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Title 40 —Protection of Environment

Chapter I —Environmental Protection Agency

Subchapter A —General

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PART 2—PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Subpart A—Procedures for Disclosure of Records Under the Freedom of Information Act

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§ 2.100 General provisions.

- (a) **General.** This subpart contains the rules that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or Agency) follows in processing requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552. Information routinely provided to the public as part of a regular EPA activity may be provided to the public without following this subpart.
- (b) **Other regulatory provisions.**
 - (1) Subpart B of this part contains requirements pertaining to the confidentiality of business information.
 - (2) 40 CFR part 16 contains requirements pertaining to Privacy Act requests.
- (c) **Statutory-based fee schedule programs.** EPA will inform the requester of the steps necessary to obtain records from agencies operating statutory-based fee schedule programs, such as, but not limited to, the Government Printing Office or the National Technical Information Service.
- (d) **National FOIA Office.** The Chief FOIA Officer designates the office that performs the duties of the National FOIA Office. The National FOIA Office reports to the Chief FOIA Officer.
- (e) **FOIA Public Liaison.** The Chief FOIA Officer designates the FOIA Public Liaisons. The FOIA Public Liaisons report to the Chief FOIA Officer. A FOIA Public Liaison is responsible for assisting in reducing delays, increasing transparency and understanding of the status of requests, and assisting in the resolution of disputes. A FOIA Public Liaison is an official to whom a requester can raise concerns about the service the requester received from the FOIA Requester Service Center. The public can find more information about the FOIA Public Liaisons at EPA's website.
- (f) **Other record availability.** Records required by FOIA to be made available for public inspection and copying are accessible through EPA's FOIA website, <http://www.epa.gov/foia>. EPA also proactively discloses records and information through the Agency's website, www.epa.gov.

§ 2.101 Where to file requests for records.

- (a) Requesters must submit all requests for records from EPA under the FOIA in writing and by one of the following methods:
 - (1) EPA's FOIA submission website, linked to at www.epa.gov/foia;
 - (2) An electronic government submission website established pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(m), such as FOIA.gov;
 - (3) U.S. Mail sent to the following address: National FOIA Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW (2310A), Washington, DC 20460; or
 - (4) Overnight delivery service to National FOIA Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania NW, Room 7309C, Washington, DC 20460.
- (b) EPA will not treat a request submitted by any method other than those listed in § 2.101(a) as a FOIA request, and the Agency will not re-route such a request.
- (c) The requester or requester organization must include the full name of their point of contact and their mailing address for EPA to process the request. For all requests, requesters should provide an email address and daytime telephone number whenever possible. For requests submitted through EPA's FOIA

submission website or as provided by an electronic government submission website established pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(m), requesters must include an email address. For requests submitted through U.S. Mail, the requester must mark both the request letter and envelope "Freedom of Information Act Request."

- (d) EPA provides access to all records that the FOIA requires an agency to make regularly available for public inspection and copying. Each office is responsible for determining which of the records it generates are required to be made publicly available and for providing access by the public to them. The Agency will also maintain and make available for public inspection and copying a current subject matter index of such records and provide a copy or a link to the respective website for Headquarters or the Regions. Each index will be updated regularly, at least quarterly, with respect to newly-included records.
- (e) All records created by EPA on or after November 1, 1996, which the FOIA requires an agency to make regularly available for public inspection and copying, will be made available electronically through EPA's website, located at <http://www.epa.gov>, or, upon request, through other electronic means. EPA will also include on its website the current subject matter index of all such records.

§ 2.102 Procedures for making requests.

- (a) EPA employees may attempt in good faith to comply with oral requests for inspection or disclosure of EPA records that are publicly available under § 2.201(a) and (b), but such requests are not subject to the FOIA or this Part.
- (b)
 - (1) Requesters must reasonably describe the records sought in sufficient detail to enable a professional employee of the Agency who is familiar with the subject area of the request to locate the records with a reasonable amount of effort.
 - (2) If EPA determines that a request does not reasonably describe the requested records as provided in § 2.102(b)(1), EPA will tell the requester either what additional information the requester needs to provide or why the request is otherwise insufficient. EPA will also give the requester an opportunity to discuss and modify the request to meet the requirements of § 2.102(b)(1). If the requester fails to modify the request to meet the requirements of § 2.102(b)(1) within 20 calendar days, EPA will not process the submission and close the request. If the requester does modify the request to meet the requirements of § 2.102(b)(1), EPA will consider the request received as of the date the modification is received by EPA.
 - (3) Whenever possible, a request should include specific information about each record sought, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, and subject matter. If known, the requester should include any file designations or descriptions for the records that the requester wants. The more specific the requester is about the records or type of records that the requester wants, the more likely EPA will be able to identify and locate records responsive to the request.

§ 2.103 Responsibility for responding to requests.

- (a) *In general.* Upon receipt of a FOIA request under § 2.101(a), the National FOIA Office will assign the request to an appropriate office within the Agency for processing. To determine which records are within the scope of a request, an office will ordinarily include only those records in the Agency's possession as of the date that the Agency begins its search. The Agency will inform the requester if any other date is used.

- (b) **Authority to issue final determinations.** The Administrator, Deputy Administrators, Assistant Administrators, Deputy Assistant Administrators, Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators, General Counsel, Deputy General Counsels, Regional Counsels, Deputy Regional Counsels, and Inspector General or those individuals' delegates, are authorized to make determinations required by 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(A).
- (c) **Authority to grant or deny fee waivers or requests for expedited processing.** EPA's Chief FOIA Officer or EPA's Chief FOIA Officer's delegates are authorized to grant or deny requests for fee waivers or requests for expedited processing.
- (d) **Consultations and referrals.** When a request to EPA seeks records in EPA's possession that originated with another Federal agency, the EPA office assigned to process the request shall either:
 - (1) In coordination with the National FOIA Office, consult with the Federal agency where the record or portion thereof originated and then respond to the request, or
 - (2) With the concurrence of the National FOIA Office, refer any record to the Federal agency where the record or portion thereof originated. The National FOIA Office will notify the requester whenever all or any part of the responsibility for responding to a request has been referred to another agency.
- (e) **Law enforcement information.** Whenever a requester makes a request for a record containing information that relates to an investigation of a possible violation of law and the investigation originated with another agency, the assigned office, with the concurrence of the National FOIA Office, will refer the record to that other agency or consult with that other agency prior to making any release determination.
- (f) **Assigning tracking numbers.** EPA may assign multiple tracking numbers to a FOIA request that contains unrelated parts that will be processed separately by multiple regions or headquarters program offices.

§ 2.104 Responses to requests.

- (a) **Timing of response.**
 - (1) Consistent with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(A) and upon any request for records made pursuant to this subpart, EPA shall determine within 20 working days after receipt of any such request whether to comply with such request and shall immediately notify the person according to this section.
 - (2) A requester submitting a request electronically must do so before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time for the Agency to consider the request as received on that date, and a request submitted electronically at or after 5 p.m. Eastern Time will be considered received by the National FOIA Office on the next business day.
 - (3) The timeframe for response may be extended if unusual circumstances exist per paragraph (f) of this section, including when EPA asserts unusual circumstances and arranges an alternative timeframe with the requester, or exceptional circumstances exist per paragraph (g) of this section. The timeframe for response may be tolled per paragraph (e) of this section.
- (b) **Agency failure to respond.** If EPA fails to respond to the request within the statutory time-period, or any authorized extension of time, the requester may seek judicial review to obtain the records without first making an administrative appeal.
- (c) **Acknowledgment of request.** On receipt of a request, the National FOIA Office ordinarily will send a written acknowledgment advising the requester of the date the Agency received the request and of the processing number assigned to the request for future reference.

- (d) **Multitrack processing.** The Agency uses three or more processing tracks by distinguishing between simple and complex requests based on the amount of work, time needed to process the request, or both, including limits based on the number of pages involved. The Agency will advise the requester of the processing track in which the Agency placed the request and the limits of the different processing tracks. The Agency may place the request in a slower track while providing the requester with the opportunity to limit the scope of the request to qualify for faster processing within the specified limits of a faster track. If the Agency places the request in a slower track, the Agency will contact the requester.
- (e) **Tolling the request.** EPA shall not toll the processing time-period except:
 - (1) The Agency may toll the processing time-period one time while seeking clarification from the requester; or
 - (2) The Agency may toll the processing time-period as many times as necessary to resolve fee issues.
- (f) **Unusual circumstances.**
 - (1) When the Agency cannot meet statutory time limits for processing a request because of “unusual circumstances,” as defined in the FOIA, and the time limits are extended on that basis, the Agency will notify the requester in writing, as soon as practicable, of the unusual circumstances and of the date by which processing of the request should be completed.
 - (2) If the 20 working-day period is extended, EPA will give the requester an opportunity to limit the scope of the request, modify the request, or agree to an alternative time-period for processing, as described by the FOIA.
 - (3) EPA will provide contact information for its FOIA Public Liaison to assist in the resolution of any disputes between the requester and the Agency, and the Agency will notify the requester of their right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services within the National Archives and Records Administration.
- (g) **Expedited processing.**
 - (1) EPA will take requests or appeals out of order and give expedited treatment whenever EPA determines that such requests or appeals involve a compelling need, an environmental justice-related need, or both.
 - (i) A compelling need is defined as either:
 - (A) Circumstances in which the lack of expedited treatment could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or
 - (B) An urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal government activity, if the information is requested by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information to the public.
 - (ii) For purposes of this provision, an environmental justice-related need means a pressing need to inform a community that is potentially experiencing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects. The Agency will consider:
 - (A) Whether the requested records relate to actual or alleged Federal government activity, including Agency records containing environmental information or data.

- (B) The extent to which there is a pressing need to inform the community about the Federal government activity. A pressing need to inform does not include requests where the disclosure is primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.
 - (C) The extent to which the community is potentially experiencing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects.
 - (D) The requester's ability and intention to effectively convey the information to members of the community.
- (iii) If the Agency grants a request for expedited processing under paragraph (g)(1)(ii) of this section, the Agency will also waive fees established under § 2.107(f) for the request.
- (2) Requesters must make a written request for expedited processing at the time of the initial request for records or at the time of appeal.
- (3) If the requester seeks expedited processing, the requester must submit a statement, certified to be true and correct to the best of the requester's knowledge and belief, explaining in detail the basis for the request.
 - (i) For example, if the requester fits within the category described in paragraph (g)(1)(i)(B) of this section and is not a full-time member of the news media, the requester must establish that they are a person whose primary professional activity or occupation is information dissemination, although it need not be the requester's sole occupation.
 - (ii) If the requester fits within the category described in paragraph (g)(1)(i)(B) of this section, the requester must also establish a particular urgency to inform the public about the government activity involved in the request, beyond the public's right to know about government activity generally.
- (4) Within 10 calendar days from the date of the request for expedited processing, the Chief FOIA Officer, or the Chief FOIA Officer's delegates, will decide whether to grant the request and will notify the requester of the decision. If the Agency grants the request for expedited processing, the Agency will give the request priority and will process the request as soon as practicable. If the Agency denies the request for expedited processing, the Agency will act on any appeal of that decision expeditiously.
- (h) **Grants of requests.** Once the Agency determines to grant a request in whole or in part, it will release the records or parts of records to the requester and notify the requester of any applicable fee charged under § 2.107. The office will annotate records released in part, whenever technically feasible, with the applicable FOIA exemption or exemptions at that part of the record from which the exempt information was deleted.
- (i) **Adverse determinations of requests.** When the Agency makes an adverse determination, the Agency will notify the requester of that determination in writing. Adverse determinations include:
 - (1) A decision that the requested record is exempt from disclosure, in whole or in part;
 - (2) A decision that the information requested is not a record subject to the FOIA;
 - (3) A decision that the requested record does not exist or cannot be located;
 - (4) A decision that the requested record is not readily reproducible in the form or format sought by the requester;
 - (5) A determination on any disputed fee matter, including a denial of a request for a fee waiver; or

- (6) A denial of a request for expedited processing.
- (j) **Content of final determination letter.** The appropriate official will issue the final determination letter in accordance with § 2.103(b) and will include:
 - (1) The name and title or position of the person responsible for the determination;
 - (2) A brief statement of the reason or reasons for the denial, including an identification of records being withheld (either individually or, if a large number of similar records are being denied, described by category) and any FOIA exemption applied by the office in denying the request;
 - (3) An estimate of the volume of records or information withheld, in number of pages or in some other reasonable form of estimation. This estimate does not need to be provided if the volume is otherwise indicated through annotated deletions on records disclosed in part, or if providing an estimate would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption;
 - (4) A statement that an adverse determination may be appealed under § 2.108 and description of the requirements for submitting an administrative appeal; and
 - (5) A statement that the requester has the right to seek dispute resolution services from an EPA FOIA Public Liaison or the Office of Government Information Service.

