dumping Tribunal Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0G5

Atlantic Development Council St. John's, Newfoundland AlA 1N5

Atlantic Pilotage Authority Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1M5

Atomic Energy Control Board Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5S9

Bank of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A OG9

Bilingual Districts Advisory Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM5

Board of Trustees of the Queen Elizabeth II Canadian Fund to Aid in Research on the Diseases of Children Ottawa, Ontario KIA OW9

Bureau of Pension Advocates Ottawa, Ontario KlA OP4

Canada Council Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8

Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5W5

Canada Employment and Immigration Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0J9 Canada Labour Relations Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0X8

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3K5

Canada Post Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA OB1

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1H6

Canadian Commercial Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1E9

Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C8

Canadian Dairy Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0Z2

Canadian Film Development Corporation Montreal, Quebec H4Z 1A8

Canadian Government Specifications Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1H2

Canadian Grain Commission Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1B2

Canadian Human Rights Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1E1

Canadian International Development Agency Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Canadian Livestock Feed Board Montreal, Quebec H3X 3J4

Canadian Patents and Development Limited Ottawa, Ontario KIA OR3 Canadian Penitentiary Service Ottawa, Ontario KIA OP9

Canadian Pension Commission Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0P4

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON2

Canadian Saltfish Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E6

Canadian Transport Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON9

Canadian Unity Information Office Ottawa, Ontario KIP 6G6

The Canadian Wheat Board Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2P5

Crown Assets Disposal Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KlG 3J8

Defence Construction (1951) Limited Ottawa, Ontario KIA OK3

The Director of Soldier Settlement Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0P4

The Director, The Veterans' Land Act Ottawa, Ontario KIA OP4

Economic Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V6

Energy Supplies Allocation Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E4

Export Development Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIP 5T9

Farm Credit Corporation Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6J9 Federal Business Development Bank Montreal, Quebec H2Z 1R1

Federal Mortgage Exchange Corporation Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM2

Federal-Provincial Relations Office Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0A3

Fisheries Prices Support Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OE6

The Fisheries Research Board of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIA OE6

Foreign Investment Review Agency Ottawa, Ontario KIP 6A5

Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 3L4

Great Lakes Pilotage Authority, Ltd. Cornwall, Ontario K6H 5R9

Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KlC 1C7

Immigration Appeal Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OKI

International Development Research Centre Ottawa, Ontario KIG 3H9

Laurentian Pilotage Authority Montreal, Quebec H2Z 1S8

Law Reform Commission of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0L6

Medical Research Council Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0W9

Merchant Seamen Compensation Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0J2

Metric Commission Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0C9 National Arts Centre Corporation Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5W1 The National Battlefields Commission Quebec, Quebec G1R 2L7 National Capital Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIP 6J6 National Design Council Ottawa, Ontario KlA OH5 National Energy Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA OE5 National Farm Products Marketing Council Ottawa, Ontario KIR 7S3 National Film Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0M9 National Harbours Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON6 National Library Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0N4 National Museums of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0M8 National Parole Board Ottawa, Ontario K1A OR1 National Parole Service Ottawa, Ontario KlA OP9 National Research Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A OR6

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Ottawa, Ontario KIA OR6 Northern Canada Power Commission Edmonton, Alberta T6C 4J8

Northern Pipeline Agency Ottawa, Ontario KIP 5G4

Northwest Territories Water Board Yellowknife, Northwest Territories X1A 2R3

Office of the Auditor General Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0G6

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM6

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0T8

Office of the Comptroller General Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1E4

Office of the Co-ordinator, Status of Women Ottawa, Ontario KIA 1C3

Office of the Correctional Investigator Ottawa, Ontario KIP 5W5

Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Ottawa, Ontario KIA OS5

Pacific Pilotage Authority Vancouver, British Columbia V6E 2T9

Pension Appeals Board Ottawa, Ontario KlG 3H9

Pension Review Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0P4

Petroleum Compensation Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0E4 Petroleum Monitoring Agency Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0E4

Prairie Farm Assistance Administration Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0C5

Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0H5

Privy Council Office Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0A3

Public Archives Ottawa, Ontario KIA ON3

Public Service Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM7

Public Service Staff Relations Board Ottawa, Ontario KIP 5V2

Public Works Land Company Limited Ottawa, Ontario KIA OM2

Regional Development Incentives Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH5

Restrictive Trade Practices Commission Ottawa, Ontario KlN 8V3

Royal Canadian Mint Ottawa, Ontario KlA OG8

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Ottawa, Ontario KIA OR2

The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Ottawa, Ontario KlR 5A3

Science Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIP 5Ml

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Ottawa, Ontario KlR 5A3 Standards Council of Canada Ottawa, Ontario KlR 7S8

Statistics Canada Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0T6

Statute Revision Commission Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH8

Tariff Board Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0G7

Tax Review Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OMI

Textile and Clothing Board Ottawa, Ontario KIA OH5

Treasury Board Secretariat Ottawa, Ontario KlA OR5

Uranium Canada Limited Ottawa, Ontario KlA 0E4

War Veterans Allowance Board Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island ClA 8M9

Yukon Territory Water Board Whitehorse, Yukon Territory YlA 3Vl