§ 2.105 [Reserved]

§ 2.106 Preservation of records.

The Agency will preserve all correspondence pertaining to the FOIA requests that it receives, as well as copies of all requested records, until disposition or destruction is authorized pursuant to title 44 of the United States Code or the National Archives and Records Administration's General Records Schedule 4.2. Records shall not be disposed of while they are the subject of a pending request, appeal, or lawsuit under the FOIA.

§ 2.107 Fees.

- (a) **In general.** The Agency will charge for processing requests under the FOIA in accordance with this section, except where fees are limited under paragraph (g) of this section or where a waiver or reduction of fees is granted under paragraph (n) of this section.
- (b) **How to pay fees.** Requesters must pay fees by check, money order, electronically at <https://www.pay.gov/>, to the Treasury of the United States.
- (c) **Contractor rates.** When any search, review, or duplication task is performed by a contractor, EPA will charge for staff time at the contractor's actual pay rate, but not exceeding the rates set under paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section.
- (d) **Rounding staff time.** Billable staff time is calculated by rounding to the nearest quarter-hour.
- (e) **Types of requests for fee purposes.** For purposes of this section, the five types of request categories are defined in paragraphs (e)(1) through (5) of this section. These request categories will be charged for the types of fees as noted, subject to the restrictions in paragraph (g) of this section and unless a fee waiver has been granted under paragraph (n) of this section. Paragraph (f) of this section defines and explains how the Agency calculates each type of fee.
 - (1) **Commercial-use Request.**

- (i) Commercial use request means a request from or on behalf of a person who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the requester's commercial, trade, or profit interests, which can include furthering those interests through litigation. The Agency will determine, whenever reasonably possible, the use to which a requester will put the requested records. When it appears that the requester will put the records to a commercial use, either because of the nature of the request itself or because the Agency has reasonable cause to doubt a requester's stated use, the Agency will provide the requester a reasonable opportunity to submit further clarification.
- (ii) For a commercial-use request, the Agency will charge the requester for search, review, and duplication.

(2) *Educational institution request.*

- (i) Educational institution means a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate higher education, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of professional education, or an institution of vocational education, that operates a program of scholarly research. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, requesters must show that the request is being made as authorized by and under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are not sought for a commercial use, but are sought in furtherance of scholarly research.
- (ii) For an educational institution request, the Agency will charge the requester for duplication, except that the Agency will furnish the first 100 pages of duplication at no charge.

(3) *Noncommercial scientific institution request.*

- (i) Noncommercial scientific institution means an institution not operated on a "commercial" basis, as defined in paragraph (e)(1) of this section, and that is operated solely for conducting scientific research that is not intended to promote any particular product or industry. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, requesters must show that the request is being made as authorized by and under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are not sought for a commercial use, but are sought in furtherance of scientific research.
- (ii) For a noncommercial scientific institution request, the Agency will charge the requester for duplication, except that the Agency will furnish the first 100 pages of duplication at no charge.

(4) *Representative of the news media requests.*

- (i) Representative of the news media has the meaning provided at 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A)(ii).
- (ii) For representative of the news media requests, the Agency will charge a requester for duplication, except that the Agency will furnish the first 100 pages of duplication at no charge.

(5) *Other requests.*

- (i) Other requesters are requesters that are not commercial-use requesters, educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions, or representatives of the news media.
- (ii) The Agency will charge other requesters for search and duplication, except that the Agency will furnish without charge the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication.

- (f) ***Types of fees.*** Paragraphs (f)(1) through (4) of this section are definitions of the types of fees and explanations of how the Agency calculates each type of fee.

(1) **Direct costs.** Direct costs means those expenses that the Agency actually incurs in searching for and duplicating (and, in the case of commercial use requests, reviewing) records to respond to a FOIA request. Direct costs include, for example, the salary of the employee performing the work and the cost of operating duplication equipment. Not included in direct costs are overhead expenses such as the costs of space and heating or lighting of the facility in which the records are kept.

(2) **Search.**

(i) Search means the process of looking for and retrieving records or information responsive to a request. It includes page-by-page or line-by-line identification of information within records and includes reasonable efforts to locate and retrieve information from records maintained in electronic form or format. Offices will ensure that searches are done in the most efficient and least expensive manner reasonably possible. For example, offices will not search line-by-line where duplicating an entire document would be quicker and less expensive. The Agency will charge for time spent searching even if no responsive records are found or if the records are located but are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(ii) Search fees will equal the direct costs of search. Personnel will bill their time at the following rates using the current Office of Personnel Management General Schedule (GS) pay table for Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA. The current calculations of these rates may be found at www.epa.gov/foia.

(A) GS-12 level or below (or equivalent pay scale): The average of GS-9 to GS-12 (Step 5), plus 16 percent, rounded to the nearest \$1 increment per quarter hour.

(B) GS-13 level or above (or equivalent pay scale): The average of GS-13 to GS-15 (Step 5), plus 16 percent, rounded to the nearest \$1 increment per quarter hour.

(iii) For requests that require the retrieval of records stored by an agency at a Federal Records Center operated by NARA, additional costs will be charged in accordance with the Transactional Billing Rate Schedule established by NARA.

(3) **Review.**

(i) Review means the examination of a record located in response to a request to determine whether any portion of it is exempt from disclosure. It also includes processing any record for disclosure (for example, doing all that is necessary to redact it and prepare it for disclosure). Review costs are recoverable even if a record ultimately is not disclosed. Review time includes time spent considering any formal objection to disclosure made by a business submitter requesting confidential treatment but does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(ii) The Agency will charge review fees only for the initial record review (that is, the review done when an office is deciding whether an exemption applies to a particular record or portion of a record at the initial request level). The Agency will not charge for review at the administrative appeal level for an exemption already applied. However, the Agency may again review records or portions of records withheld under an exemption that the Agency subsequently determines not to apply to determine whether any other exemption not previously considered applies; the Agency will charge costs of that review when a change of circumstances makes it necessary. The Agency will charge review fees at the same rates as those charged for a search under paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section.

(4) *Duplication.*

- (i) Duplication means the making of a copy of a record, or of the information contained in it, necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Copies can take the form of paper, microform, audiovisual materials, or electronic records (for example, magnetic tape, disc, or compact disc), among others. The Agency will honor a requester's specified preference of form or format of disclosure if the record is readily reproducible with reasonable efforts in the requested form or format.
- (ii) For either a photocopy or a computer-generated printout of a record (no more than one copy of which need be supplied), the fee will be fifteen (15) cents per page. For electronic forms of duplication, other than a computer-generated printout, offices will charge the direct costs of that duplication. Such direct costs will include the costs of the requested electronic medium on which the copy is to be made and the actual operator time and computer resource usage required to produce the copy, to the extent they can be determined. The Agency will charge operator time at the same rates as those charged for search under paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section.

(g) *Limitations on charging fees.*

- (1) The Agency will charge no fee when a total fee calculated under paragraph (c) of this section is less than fourteen times the rate in paragraph (f)(2)(ii)(B) of this section rounded to the nearest \$5.00 increment for any request. The current calculation of this threshold may be found at www.epa.gov/foia.
- (2) The restrictions in paragraphs (e)(1)(ii), (2)(ii), (3)(ii), (4)(ii), and (5)(ii) and minimum fee threshold in (g)(1) of this section work together. This means that for requesters other than those seeking records for a commercial use, the Agency will charge no fee unless the cost of search more than two hours plus the cost of duplication in excess of 100 pages totals more than fourteen times the rate in paragraph 2.107(f)(2)(ii)(B) of this section rounded to the nearest \$5.00 increment. The current calculation of this threshold may be found at www.epa.gov/foia.
- (3) If EPA fails to comply with the FOIA's time limits for responding to a request, EPA will not charge search fees, or, in the instance of requesters described in paragraphs (e)(2) through (4) of this section, duplication fees, except as follows:
 - (i) If EPA determined that unusual circumstances as defined by the FOIA apply and the Agency provided timely written notice to the requester in accordance with the FOIA, a failure to comply with the time limit shall be excused for an additional 10 working days;
 - (ii) If EPA determined that unusual circumstances as defined by the FOIA apply and more than 5,000 pages are necessary to respond to the request, EPA may charge search fees, or, in the case of requesters described in paragraphs (e)(2) through (4) of this section, may charge duplication fees, if the following steps are taken: EPA must have provided timely written notice of unusual circumstances to the requester in accordance with the FOIA and the EPA must have discussed with the requester by written mail, email, or telephone (or made not less than three good-faith attempts to do so) how the requester could effectively limit the scope of the request in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B)(ii), which includes notification to the requester of the availability of the FOIA Public Liaison and the right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services. If this exception is satisfied, EPA may charge all applicable fees incurred in the processing of the request; or

- (iii) If a court determines that exceptional circumstances exist, as defined by the FOIA, a failure to comply with the time limits shall be excused for the length of time provided by the court order.

(h) **Assurance of payment and advanced payment of fees.**

- (1) If EPA determines that the actual or estimated fees exceed the amount in paragraph (g)(1) of this section, the Agency will notify the requester of the actual or estimated amount, toll the processing clock, and will do no further work on the request until the requester agrees in writing to pay the anticipated total fee.
- (2) If EPA determines that the actual or estimated fees exceed twenty-five times the amount in paragraph (f)(2)(ii)(B) of this section, the Agency will notify the requester of the actual or estimated amount, and may toll the processing clock and do no further work on the request until the requester pays the estimated or actual fee. The current calculation of this amount may be found at www.epa.gov/foia.
- (3) After providing the requester with estimated fee amounts, EPA will provide the requester with an opportunity to discuss with the Agency how to modify the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost.
- (4) EPA calculates the estimated or actual fee cumulatively for multi-component requests. If only a part of the fee can be estimated readily, the Agency will advise the requester that the estimated fee may be only a portion of the total fee.
- (5) If, after the requester provided an assurance of payment or paid an initially estimated or actual amount of fees, the Agency increases the estimated or actual amount of fees, the Agency will notify the requester, stop further processing of the request, and toll any deadline for responding to the request. Once the requester provides assurance of payment or pays the fees, the time to respond to the request will resume from where it was at the date of the tolling notification.

- (i) **Charges for other services.** Although not required to provide special services, if EPA chooses to do so as a matter of administrative discretion, the direct costs of providing the service will be charged to the requester. Examples of such services include certifying that records are true copies, sending records by other than EPA's electronic FOIA management system or U.S. Mail, or providing multiple copies of the same document.

- (j) **Charging interest.** EPA may charge interest on any unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the date of billing the requester. The Agency will assess interest charges at the rate provided in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and will accrue from the date of the billing until the Agency receives payment. EPA will follow the provisions of the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97-365), as amended, and its administrative procedures, including the use of consumer reporting agencies, collection agencies, and offset. The Agency will assess no penalty against FOIA requesters for exercising their statutory right to ask the Agency to waive or reduce a fee or to dispute a billing. If a fee is in dispute, the Agency will suspend penalties upon notification.

(k) **Delinquent requesters.**

- (1) If a requester fails to pay all fees charged to the requester under the FOIA by EPA or any other Federal agency within 60 calendar days of the date the fees were billed, the Agency will treat the requester as delinquent. The Agency may share information regarding delinquent requesters with other Federal agencies.

- (2) Before EPA continues processing a pending FOIA request or begins processing any new FOIA requests from a delinquent requester, the delinquent requester must pay the full amount due, plus any applicable interest, on that prior request and make an advance payment of the full amount of any anticipated fee.
- (3) When the Agency requires payment under paragraph (h)(2) of this section, the request will not be considered received until the required payment is made. If the requester does not pay the outstanding balance and the advance payment within 30 calendar days after the date of EPA's fee determination, the request will be closed.

(l) **Aggregating requests.** If a requester or a group of requesters acting in concert submit two or more requests that involve related matters and paragraphs (l)(1), (2), or both of this section, apply then the Agency may aggregate those requests and charge fees accordingly. Multiple FOIA requests involving unrelated matters shall not be aggregated. An aggregated group of FOIA requests will be treated as a single FOIA request under this subpart, including evaluation of whether unusual circumstances exist.

- (1) The Agency reasonably believes that if the requests constituted a single request, such a request would result in unusual circumstances pursuant to § 2.104(f); or
- (2) The Agency reasonably believes that the requester or requesters acting together are attempting to divide a request into a series of requests for the purpose of avoiding fees. The Agency may presume that such requests have been submitted to avoid fees if submitted within a 30-day period. When requests are submitted by a period greater than 30 days, the Agency will aggregate them only if there exists a solid basis for determining that aggregation is warranted under all the circumstances involved.

(m) **Other statutes specifically providing for fees.** The fee schedule of this section does not apply to fees charged under any other statute that specifically requires an agency to set and collect fees for particular types of records. When records responsive to requests are maintained for distribution by agencies operating such statutorily based fee schedule programs, EPA will inform requesters of the steps for obtaining records from those sources so that they may do so most economically.

(n) **Waiver or reduction of fees.**

- (1) A request for a waiver or reduction of FOIA fees must be made at the time of the initial submission of a FOIA request. An untimely request for a waiver or reduction of fees will be denied.
- (2) Requests for the waiver or reduction of fees must address the factors listed in paragraphs (n)(4) through (6) of this section, as far as they apply to each request. EPA components will exercise their discretion to consider the cost-effectiveness of their investment of administrative resources in deciding whether to grant waivers or reductions of fees and will consult the appropriate EPA components as needed. Requesters must submit requests for the waiver or reduction of fees along with the request.
- (3) When only some of the requested records satisfy the requirements for a waiver of fees, the Agency will grant a waiver for only those records.
- (4) Records responsive to a request will be furnished without charge or at a charge reduced below that established under paragraph (c) of this section when the Agency determines, based on all available information, that disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is:
 - (i) Likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government, and

- (ii) Is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.
- (5) To determine whether the request meets the first fee waiver requirement, the Agency will consider the following factors:
 - (i) The subject of the request. Whether the subject of the requested records concerns “the operations or activities of the government.” The subject of the requested records must concern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal government, with a connection that is direct and clear, not remote.
 - (ii) The informative value of the information to be disclosed. Whether the disclosure is “likely to contribute” to an understanding of government operations or activities. The disclosable portions of the requested records must be meaningfully informative about government operations or activities in order to be “likely to contribute” to an increased public understanding of those operations or activities. The disclosure of information that already is in the public domain, in either a duplicative or a substantially identical form, would not be as likely to contribute to such understanding when nothing new would be added to the public's understanding.
 - (iii) The contribution to an understanding of the subject by the public is likely to result from the disclosure. Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to “public understanding.” The disclosure must contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester. The Agency will consider a requester's expertise in the subject area and ability and intention to effectively convey information to the public. The Agency presumes that a representative of the news media will satisfy this consideration.
 - (iv) The significance of the contribution to public understanding. Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute “significantly” to public understanding of government operations or activities. The public's understanding of the subject in question, as compared to the level of public understanding existing prior to the disclosure, must be enhanced by the disclosure to a significant extent. The Agency will not make value judgments about whether information that would contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government is “important” enough to be made public.
- (6) To determine whether the request meets the second fee waiver requirement, the Agency will consider the following factors:
 - (i) The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest. Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. The Agency will consider any commercial interest of the requester (with reference to the definition of “commercial use request” in paragraph (e)(1) of this section), or of any person on whose behalf the requester may be acting, that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. The Agency will give the requester an opportunity in the administrative process to provide explanatory information regarding this consideration.
 - (ii) The primary interest in disclosure. Whether any identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is “primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” A fee waiver or reduction is justified where the public interest standard is satisfied and that public interest is greater in magnitude than that of any identified commercial interest in disclosure. The Agency ordinarily will presume that when a news media requester has satisfied the public interest standard, the public interest

will be the interest primarily served by disclosure to that requester. The Agency will not presume that disclosure to data brokers or others who merely compile and market government information for direct economic return is to primarily serve the public interest.

§ 2.108 Administrative appeals.

- (a) **Appeals of adverse determinations.** To appeal an adverse determination, a requester must submit an appeal in writing within 90 calendar days from the date of the letter communicating the Agency's adverse determination, and by one of the following methods:
 - (1) EPA's FOIA submission website, linked to at www.epa.gov/foia;
 - (2) U.S. Mail sent to the following address: National FOIA Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW (2310A), Washington, DC 20460; or
 - (3) Overnight delivery service to National FOIA Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania NW, Room 7309C, Washington, DC 20460.
- (b) **Timing for administrative appeals submitted electronically.** Requesters submitting appeals electronically must do so before 5 p.m. Eastern Time for the Agency to consider the appeal as received on that date, and appeals submitted electronically at or after 5 p.m. Eastern Time will be considered received by the National FOIA Office on the next business day.
- (c) **Content of administrative appeal.** The appeal may include as much or as little related information as the requester wishes. The appeal must clearly identify the office's determination that is being appealed and the assigned request tracking number. For quickest handling of appeals sent via U.S. Mail or overnight delivery service, the requester must mark their appeal letter and its envelope with "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."
- (d) **Authority to make decision on appeal.** Unless the Administrator directs otherwise, the General Counsel or the General Counsel's delegate will act on behalf of the Administrator on all appeals under this section, except that:
 - (1) The Counsel to the Inspector General will act on any appeal where the Inspector General or the Inspector General's delegate has made the final adverse determination; however, if the Counsel to the Inspector General has signed the final adverse determination, the General Counsel or the General Counsel's delegate will act on the appeal;
 - (2) An adverse determination by the Administrator on an initial request will serve as the final action of the Agency; and
 - (3) An appeal ordinarily will not be adjudicated if the request becomes a matter of FOIA litigation.
- (e) **Timing of decision on appeal.** EPA will make the decision on the appeal in writing, normally within 20 working days of its receipt by the National FOIA Office.
 - (1) A decision affirming an adverse determination in whole or in part will contain a statement of the reason or reasons for the decision, including any FOIA exemption or exemptions applied, inform the requester of dispute resolution services offered by the Office of Government Information Service of the National Archives and Records Administration, and inform the requester of the FOIA provisions for judicial review of the decision.

(2) If the Agency reverses or modifies the adverse determination on appeal, the Agency will attach the requested information that the Agency determined on appeal to be releasable, or the Agency will return the request to the appropriate office so that the office may reprocess the request in accordance with the appeal decision.

(f) **When appeal is required.** If the requester wishes to seek judicial review of any adverse determination, the requester must first appeal that adverse determination under this section, except when EPA has not responded to the request within the applicable time-period. In such cases, the requester may seek judicial review without making an administrative appeal.

§ 2.109 Other rights and services.

Nothing in this subpart shall be construed to entitle any person, as a right, to any service or to the disclosure of any record to which such person is not entitled under the FOIA.

Subpart B—Confidentiality of Business Information

§ 2.201 Definitions.

For the purposes of this subpart:

- (a) **Person** means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other public or private organization or legal entity, including Federal, State or local governmental bodies and agencies and their employees.
- (b) **Business** means any person engaged in a business, trade, employment, calling or profession, whether or not all or any part of the net earnings derived from such engagement by such person inure (or may lawfully inure) to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
- (c) **Business information** (sometimes referred to simply as *information*) means any information which pertains to the interests of any business, which was developed or acquired by that business, and (except where the context otherwise requires) which is possessed by EPA in recorded form.
- (d) **Affected business** means, with reference to an item of business information, a business which has asserted (and not waived or withdrawn) a business confidentiality claim covering the information, or a business which could be expected to make such a claim if it were aware that disclosure of the information to the public was proposed.
- (e) **Reasons of business confidentiality** include the concept of trade secrecy and other related legal concepts which give (or may give) a business the right to preserve the confidentiality of business information and to limit its use or disclosure by others in order that the business may obtain or retain business advantages it derives from its rights in the information. The definition is meant to encompass any concept which authorizes a Federal agency to withhold business information under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), as well as any concept which requires EPA to withhold information from the public for the benefit of a business under 18 U.S.C. 1905 or any of the various statutes cited in §§ 2.301 through 2.309.
- (f) [Reserved]
- (g) Information which is *available to the public* is information in EPA's possession which EPA will furnish to any member of the public upon request and which EPA may make public, release or otherwise make available to any person whether or not its disclosure has been requested.

- (h) **Business confidentiality claim** (or, simply, *claim*) means a claim or allegation that business information is entitled to confidential treatment for reasons of business confidentiality, or a request for a determination that such information is entitled to such treatment.
- (i) **Voluntarily submitted information** means business information in EPA's possession—
 - (1) The submission of which EPA had no statutory or contractual authority to require; and
 - (2) The submission of which was not prescribed by statute or regulation as a condition of obtaining some benefit (or avoiding some disadvantage) under a regulatory program of general applicability, including such regulatory programs as permit, licensing, registration, or certification programs, but excluding programs concerned solely or primarily with the award or administration by EPA of contracts or grants.
- (j) **Recorded** means written or otherwise registered in some form for preserving information, including such forms as drawings, photographs, videotape, sound recordings, punched cards, and computer tape or disk.
- (k) [Reserved]
- (l) **Administrator, Regional Administrator, General Counsel, Regional Counsel, and Freedom of Information Officer** mean the EPA officers or employees occupying the positions so titled.
- (m) **EPA office** means any organizational element of EPA, at any level or location. (The terms *EPA office* and *EPA legal office* are used in this subpart for the sake of brevity and ease of reference. When this subpart requires that an action be taken by an *EPA office* or by an *EPA legal office*, it is the responsibility of the officer or employee in charge of that office to take the action or ensure that it is taken.)
- (n) **EPA legal office** means the EPA General Counsel and any EPA office over which the General Counsel exercises supervisory authority, including the various Offices of Regional Counsel. (See paragraph (m) of this section.)
- (o) A *working day* is any day on which Federal Government offices are open for normal business. Saturdays, Sundays, and official Federal holidays are not working days; all other days are.

§ 2.202 Applicability of subpart; priority where provisions conflict; records containing more than one kind of information.

- (a) Sections 2.201 through 2.215 establish basic rules governing business confidentiality claims, the handling by EPA of business information which is or may be entitled to confidential treatment, and determinations by EPA of whether information is entitled to confidential treatment for reasons of business confidentiality.
- (b) Various statutes (other than 5 U.S.C. 552) under which EPA operates contain special provisions concerning the entitlement to confidential treatment of information gathered under such statutes. Sections 2.301 through 2.311 prescribe rules for treatment of certain categories of business information obtained under the various statutory provisions. Paragraph (b) of each of those sections should be consulted to determine whether any of those sections applies to the particular information in question.
- (c) The basic rules of §§ 2.201 through 2.215 govern except to the extent that they are modified or supplanted by the special rules of §§ 2.301 through 2.311. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of the basic rules and those of a special rule which is applicable to the particular information in question, the provision of the special rule shall govern.

- (d) If two or more of the sections containing special rules apply to the particular information in question, and the applicable sections prescribe conflicting special rules for the treatment of the information, the rule which provides greater or wider availability to the public of the information shall govern.
- (e) For most purposes, a document or other record may usefully be treated as a single unit of *information*, even though in fact the document or record is comprised of a collection of individual items of information. However, in applying the provisions of this subpart, it will often be necessary to separate the individual items of information into two or more categories, and to afford different treatment to the information in each such category. The need for differentiation of this type may arise, e.g., because a business confidentiality claim covers only a portion of a record, or because only a portion of the record is eligible for confidential treatment. EPA offices taking action under this subpart must be alert to this problem.
- (f) In taking actions under this subpart, EPA offices should consider whether it is possible to obtain the affected business's consent to disclosure of useful portions of records while protecting the information which is or may be entitled to confidentiality (e.g., by withholding such portions of a record as would identify a business, or by disclosing data in the form of industry-wide aggregates, multi-year averages or totals, or some similar form).
- (g) This subpart does not apply to questions concerning entitlement to confidential treatment or information which concerns an individual solely in his personal, as opposed to business, capacity.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40000, Sept. 8, 1978; 50 FR 51661, Dec. 18, 1985]

§ 2.203 Notice to be included in EPA requests, demands, and forms; method of asserting business confidentiality claim; effect of failure to assert claim at time of submission.

- (a) **Notice to be included in certain requests and demands for information, and in certain forms.** Whenever an EPA office makes a written request or demand that a business furnish information which, in the office's opinion, is likely to be regarded by the business as entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart, or whenever an EPA office prescribes a form for use by businesses in furnishing such information, the request, demand, or form shall include or enclose a notice which—
 - (1) States that the business may, if it desires, assert a business confidentiality claim covering part or all of the information, in the manner described by paragraph (b) of this section, and that information covered by such a claim will be disclosed by EPA only to the extent, and by means of the procedures, set forth in this subpart;
 - (2) States that if no such claim accompanies the information when it is received by EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the business; and
 - (3) Furnishes a citation of the location of this subpart in the Code of Federal Regulations and the FEDERAL REGISTER.
- (b) **Method and time of asserting business confidentiality claim.** A business which is submitting information to EPA may assert a business confidentiality claim covering the information by placing on (or attaching to) the information, at the time it is submitted to EPA, a cover sheet, stamped or typed legend, or other suitable form of notice employing language such as *trade secret*, *proprietary*, or *company confidential*. Allegedly confidential portions of otherwise non-confidential documents should be clearly identified by

the business, and may be submitted separately to facilitate identification and handling by EPA. If the business desires confidential treatment only until a certain date or until the occurrence of a certain event, the notice should so state.

- (c) ***Effect of failure to assert claim at time of submission of information.*** If information was submitted by a business to EPA on or after October 1, 1976, in response to an EPA request or demand (or on an EPA-prescribed form) which contained the substance of the notice required by paragraph (a) of this section, and if no business confidentiality claim accompanied the information when it was received by EPA, the inquiry to the business normally required by § 2.204(c)(2) need not be made. If a claim covering the information is received after the information itself is received, EPA will make such efforts as are administratively practicable to associate the late claim with copies of the previously-submitted information in EPA files (see § 2.204(c)(1)). However, EPA cannot assure that such efforts will be effective, in light of the possibility of prior disclosure or widespread prior dissemination of the information.

§ 2.204 Initial action by EPA office.

- (a) ***Situations requiring action.*** This section prescribes procedures to be used by EPA offices in making initial determinations of whether business information is entitled to confidential treatment for reasons of business confidentiality. Action shall be taken under this section whenever an EPA office:
- (1) Learns that it is responsible for responding to a request under 5 U.S.C. 552 for the release of business information; in such a case, the office shall issue an initial determination within the period specified in § 2.112;
 - (2) Desires to determine whether business information in its possession is entitled to confidential treatment, even though no request for release of the information has been received; or
 - (3) Determines that it is likely that EPA eventually will be requested to disclose the information at some future date and thus will have to determine whether the information is entitled to confidential treatment. In such a case this section's procedures should be initiated at the earliest practicable time, in order to increase the time available for preparation and submission of comments and for issuance of determinations, and to make easier the task of meeting response deadlines if a request for release of the information is later received under 5 U.S.C. 552.
- (b) ***Previous confidentiality determination.*** The EPA office shall first ascertain whether there has been a previous determination, issued by a Federal court or by an EPA legal office acting under this subpart, holding that the information in question is entitled to confidential treatment for reasons of business confidentiality.
- (1) If such a determination holds that the information is entitled to confidential treatment, the EPA Office shall furnish any person whose request for the information is pending under 5 U.S.C. 552 an initial determination (see § 2.111 and § 2.113) that the information has previously been determined to be entitled to confidential treatment, and that the request is therefore denied. The office shall furnish such person the appropriate case citation or EPA determination. If the EPA office believes that a previous determination which was issued by an EPA legal office may be improper or no longer valid, the office shall so inform the EPA legal office, which shall consider taking action under § 2.205(h).
 - (2) With respect to all information not known to be covered by such a previous determination, the EPA office shall take action under paragraph (c) of this section.
- (c) ***Determining existence of business confidentiality claims.***

- (1) Whenever action under this paragraph is required by paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the EPA office shall examine the information and the office's records to determine which businesses, if any, are affected businesses (see § 2.201(d)), and to determine which businesses if any, have asserted business confidentiality claims which remain applicable to the information. If any business is found to have asserted an applicable claim, the office shall take action under paragraph (d) of this section with respect to each such claim.
- (2)
 - (i) If the examination conducted under paragraph (c)(1) of this section discloses the existence of any business which, although it has not asserted a claim, might be expected to assert a claim if it knew EPA proposed to disclose the information, the EPA office shall contact a responsible official of each such business to learn whether the business asserts a claim covering the information. However, no such inquiry need be made to any business—
 - (A) Which failed to assert a claim covering the information when responding to an EPA request or demand, or supplying information on an EPA form, which contained the substance of the statements prescribed by § 2.203(a);
 - (B) Which otherwise failed to assert a claim covering the information after being informed by EPA that such failure could result in disclosure of the information to the public; or
 - (C) Which has otherwise waived or withdrawn a claim covering the information.
 - (ii) If a request for release of the information under 5 U.S.C. 552 is pending at the time inquiry is made under this paragraph (c)(2), the inquiry shall be made by telephone or equally prompt means, and the responsible official contacted shall be informed that any claim the business wishes to assert must be brought to the EPA office's attention no later than the close of business on the third working day after such inquiry.
 - (iii) A record shall be kept of the results of any inquiry under this paragraph (c)(2). If any business makes a claim covering the information, the EPA office shall take further action under paragraph (d) of this section.
- (3) If, after the examination under paragraph (c)(1) of this section, and after any inquiry made under paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the EPA office knows of no claim covering the information and the time for response to any inquiry has passed, the information shall be treated for purposes of this subpart as not entitled to confidential treatment.
- (d) **Preliminary determination.** Whenever action under this paragraph is required by paragraph (c)(1) or (2) of this section on any business's claim, the EPA Office shall make a determination with respect to each such claim. Each determination shall be made after consideration of the provisions of § 2.203, the applicable substantive criteria in § 2.208 or elsewhere in this subpart, and any previously-issued determinations under this subpart which are applicable.
 - (1) If, in connection with any business's claim, the office determines that the information may be entitled to confidential treatment, the office shall—
 - (i) Furnish the notice of opportunity to submit comments prescribed by paragraph (e) of this section to each business which is known to have asserted an applicable claim and which has not previously been furnished such notice with regard to the information in question;

- (ii) Furnish, to any person whose request for release of the information is pending under 5 U.S.C. 552, a determination (in accordance with § 2.113) that the information may be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart and 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), that further inquiry by EPA pursuant to this subpart is required before a final determination on the request can be issued, that the person's request is therefore initially denied, and that after further inquiry a final determination will be issued by an EPA legal office; and
- (iii) Refer the matter to the appropriate EPA legal office, furnishing the information required by paragraph (f) of this section after the time has elapsed for receipt of comments from the affected business.

- (2) If, in connection with all applicable claims, the office determines that the information clearly is not entitled to confidential treatment, the office shall take the actions required by § 2.205(f). However, if a business has previously been furnished notice under § 2.205(f) with respect to the same information, no further notice need be furnished to that business. A copy of each notice furnished to a business under this paragraph (d)(2) and § 2.205(f) shall be forwarded promptly to the appropriate EPA legal office.

(e) ***Notice to affected businesses; opportunity to comment.***

- (1) Whenever required by paragraph (d)(1) of this section, the EPA office shall promptly furnish each business a written notice stating that EPA is determining under this subpart whether the information is entitled to confidential treatment, and affording the business an opportunity to comment. The notice shall be furnished by certified mail (return receipt requested), by personal delivery, or by other means which allows verification of the fact and date of receipt. The notice shall state the address of the office to which the business's comments shall be addressed (the EPA office furnishing the notice, unless the General Counsel has directed otherwise), the time allowed for comments, and the method for requesting a time extension under § 2.205(b)(2). The notice shall further state that EPA will construe a business's failure to furnish timely comments as a waiver of the business's claim.
- (2) If action under this section is occasioned by a request for the information under 5 U.S.C. 552, the period for comments shall be 15 working days after the date of the business's receipt of the written notice. In other cases, the EPA office shall establish a reasonable period for comments (not less than 15 working days after the business's receipt of the written notice). The time period for comments shall be considered met if the business's comments are postmarked or hand delivered to the office designated in the notice by the date specified. In all cases, the notice shall call the business's attention to the provisions of § 2.205(b).
- (3) At or about the time the written notice is furnished, the EPA office shall orally inform a responsible representative of the business (by telephone or otherwise) that the business should expect to receive the written notice, and shall request the business to contact the EPA office if the written notice has not been received within a few days, so that EPA may furnish a duplicate notice.
- (4) The written notice required by paragraph (e)(1) of this section shall invite the business's comments on the following points (subject to paragraph (e)(5) of this section):
 - (i) The portions of the information which are alleged to be entitled to confidential treatment;
 - (ii) The period of time for which confidential treatment is desired by the business (e.g., until a certain date, until the occurrence of a specified event, or permanently);

- (iii) The purpose for which the information was furnished to EPA and the approximate date of submission, if known;
 - (iv) Whether a business confidentiality claim accompanied the information when it was received by EPA;
 - (v) Measures taken by the business to guard against undesired disclosure of the information to others;
 - (vi) The extent to which the information has been disclosed to others, and the precautions taken in connection therewith;
 - (vii) Pertinent confidentiality determinations, if any, by EPA or other Federal agencies, and a copy of any such determination, or reference to it, if available;
 - (viii) Whether the business asserts that disclosure of the information would be likely to result in substantial harmful effects on the business' competitive position, and if so, what those harmful effects would be, why they should be viewed as substantial, and an explanation of the causal relationship between disclosure and such harmful effects; and
 - (ix) Whether the business asserts that the information is voluntarily submitted information as defined in § 2.201(i), and if so, whether and why disclosure of the information would tend to lessen the availability to EPA of similar information in the future.
- (5) To the extent that the EPA office already possesses the relevant facts, the notice need not solicit responses to the matters addressed in paragraphs (e)(4) (i) through (ix) of this section, although the notice shall request confirmation of EPA's understanding of such facts where appropriate.
- (6) The notice shall refer to § 2.205(c) and shall include the statement prescribed by § 2.203(a).
- (f) **Materials to be furnished to EPA legal office.** When a matter is referred to an EPA legal office under paragraph (d)(1) of this section, the EPA office taking action under this section shall forward promptly to the EPA legal office the following items:
- (1) A copy of the information in question, or (where the quantity or form of the information makes forwarding a copy of the information impractical) representative samples, a description of the information, or both;
 - (2) A description of the circumstances and date of EPA's acquisition of the information;
 - (3) The name, address, and telephone number of the EPA employee(s) most familiar with the information;
 - (4) The name, address and telephone number of each business which asserts an applicable business confidentiality claim;
 - (5) A copy of each applicable claim (or the record of the assertion of the claim), and a description of when and how each claim was asserted;
 - (6) Comments concerning each business's compliance or noncompliance with applicable requirements of § 2.203;
 - (7) A copy of any request for release of the information pending under 5 U.S.C. 552;
 - (8) A copy of the business's comments on whether the information is entitled to confidential treatment;

- (9) The office's comments concerning the appropriate substantive criteria under this subpart, and information the office possesses concerning the information's entitlement to confidential treatment; and
- (10) Copies of other correspondence or memoranda which pertain to the matter.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40000, Sept. 8, 1978; 50 FR 51661, Dec. 18, 1985]

§ 2.205 Final confidentiality determination by EPA legal office.

(a) *Role of EPA legal office.*

- (1) The appropriate EPA legal office (see paragraph (i) of this section) is responsible for making the final administrative determination of whether or not business information covered by a business confidentiality claim is entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart.
- (2) When a request for release of the information under 5 U.S.C. 552 is pending, the EPA legal office's determination shall serve as the final determination on appeal from an initial denial of the request.
 - (i) If the initial denial was issued under § 2.204(b)(1), a final determination by the EPA legal office is necessary only if the requestor has actually filed an appeal.
 - (ii) If the initial denial was issued under § 2.204(d)(1), however, the EPA legal office shall issue a final determination in every case, unless the request has been withdrawn. (Initial denials under § 2.204(d)(1) are of a procedural nature, to allow further inquiry into the merits of the matter, and a requestor is entitled to a decision on the merits.) If an appeal from such a denial has not been received by the EPA Freedom of Information Officer on the tenth working day after issuance of the denial, the matter shall be handled as if an appeal had been received on that day, for purposes of establishing a schedule for issuance of an appeal decision under § 2.117 of this part.

(b) *Comment period; extensions; untimeliness as waiver of claim.*

- (1) Each business which has been furnished the notice and opportunity to comment prescribed by § 2.204(d)(1) and § 2.204(e) shall furnish its comments to the office specified in the notice in time to be postmarked or hand delivered to that office not later than the date specified in the notice (or the date established in lieu thereof under this section).
- (2) The period for submission of comments may be extended if, before the comments are due, a request for an extension of the comment period is made by the business and approved by the EPA legal office. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the EPA legal office will not approve such an extension without the consent of any person whose request for release of the information under 5 U.S.C. 552 is pending.
- (3) The period for submission of comments by a business may be shortened in the manner described in paragraph (g) of this section.
- (4) If a business's comments have not been received by the specified EPA office by the date they are due (including any approved extension), that office shall promptly inquire whether the business has complied with paragraph (b)(1) of this section. If the business has complied with paragraph (b)(1) but the comments have been lost in transmission, duplicate comments shall be requested.

- (c) **Confidential treatment of comments from business.** If information submitted to EPA by a business as part of its comments under this section pertains to the business's claim, is not otherwise possessed by EPA, and is marked when received in accordance with § 2.203(b), it will be regarded by EPA as entitled to confidential treatment and will not be disclosed by EPA without the business's consent, unless its disclosure is duly ordered by a Federal court, notwithstanding other provisions of this subpart to the contrary.
- (d) **Types of final determinations; matters to be considered.**
- (1) If the EPA legal office finds that a business has failed to furnish comments under paragraph (b) of this section by the specified due date, it shall determine that the business has waived its claim. If, after application of the preceding sentence, no claim applies to the information, the office shall determine that the information is not entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart and, subject to § 2.210, is available to the public.
 - (2) In all other cases, the EPA legal office shall consider each business's claim and comments, the various provisions of this subpart, any previously-issued determinations under this subpart which are pertinent, the materials furnished it under § 2.204(f), and such other materials as it finds appropriate. With respect to each claim, the office shall determine whether or not the information is entitled to confidential treatment for the benefit of the business that asserted the claim, and the period of any such entitlement (e.g., until a certain date, until the occurrence of a specified event, or permanently), and shall take further action under paragraph (e) or (f) of this section, as appropriate.
 - (3) Whenever the claims of two or more businesses apply to the same information, the EPA legal office shall take action appropriate under the particular circumstances to protect the interests of all persons concerned (including any person whose request for the information is pending under 5 U.S.C. 552).
- (e) **Determination that information is entitled to confidential treatment.** If the EPA legal office determines that the information is entitled to confidential treatment for the full period requested by the business which made the claim, EPA shall maintain the information in confidence for such period, subject to paragraph (h) of this section, § 2.209, and the other provisions of this subpart which authorize disclosure in specified circumstances, and the office shall so inform the business. If any person's request for the release of the information is then pending under 5 U.S.C. 552, the EPA legal office shall issue a final determination denying that request.
- (f) **Determination that information is not entitled to confidential treatment; notice; waiting period; release of information.**
- (1) Notice of denial (or partial denial) of a business confidentiality claim, in the form prescribed by paragraph (f)(2) of this section, shall be furnished—
 - (i) By the EPA office taking action under § 2.204, to each business on behalf of which a claim has been made, whenever § 2.204(d)(2) requires such notice; and
 - (ii) By the EPA legal office taking action under this section, to each business which has asserted a claim applicable to the information and which has furnished timely comments under paragraph (b) of this section, whenever the EPA legal office determines that the information is not entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart for the benefit of the business, or determines that the period of any entitlement to confidential treatment is shorter than that requested by the business.

- (2) The notice prescribed by paragraph (f)(1) of this section shall be written, and shall be furnished by certified mail (return receipt requested), by personal delivery, or by other means which allows verification of the fact of receipt and the date of receipt. The notice shall state the basis for the determination, that it constitutes final agency action concerning the business confidentiality claim, and that such final agency action may be subject to judicial review under Chapter 7 of Title 5, United States Code. With respect to EPA's implementation of the determination, the notice shall state that (subject to § 2.210) EPA will make the information available to the public on the tenth working day after the date of the business's receipt of the written notice (or on such later date as is established in lieu thereof by the EPA legal office under paragraph (f)(3) of this section), unless the EPA legal office has first been notified of the business's commencement of an action in a Federal court to obtain judicial review of the determination, and to obtain preliminary injunctive relief against disclosure. The notice shall further state that if such an action is timely commenced, EPA may nonetheless make the information available to the public (in the absence of an order by the court to the contrary), once the court has denied a motion for a preliminary injunction in the action or has otherwise upheld the EPA determination, or whenever it appears to the EPA legal office, after reasonable notice to the business, that the business is not taking appropriate measures to obtain a speedy resolution of the action. If the information has been found to be temporarily entitled to confidential treatment, the notice shall further state that the information will not be disclosed prior to the end of the period of such temporary entitlement to confidential treatment.
- (3) The period established in a notice under paragraph (f)(2) of this section for commencement of an action to obtain judicial review may be extended if, before the expiration of such period, a request for an extension is made by the business and approved by the EPA legal office. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the EPA legal office will not approve such an extension without the consent of any person whose request for release of the information under 5 U.S.C. 552 is pending.
- (4) After the expiration of any period of temporary entitlement to confidential treatment, a determination under this paragraph (f) shall be implemented by the EPA legal office by making the information available to the public (in the absence of a court order prohibiting disclosure) whenever—
 - (i) The period provided for commencement by a business of an action to obtain judicial review of the determination has expired without notice to the EPA legal office of commencement of such an action;
 - (ii) The court, in a timely-commenced action, has denied the business' motion for a preliminary injunction, or has otherwise upheld the EPA determination; or
 - (iii) The EPA legal office, after reasonable notice has been provided to the business, finds that the business is not taking appropriate measures to obtain a speedy resolution of the timely-commenced action.
- (5) Any person whose request for release of the information under 5 U.S.C. 552 is pending at the time notice is given under paragraph (f)(2) of this section shall be furnished a determination under 5 U.S.C. 552 stating the circumstances under which the information will be released.
- (g) **Emergency situations.** If the General Counsel finds that disclosure of information covered by a claim would be helpful in alleviating a situation posing an imminent and substantial danger to public health or safety, he may prescribe and make known to interested persons such shorter comment period (paragraph (b) of this section), post-determination waiting period (paragraph (f) of this section), or both, as he finds necessary under the circumstances.

- (h) **Modification of prior determinations.** A determination that information is entitled to confidential treatment for the benefit of a business, made under this subpart by an EPA legal office, shall continue in effect in accordance with its terms until an EPA legal office taking action under this section, or under § 2.206 or § 2.207, issues a final determination stating that the earlier determination no longer describes correctly the information's entitlement to confidential treatment because of change in the applicable law, newly-discovered or changed facts, or because the earlier determination was clearly erroneous. If an EPA legal office tentatively concludes that such an earlier determination is of questionable validity, it shall so inform the business, and shall afford the business an opportunity to furnish comments on pertinent issues in the manner described by § 2.204(e) and paragraph (b) of this section. If, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the EPA legal office makes a revised final determination that the information is not entitled to confidential treatment, or that the period of entitlement to such treatment will end sooner than it would have ended under the earlier determination, the office will follow the procedure described in paragraph (f) of this section. Determinations under this section may be made only by, or with the concurrence of, the General Counsel.
- (i) **Delegation and redelegation of authority.** Unless the General Counsel otherwise directs, or this subpart otherwise specifically provides, determinations and actions required by this subpart to be made or taken by an EPA legal office shall be made or taken by the appropriate Regional counsel whenever the EPA office taking action under § 2.204 or § 2.206(b) is under the supervision of a Regional Administrator, and by the General Counsel in all other cases. The General Counsel may redelegate any or all of his authority under this subpart to any attorney employed by EPA on a full-time basis under the General Counsel's supervision. A Regional Counsel may redelegate any or all of his authority under this subpart to any attorney employed by EPA on a full-time basis under the Regional counsel's supervision.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 50 FR 51661, Dec. 18, 1985]

§ 2.206 Advance confidentiality determinations.

- (a) An advance determination under this section may be issued by an EPA legal office if—
- (1) EPA has requested or demanded that a business furnish business information to EPA;
 - (2) The business asserts that the information, if submitted, would constitute voluntarily submitted information under § 2.201(i);
 - (3) The business will voluntarily submit the information for use by EPA only if EPA first determines that the information is entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart; and
 - (4) The EPA office which desires submission of the information has requested that the EPA legal office issue a determination under this section.
- (b) The EPA office requesting an advance determination under this section shall—
- (1) Arrange to have the business furnish directly to the EPA legal office a copy of the information (or, where feasible, a description of the nature of the information sufficient to allow a determination to be made), as well as the business's comments concerning the matters addressed in § 2.204(e)(4), excluding, however, matters addressed in § 2.204 (e)(4)(iii) and (e)(4)(iv); and
 - (2) Furnish to the EPA legal office the materials referred to in § 2.204(f) (3), (7), (8), and (9).

- (c) In making a determination under this section, the EPA legal office shall first determine whether or not the information would constitute voluntarily submitted information under § 2.201(i). If the information would constitute voluntarily submitted information, the legal office shall further determine whether the information is entitled to confidential treatment.
- (d) If the EPA legal office determines that the information would not constitute voluntarily submitted information, or determines that it would constitute voluntarily submitted information but would not be entitled to confidential treatment, it shall so inform the business and the EPA office which requested the determination, stating the basis of the determination, and shall return to the business all copies of the information which it may have received from the business (except that if a request under 5 U.S.C. 552 for release of the information is received while the EPA legal office is in possession of the information, the legal office shall retain a copy of the information, but shall not disclose it unless ordered by a Federal court to do so). The legal office shall not disclose the information to any other EPA office or employee and shall not use the information for any purpose except the determination under this section, unless otherwise directed by a Federal court.
- (e) If the EPA legal office determines that the information would constitute voluntarily submitted information and that it is entitled to confidential treatment, it shall so inform the EPA office which requested the determination and the business which submitted it, and shall forward the information to the EPA office which requested the determination.

§ 2.207 Class determinations.

- (a) The General Counsel may make and issue a class determination under this section if he finds that—
 - (1) EPA possesses, or is obtaining, related items of business information;
 - (2) One or more characteristics common to all such items of information will necessarily result in identical treatment for each such item under one or more of the provisions in this subpart, and that it is therefore proper to treat all such items as a class for one or more purposes under this subpart; and
 - (3) A class determination would serve a useful purpose.
- (b) A class determination shall clearly identify the class of information to which it pertains.
- (c) A class determination may state that all of the information in the class—
 - (1) Is, or is not, voluntarily submitted information under § 2.201(i);
 - (2) Is, or is not, governed by a particular section of this subpart, or by a particular set of substantive criteria under this subpart;
 - (3) Fails to satisfy one or more of the applicable substantive criteria, and is therefore ineligible for confidential treatment;
 - (4) Satisfies one or more of the applicable substantive criteria; or
 - (5) Satisfies one or more of the applicable substantive criteria during a certain period, but will be ineligible for confidential treatment thereafter.
- (d) The purpose of a class determination is simply to make known the Agency's position regarding the manner in which information within the class will be treated under one or more of the provisions of this subpart. Accordingly, the notice of opportunity to submit comments referred to in § 2.204(d)(1)(ii) and § 2.205(b), and the list of materials required to be furnished to the EPA legal office under § 2.204(d)(1)(iii),

may be modified to reflect the fact that the class determination has made unnecessary the submission of materials pertinent to one or more issues. Moreover, in appropriate cases, action based on the class determination may be taken under § 2.204(b)(1), § 2.204(d), § 2.205(d), or § 2.206. However, the existence of a class determination shall not, of itself, affect any right a business may have to receive any notice under § 2.204(d)(2) or § 2.205(f).

§ 2.208 Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.

Determinations issued under §§ 2.204 through 2.207 shall hold that business information is entitled to confidential treatment for the benefit of a particular business if—

- (a) The business has asserted a business confidentiality claim which has not expired by its terms, nor been waived nor withdrawn;
- (b) The business has satisfactorily shown that it has taken reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of the information, and that it intends to continue to take such measures;
- (c) The information is not, and has not been, reasonably obtainable without the business's consent by other persons (other than governmental bodies) by use of legitimate means (other than discovery based on a showing of special need in a judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding);
- (d) No statute specifically requires disclosure of the information; and
- (e) Either—
 - (1) The business has satisfactorily shown that disclosure of the information is likely to cause substantial harm to the business's competitive position; or
 - (2) The information is voluntarily submitted information (see § 2.201(i)), and its disclosure would be likely to impair the Government's ability to obtain necessary information in the future.

§ 2.209 Disclosure in special circumstances.

- (a) **General.** Information which, under this subpart, is not available to the public may nonetheless be disclosed to the persons, and in the circumstances, described by paragraphs (b) through (g) of this section. (This section shall not be construed to restrict the disclosure of information which has been determined to be available to the public. However, business information for which a claim of confidentiality has been asserted shall be treated as being entitled to confidential treatment until there has been a determination in accordance with the procedures of this subpart that the information is not entitled to confidential treatment.)
- (b) **Disclosure to Congress or the Comptroller General.**
 - (1) Upon receipt of a written request by the Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, chairman of a committee or subcommittee, or the Comptroller General, as appropriate, EPA will disclose business information to either House of Congress, to a committee or subcommittee of Congress, or to the Comptroller General, unless a statute forbids such disclosure.
 - (2) If the request is for business information claimed as confidential or determined to be confidential, the EPA office processing the request shall provide notice to each affected business of the type of information disclosed and to whom it is disclosed. Notice shall be given at least ten days prior to disclosure, except where it is not possible to provide notice ten days in advance of any date established by the requesting body for responding to the request. Where ten days advance notice cannot be given, as much advance notice as possible shall be provided. Where notice cannot be

given before the date established by the requesting body for responding to the request, notice shall be given as promptly after disclosure as possible. Such notice may be given by notice published in the FEDERAL REGISTER or by letter sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or telegram. However, if the requesting body asks in writing that no notice under this subsection be given, EPA will give no notice.

- (3) At the time EPA discloses the business information, EPA will inform the requesting body of any unresolved business confidentiality claim known to cover the information and of any determination under this subpart that the information is entitled to confidential treatment.

(c) **Disclosure to other Federal agencies.** EPA may disclose business information to another Federal agency if—

- (1) EPA receives a written request for disclosures of the information from a duly authorized officer or employee of the other agency or on the initiative of EPA when such disclosure is necessary to enable the other agency to carry out a function on behalf of EPA;
- (2) The request, if any, sets forth the official purpose for which the information is needed;
- (3) When the information has been claimed as confidential or has been determined to be confidential, the responsible EPA office provides notice to each affected business of the type of information to be disclosed and to whom it is to be disclosed. At the discretion of the office, such notice may be given by notice published in the FEDERAL REGISTER at least 10 days prior to disclosure, or by letter sent by certified mail return receipt requested or telegram either of which must be received by the affected business at least 10 days prior to disclosure. However, no notice shall be required when EPA furnishes business information to another Federal agency to perform a function on behalf of EPA, including but not limited to—
 - (i) Disclosure to the Department of Justice for purposes of investigation or prosecution of civil or criminal violations of Federal law related to EPA activities;
 - (ii) Disclosure to the Department of Justice for purposes of representing EPA in any matter; or
 - (iii) Disclosure to any Federal agency for purposes of performing an EPA statutory function under an interagency agreement.
- (4) EPA notifies the other agency of any unresolved business confidentiality claim covering the information and of any determination under this subpart that the information is entitled to confidential treatment, and that further disclosure of the information may be a violation of 18 U.S.C. 1905; and
- (5) The other agency agrees in writing not to disclose further any information designated as confidential unless—
 - (i) The other agency has statutory authority both to compel production of the information and to make the proposed disclosure, and the other agency has, prior to disclosure of the information to anyone other than its officers and employees, furnished to each affected business at least the same notice to which the affected business would be entitled under this subpart;
 - (ii) The other agency has obtained the consent of each affected business to the proposed disclosure; or
 - (iii) The other agency has obtained a written statement from the EPA General Counsel or an EPA Regional Counsel that disclosure of the information would be proper under this subpart.

- (d) **Court-ordered disclosure.** EPA may disclose any business information in any manner and to the extent ordered by a Federal court. Where possible, and when not in violation of a specific directive from the court, the EPA office disclosing information claimed as confidential or determined to be confidential shall provide as much advance notice as possible to each affected business of the type of information to be disclosed and to whom it is to be disclosed, unless the affected business has actual notice of the court order. At the discretion of the office, subject to any restrictions by the court, such notice may be given by notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, letter sent by certified mail return receipt requested, or telegram.
- (e) **Disclosure within EPA.** An EPA office, officer, or employee may disclose any business information to another EPA office, officer, or employee with an official need for the information.
- (f) **Disclosure with consent of business.** EPA may disclose any business information to any person if EPA has obtained the prior consent of each affected business to such disclosure.
- (g) **Record of disclosures to be maintained.** Each EPA office which discloses information to Congress, a committee or subcommittee of Congress, the Comptroller General, or another Federal agency under the authority of paragraph (b) or (c) of this section, shall maintain a record of the fact of such disclosure for a period of not less than 36 months after such disclosure. Such a record, which may be in the form of a log, shall show the name of the affected businesses, the date of disclosure, the person or body to whom disclosure was made, and a description of the information disclosed.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40000, Sept. 8, 1978; 50 FR 51661, Dec. 18, 1985]

§ 2.210 Nondisclosure for reasons other than business confidentiality or where disclosure is prohibited by other statute.

- (a) Information which is not entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart shall be made available to the public (using the procedures set forth in §§ 2.204 and 2.205) if its release is requested under 5 U.S.C. 552, unless EPA determines (under subpart A of this part) that, for reasons other than reasons of business confidentiality, the information is exempt from mandatory disclosure and cannot or should not be made available to the public. Any such determination under subpart A shall be coordinated with actions taken under this subpart for the purpose of avoiding delay in responding to requests under 5 U.S.C. 552.
- (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subpart, if any statute not cited in this subpart appears to require EPA to give confidential treatment to any business information for reasons of business confidentiality, the matter shall be referred promptly to an EPA legal office for resolution. Pending resolution, such information shall be treated as if it were entitled to confidential treatment.

§ 2.211 Safeguarding of business information; penalty for wrongful disclosure.

- (a) No EPA officer or employee may disclose, or use for his or her private gain or advantage, any business information which came into his or her possession, or to which he or she gained access, by virtue of his or her official position or employment, except as authorized by this subpart.
- (b) Each EPA officer or employee who has custody or possession of business information shall take appropriate measures to properly safeguard such information and to protect against its improper disclosure.
- (c) Violation of paragraph (a) or (b) of this section shall constitute grounds for dismissal, suspension, fine, or other adverse personnel action. Willful violation of paragraph (a) of this section may result in criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1905 or other applicable statute.

- (d) Each contractor or subcontractor with the United States Government, and each employee of such contractor or subcontractor, who is furnished business information by EPA under § 2.301(h), § 2.302(h), § 2.304(h), § 2.305(h), § 2.306(j), § 2.307(h), § 2.308(i), or § 2.310(h) shall use or disclose that information only as permitted by the contract or subcontract under which the information was furnished. Contractors or subcontractors shall take steps to properly safeguard business information including following any security procedures for handling and safeguarding business information which are contained in any manuals, procedures, regulations, or guidelines provided by EPA. Any violation of this paragraph shall constitute grounds for suspension or debarment of the contractor or subcontractor in question. A willful violation of this paragraph may result in criminal prosecution.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 50 FR 51662, Dec. 18, 1985; 58 FR 461, Jan. 5, 1993]

§ 2.212 Establishment of control offices for categories of business information.

- (a) The Administrator, by order, may establish one or more mutually exclusive categories of business information, and may designate for each such category an EPA office (hereinafter referred to as a *control office*) which shall have responsibility for taking actions (other than actions required to be taken by an EPA legal office) with respect to all information within such category.
- (b) If a control office has been assigned responsibility for a category of business information, no other EPA office, officer, or employee may make available to the public (or otherwise disclose to persons other than EPA officers and employees) any information in that category without first obtaining the concurrence of the control office. Requests under 5 U.S.C. 552 for release of such information shall be referred to the control office.
- (c) A control office shall take the actions and make the determinations required by § 2.204 with respect to all information in any category for which the control office has been assigned responsibility.
- (d) A control office shall maintain a record of the following, with respect to items of business information in categories for which it has been assigned responsibility:
 - (1) Business confidentiality claims;
 - (2) Comments submitted in support of claims;
 - (3) Waivers and withdrawals of claims;
 - (4) Actions and determinations by EPA under this subpart;
 - (5) Actions by Federal courts; and
 - (6) Related information concerning business confidentiality.

§ 2.213 Designation by business of addressee for notices and inquiries.

- (a) A business which wishes to designate a person or office as the proper addressee of communications from EPA to the business under this subpart may do so by furnishing in writing to the Headquarters Freedom of Information Operations (1105), Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460, the following information: The name and address of the business making the designation; the name, address, and telephone number of the designated person or office; and a request that EPA inquiries and communications (oral and written) under this subpart, including inquiries and

notices which require reply within deadlines if the business is to avoid waiver of its rights under this subpart, be furnished to the designee pursuant to this section. Only one person or office may serve at any one time as a business's designee under this subpart.

- (b) If a business has named a designee under this section, the following EPA inquiries and notices to the business shall be addressed to the designee:
 - (1) Inquiries concerning a business's desire to assert a business confidentiality claim, under § 2.204(c)(2)(i)(A);
 - (2) Notices affording opportunity to substantiate confidentiality claims, under § 2.204(d)(1) and § 2.204(e);
 - (3) Inquires concerning comments, under § 2.205(b)(4);
 - (4) Notices of denial of confidential treatment and proposed disclosure of information, under § 2.205(f);
 - (5) Notices concerning shortened comment and/or waiting periods under § 2.205(g);
 - (6) Notices concerning modifications or overrulings of prior determinations, under § 2.205(h);
 - (7) Notices to affected businesses under §§ 2.301(g) and 2.301(h) and analogous provisions in §§ 2.302, 2.303, 2.304, 2.305, 2.306, 2.307, and 2.308; and
 - (8) Notices to affected businesses under § 2.209.
- (c) The Freedom of Information Officer shall, as quickly as possible, notify all EPA offices that may possess information submitted by the business to EPA, the Regional Freedom of Information Offices, the Office of General Counsel, and the offices of Regional Counsel of any designation received under this section. Businesses making designations under this section should bear in mind that several working days may be required for dissemination of this information within EPA and that some EPA offices may not receive notice of such designations.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40001, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.214 Defense of Freedom of Information Act suits; participation by affected business.

- (a) In making final confidentiality determinations under this subpart, the EPA legal office relies to a large extent upon the information furnished by the affected business to substantiate its claim of confidentiality. The EPA legal office may be unable to verify the accuracy of much of the information submitted by the affected business.
- (b) If the EPA legal office makes a final confidentiality determination under this subpart that certain business information is entitled to confidential treatment, and EPA is sued by a requester under the Freedom of Information Act for disclosure of that information, EPA will:
 - (1) Notify each affected business of the suit within 10 days after service of the complaint upon EPA;
 - (2) Where necessary to preparation of EPA's defense, call upon each affected business to furnish assistance; and
 - (3) Not oppose a motion by any affected business to intervene as a party to the suit under rule 24(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

- (c) EPA will defend its final confidentiality determination, but EPA expects the affected business to cooperate to the fullest extent possible in this defense.

[43 FR 40001, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.215 Confidentiality agreements.

- (a) No EPA officer, employee, contractor, or subcontractor shall enter into any agreement with any affected business to keep business information confidential unless such agreement is consistent with this subpart. No EPA officer, employee, contractor, or subcontractor shall promise any affected business that business information will be kept confidential unless the promise is consistent with this subpart.
- (b) If an EPA office has requested information from a State, local, or Federal agency and the agency refuses to furnish the information to EPA because the information is or may constitute confidential business information, the EPA office may enter into an agreement with the agency to keep the information confidential, notwithstanding the provisions of this subpart. However, no such agreement shall be made unless the General Counsel determines that the agreement is necessary and proper.
- (c) To determine that an agreement proposed under paragraph (b) of this section is necessary, the General Counsel must find:
 - (1) The EPA office requesting the information needs the information to perform its functions;
 - (2) The agency will not furnish the information to EPA without an agreement by EPA to keep the information confidential; and
 - (3) Either:
 - (i) EPA has no statutory power to compel submission of the information directly from the affected business, or
 - (ii) While EPA has statutory power to compel submission of the information directly from the affected business, compelling submission of the information directly from the business would—
 - (A) Require time in excess of that available to the EPA office to perform its necessary work with the information,
 - (B) Duplicate information already collected by the other agency and overly burden the affected business, or
 - (C) Overly burden the resources of EPA.
- (d) To determine that an agreement proposed under paragraph (b) of this section is proper, the General Counsel must find that the agreement states—
 - (1) The purpose for which the information is required by EPA;
 - (2) The conditions under which the agency will furnish the information to EPA;
 - (3) The information subject to the agreement;
 - (4) That the agreement does not cover information acquired by EPA from another source;
 - (5) The manner in which EPA will treat the information; and

(6) That EPA will treat the information in accordance with the agreement subject to an order of a Federal court to disclose the information.

(e) EPA will treat any information acquired pursuant to an agreement under paragraph (b) of this section in accordance with the procedures of this subpart except where the agreement specifies otherwise.

[43 FR 40001, Sept. 8, 1978]

§§ 2.216-2.300 [Reserved]

§ 2.301 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Clean Air Act.

Link to an amendment published at 89 FR 91163, Nov. 18, 2024.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purpose of this section:

(1) **Act** means the Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.

(2)

(i) **Emission data** means, with reference to any source of emission of any substance into the air—

(A) Information necessary to determine the identity, amount, frequency, concentration, or other characteristics (to the extent related to air quality) of any emission which has been emitted by the source (or of any pollutant resulting from any emission by the source), or any combination of the foregoing;

(B) Information necessary to determine the identity, amount, frequency, concentration, or other characteristics (to the extent related to air quality) of the emissions which, under an applicable standard or limitation, the source was authorized to emit (including, to the extent necessary for such purposes, a description of the manner or rate of operation of the source); and

(C) A general description of the location and/or nature of the source to the extent necessary to identify the source and to distinguish it from other sources (including, to the extent necessary for such purposes, a description of the device, installation, or operation constituting the source).

(ii) Notwithstanding paragraph (a)(2)(i) of this section, the following information shall be considered to be *emission data* only to the extent necessary to allow EPA to disclose publicly that a source is (or is not) in compliance with an applicable standard or limitation, or to allow EPA to demonstrate the feasibility, practicability, or attainability (or lack thereof) of an existing or proposed standard or limitation:

(A) Information concerning research, or the results of research, on any project, method, device or installation (or any component thereof) which was produced, developed, installed, and used only for research purposes; and

(B) Information concerning any product, method, device, or installation (or any component thereof) designed and intended to be marketed or used commercially but not yet so marketed or used.

- (3) **Standard or limitation** means any emission standard or limitation established or publicly proposed pursuant to the Act or pursuant to any regulation under the Act.
- (4) **Proceeding** means any rulemaking, adjudication, or licensing conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act, except for determinations under this subpart.
- (5) **Manufacturer** has the meaning given it in section 216(1) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7550(1).

(b) **Applicability.**

- (1) This section applies to business information which was—
 - (i) Provided or obtained under section 114 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7414, by the owner or operator of any stationary source, for the purpose
 - (A) of developing or assisting in the development of any implementation plan under section 110 or 111(d) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7410, 7411(d), any standard of performance under section 111 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7411, or any emission standard under section 112 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7412,
 - (B) of determining whether any person is in violation of any such standard or any requirement of such a plan, or
 - (C) of carrying out any provision of the Act (except a provision of Part II of the Act with respect to a manufacturer of new motor vehicles or new motor vehicle engines);
 - (ii) Provided or obtained under section 208 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7542, for the purpose of enabling the Administrator to determine whether a manufacturer has acted or is acting in compliance with the Act and regulations under the Act, or provided or obtained under section 206(c) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7525(c); or
 - (iii) Provided in response to a subpoena for the production of papers, books, or documents issued under the authority of section 307(a) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7607(a).
- (2) Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 114 of the Act if it was provided in response to a request by EPA made for any of the purposes stated in section 114, or if its submission could have been required under section 114, regardless of whether section 114 was cited as the authority for any request for the information, whether an order to provide the information was issued under section 113(a) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7413(a), whether an action was brought under section 113(b) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7413(b), or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.
- (3) Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 208 of the Act if it was provided in response to a request by EPA made for any of the purposes stated in section 208, or if its submission could have been required under section 208, regardless of whether section 208 was cited as the authority for any request for the information, whether an action was brought under section 204 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7523, or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.
- (4) Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 206(c) of the Act if it was provided in response to a request by EPA made for any of the purposes stated in section 206(c), or if its submission could have been required under section 206(c) regardless of whether section

206(c) was cited as authority for any request for the information, whether an action was brought under section 204 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 7523, or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.

- (5) Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 307(a) of the Act if it was provided in response to a subpoena issued under section 307(a), or if its production could have been required by subpoena under section 307(a), regardless of whether section 307(a) was cited as the authority for any request for the information, whether a subpoena was issued by EPA, whether a court issued an order under section 307(a), or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.

(c) **Basic rules that apply without change.** Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d) of this section, §§ 2.201 through 2.207, § 2.209, and §§ 2.211 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.

(d) **Data submitted under 40 CFR part 98.**

- (1) Sections 2.201 through 2.215 do not apply to data submitted under 40 CFR part 98 that EPA has determined, pursuant to sections 114(c) and 307(d) of the Clean Air Act, to be either of the following:
 - (i) Emission data.
 - (ii) Data not otherwise entitled to confidential treatment pursuant to section 114(c) of the Clean Air Act.
- (2) Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (d)(2) and (d)(4) of this section, §§ 2.201 through 2.215 do not apply to data submitted under 40 CFR part 98 data that EPA has determined, pursuant to sections 114(c) and 307(d) of the Clean Air Act, to be entitled to confidential treatment. EPA shall treat that information as confidential in accordance with the provisions of § 2.211, subject to paragraph (d)(4) of this section and § 2.209.
- (3) Upon receiving a request under 5 U.S.C. 552 for data submitted under 40 CFR part 98 that EPA has determined, pursuant to sections 114(c) and 307(d) of the Clean Air Act, to be entitled to confidential treatment, the EPA office shall furnish the requestor a notice that the information has been determined to be entitled to confidential treatment and that the request is therefore denied. The notice shall include or cite to the appropriate EPA determination.
- (4) Modification of prior confidentiality determination. A determination made pursuant to sections 114(c) and 307(d) of the Clean Air Act that information submitted under 40 CFR part 98 is entitled to confidential treatment shall continue in effect unless, subsequent to the confidentiality determination, EPA takes one of the following actions:
 - (i) EPA determines, pursuant to sections 114(c) and 307(d) of the Clean Air Act, that the information is emission data or data not otherwise entitled to confidential treatment under section 114(c) of the Clean Air Act.
 - (ii) The Office of General Counsel issues a final determination, based on the criteria in § 2.208, stating that the information is no longer entitled to confidential treatment because of change in the applicable law or newly-discovered or changed facts. Prior to making such final determination, EPA shall afford the business an opportunity to submit comments on pertinent issues in the manner described by §§ 2.204(e) and 2.205(b). If, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the Office of General Counsel makes a revised

final determination that the information is not entitled to confidential treatment under section 114(c) of the Clean Air Act, EPA will notify the business in accordance with the procedures described in § 2.205(f)(2).

- (e) ***Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.*** Section 2.208 applies to information to which this section applies, except that information which is emission data, a standard or limitation, or is collected pursuant to section 211(b)(2)(A) of the Act is not eligible for confidential treatment. No information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.
- (f) ***Availability of information not entitled to confidential treatment.*** Section 2.210 does not apply to information to which this section applies. Emission data, standards or limitations, and any other information provided under section 114 or 208 of the Act which is determined under this subpart not to be entitled to confidential treatment, shall be available to the public notwithstanding any other provision of this part. Emission data and standards or limitations provided in response to a subpoena issued under section 307(a) of the Act shall be available to the public notwithstanding any other provision of this part. Information (other than emission data and standards or limitations) provided in response to a subpoena issued under section 307(a) of the Act, which is determined under this subpart not to be entitled to confidential treatment, shall be available to the public, unless EPA determines that the information is exempt from mandatory disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b) for reasons other than reasons of business confidentiality and cannot or should not be made available to the public.
- (g) ***Disclosure of information relevant to a proceeding.***
 - (1) Under sections 114, 208 and 307 of the Act, any information to which this section applies may be released by EPA because of the relevance of the information to a proceeding, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Release of information because of its relevance to a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).
 - (2) In connection with any proceeding other than a proceeding involving a decision by a presiding officer after an evidentiary or adjudicatory hearing, information to which this section applies which may be entitled to confidential treatment may be made available to the public under this paragraph (g)(2). No information shall be made available to the public under this paragraph (g)(2) until any affected business has been informed that EPA is considering making the information available to the public under this paragraph (g)(2) in connection with an identified proceeding, and has afforded the business a reasonable period for comment (such notice and opportunity to comment may be afforded in connection with the notice prescribed by § 2.204(d)(1) and § 2.204(e)). Information may be made available to the public under this paragraph (g)(2) only if, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the General Counsel determines that the information is relevant to the subject of the proceeding and the EPA office conducting the proceeding determines that the public interest would be served by making the information available to the public. Any affected business shall be given at least 5 days' notice by the General Counsel prior to making the information available to the public.
 - (3) In connection with any proceeding involving a decision by a presiding officer after an evidentiary or adjudicatory hearing, information to which this section applies which may be entitled to confidential treatment may be made available to the public, or to one or more parties of record to the proceeding, upon EPA's initiative, under this paragraph (g)(3). An EPA office proposing disclosure of information under this paragraph (g)(3), shall so notify the presiding officer in writing. Upon receipt of such a notification, the presiding officer shall notify each affected business that disclosure under this paragraph (g)(3) has been proposed, and shall afford each such business a period for comment

found by the presiding officer to be reasonable under the circumstances. Information may be disclosed under this paragraph (g)(3) only if, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the EPA office determines in writing that, for reasons directly associated with the conduct of the proceeding, the contemplated disclosure would serve the public interest, and the presiding officer determines in writing that the information is relevant to a matter in controversy in the proceeding. The presiding officer may condition disclosure of the information to a party of record on the making of such protective arrangements and commitments as he finds to be warranted. Disclosure to one or more parties of record, under protective arrangements or commitments, shall not, of itself, affect the eligibility of information for confidential treatment under the other provisions of this subpart. Any affected business shall be given at least 5 days notice by the presiding officer prior to making the information available to the public or to one or more of the parties of record to the proceeding.

(4) In connection with any proceeding involving a decision by a presiding officer after an evidentiary or adjudicatory hearing, information to which this section applies may be made available to one or more parties of record to the proceeding, upon request of a party, under this paragraph (g)(4). A party of record seeking disclosure of information shall direct his request to the presiding officer. Upon receipt of such a request, the presiding officer shall notify each affected business that disclosure under this paragraph (g)(4) has been requested, and shall afford each such business a period for comment found by the presiding officer to be reasonable under the circumstances. Information may be disclosed to a party of record under this paragraph (g)(4) only if, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the presiding officer determines in writing that

- (i) the party of record has satisfactorily shown that with respect to a significant matter which is in controversy in the proceeding, the party's ability to participate effectively in the proceeding will be significantly impaired unless the information is disclosed to him, and
- (ii) any harm to an affected business that would result from the disclosure is likely to be outweighed by the benefit to the proceeding and to the public interest that would result from the disclosure. The presiding officer may condition disclosure of the information to a party of record on the making of such protective arrangements and commitments as he finds to be warranted. Disclosure to one or more parties of record, under protective arrangements or commitments, shall not, of itself, affect the eligibility of information to confidential treatment under the other provisions of this subpart. Any affected business shall be given at least 5 days notice by the presiding officer prior to making the information available to one or more of the parties of record to the proceeding.

(h) *Disclosure to authorized representatives.*

(1) Under sections 114, 208 and 307(a) of the Act, EPA possesses authority to disclose to any authorized representative of the United States any information to which this section applies, notwithstanding the fact that the information might otherwise be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Such authority may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (h) (2) or (3) of this section.

(2)

- (i) A person under contract or subcontract to the United States government to perform work in support of EPA in connection with the Act or regulations which implement the Act may be considered an authorized representative of the United States for purposes of this paragraph (h).

For purposes of this section, the term “contract” includes grants and cooperative agreements under the Environmental Programs Assistance Act of 1984 (Pub. L. 98-313), and the term “contractor” includes grantees and cooperators under the Environmental Programs Assistance Act of 1984. Subject to the limitations in this paragraph (h)(2), information to which this section applies may be disclosed:

- (A) To a contractor or subcontractor with EPA, if the EPA program office managing the contract first determines in writing that such disclosure is necessary in order that the contractor or subcontractor may carry out the work required by the contract or subcontract; or
 - (B) To a contractor or subcontractor with an agency other than EPA, if the EPA program office which provides the information to that agency, contractor, or subcontractor first determines in writing, in consultation with the General Counsel, that such disclosure is necessary in order that the contractor or subcontractor may carry out the work required by the contract or subcontract.
- (ii) No information shall be disclosed under this paragraph (h)(2), unless this contract or subcontract in question provides:
- (A) That the contractor or subcontractor and the contractor's or subcontractor's employees shall use the information only for the purpose of carrying out the work required by the contract or subcontract, shall refrain from disclosing the information to anyone other than EPA without the prior written approval of each affected business or of an EPA legal office and shall return to EPA all copies of the information (and any abstracts or extracts therefrom) upon request by the EPA program office, whenever the information is no longer required by the contractor or subcontractor for the performance of the work required under the contract or subcontract, or upon completion of the contract or subcontract (where the information was provided to the contractor or subcontractor by an agency other than EPA, the contractor may disclose or return the information to that agency);
 - (B) That the contractor or subcontractor shall obtain a written agreement to honor such terms of the contract or subcontract from each of the contractor's or subcontractor's employees who will have access to the information, before such employee is allowed such access; and
 - (C) That the contractor or subcontractor acknowledges and agrees that the contract or subcontract provisions concerning the use and disclosure of business information are included for the benefit of, and shall be enforceable by, both the United States government and any affected business having an interest in information concerning it supplied to the contractor or subcontractor by the United States government under the contract or subcontract.
- (iii) No information shall be disclosed under this paragraph (h)(2) until each affected business has been furnished notice of the contemplated disclosure by the EPA program office and has been afforded a period found reasonable by that office (not less than 5 working days) to submit its comments. Such notice shall include a description of the information to be disclosed, the identity of the contractor or subcontractor, the contract or subcontract number, if any, and the purposes to be served by the disclosure.

(iv) The EPA program office shall prepare a record of each disclosure under this paragraph (h)(2), showing the contractor or subcontractor, the contract or subcontract number, the information disclosed, the date(s) of disclosure, and each affected business. The EPA program office shall maintain the record of disclosure and the determination of necessity prepared under paragraph (h)(2)(i) of this section for a period of not less than 36 months after the date of the disclosure.

(3) A State or local governmental agency which has duties or responsibilities under the Act, or under regulations which implement the Act, may be considered an authorized representative of the United States for purposes of this paragraph (h). Information to which this section applies may be furnished to such an agency at the agency's written request, but only if—

(i) The agency has first furnished to the EPA office having custody of the information a written opinion from the agency's chief legal officer or counsel stating that under applicable State or local law the agency has the authority to compel a business which possesses such information to disclose it to the agency, or

(ii) Each affected business is informed of those disclosures under this paragraph (h)(3) which pertain to it, and the agency has shown to the satisfaction of an EPA legal office that the agency's use and disclosure of such information will be governed by State or local law and procedures which will provide adequate protection to the interests of affected businesses.

(i) [Reserved]

(j) ***Requests for or release of information subject to a confidentiality determination through rulemaking as specified in 40 CFR part 1068.*** This paragraph (j) describes provisions that apply for a wide range of engines, vehicles, and equipment that are subject to emission standards and other requirements under the Clean Air Act. This includes motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines, nonroad engines and nonroad equipment, aircraft and aircraft engines, and stationary engines. It also includes portable fuel containers regulated under 40 CFR part 59, subpart F, and fuel tanks, fuel lines, and related fuel-system components regulated under 40 CFR part 1060. Regulatory provisions related to confidentiality determinations for these products are codified broadly in 40 CFR part 1068, with additional detailed provisions for specific sectors in the regulatory parts referenced in 40 CFR 1068.1. References in this paragraph (j) to 40 CFR part 1068 also include these related regulatory parts.

(1) Unless noted otherwise, 40 CFR 2.201 through 2.215 do not apply for information covered by the confidentiality determinations in 40 CFR part 1068 if EPA has determined through rulemaking that information to be any of the following pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7414 or 7542(c) in a rulemaking subject to 42 U.S.C. 7607(d):

(i) Emission data as defined in paragraph (a)(2)(i) of this section.

(ii) Data not entitled to confidential treatment.

(2) Unless noted otherwise, §§ 2.201 through 2.208 do not apply for information covered by the confidentiality determinations in 40 CFR part 1068 if EPA has determined through rulemaking that information to be entitled to confidential treatment pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7414 or 7542(c) in a rulemaking subject to 42 U.S.C. 7607(d). EPA will treat such information as confidential in accordance with the provisions of §§ 2.209 through 2.215, subject to paragraph (j)(4) of this section.

(3) EPA will deny a request for information under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) if EPA has determined through rulemaking that the information is entitled to confidential treatment under 40 CFR part 1068. The denial notification will include a regulatory cite to the appropriate determination.

- (4) A determination made pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 7414 or 7542 in a rulemaking subject to 42 U.S.C. 7607(d) that information specified in 40 CFR part 1068 is entitled to confidential treatment shall continue in effect unless EPA takes one of the following actions to modify the determination:
- (i) EPA determines, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) and the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7414; 7542(c)) in a rulemaking subject to 42 U.S.C. 7607(d), that the information is entitled to confidential treatment, or that the information is emission data or data that is otherwise not entitled to confidential treatment by statute or regulation.
 - (ii) EPA determines, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) and the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7414; 7542(c)) that the information is emission data or data that is otherwise clearly not entitled to confidential treatment by statute or regulation under 40 CFR 2.204(d)(2).
 - (iii) The Office of General Counsel revisits an earlier determination, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) and the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7414; 7542(c)), that the information is entitled to confidential treatment because of a change in the applicable law or newly discovered or changed facts. Prior to a revised final determination, EPA shall afford the business an opportunity to submit a substantiation on the pertinent issues to be considered, including any described in §§ 2.204(e)(4) or 2.205(b), within 15 days of the receipt of the notice to substantiate. If, after consideration of any timely comments made by the business in its substantiation, the Office of General Counsel makes a revised final determination that the information is not entitled to confidential treatment under 42 U.S.C. 7414 or 7542, EPA will notify the business in accordance with § 2.205(f)(2).
- (5) The provisions of 40 CFR 2.201 through 2.208 continue to apply for the categories of information identified in 40 CFR 1068.11(c) for which there is no confidentiality determination in 40 CFR part 1068.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40002, Sept. 8, 1978; 43 FR 42251, Sept. 20, 1978; 50 FR 51662, Dec. 18, 1985; 58 FR 461, Jan. 5, 1993; 58 FR 5061, Jan. 19, 1993; 58 FR 7189, Feb. 5, 1993; 76 FR 30817, May 26, 2011; 76 FR 64015, Oct. 17, 2011; 88 FR 4470, Jan. 24, 2023]

§ 2.302 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Clean Water Act.

- (a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:
- (1) **Act** means the Clean Water Act, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 1251 *et seq.*
 - (2)
 - (i) **Effluent data** means, with reference to any source of discharge of any pollutant (as that term is defined in section 502(6) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1362 (6))—
 - (A) Information necessary to determine the identity, amount, frequency, concentration, temperature, or other characteristics (to the extent related to water quality) of any pollutant which has been discharged by the source (or of any pollutant resulting from any discharge from the source), or any combination of the foregoing;

- (B) Information necessary to determine the identity, amount, frequency, concentration, temperature, or other characteristics (to the extent related to water quality) of the pollutants which, under an applicable standard or limitation, the source was authorized to discharge (including, to the extent necessary for such purpose, a description of the manner or rate of operation of the source); and
 - (C) A general description of the location and/or nature of the source to the extent necessary to identify the source and to distinguish it from other sources (including, to the extent necessary for such purposes, a description of the device, installation, or operation constituting the source).
- (ii) Notwithstanding paragraph (a)(2)(i) of this section, the following information shall be considered to be *effluent data* only to the extent necessary to allow EPA to disclose publicly that a source is (or is not) in compliance with an applicable standard or limitation, or to allow EPA to demonstrate the feasibility, practicability, or attainability (or lack thereof) of an existing or proposed standard or limitation:
 - (A) Information concerning research, or the results of research, on any product, method, device, or installation (or any component thereof) which was produced, developed, installed, and used only for research purposes; and
 - (B) Information concerning any product, method, device, or installation (or any component thereof) designed and intended to be marketed or used commercially but not yet so marketed or used.
- (3) **Standard or limitation** means any prohibition, any effluent limitation, or any toxic, pre-treatment or new source performance standard established or publicly proposed pursuant to the Act or pursuant to regulations under the Act, including limitations or prohibitions in a permit issued or proposed by EPA or by a State under section 402 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1342.
- (4) **Proceeding** means any rulemaking, adjudication, or licensing conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act, except for determinations under this part.

(b) **Applicability.**

- (1) This section applies only to business information—
 - (i) Provided to or obtained by EPA under section 308 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1318, by or from the owner or operator of any point source, for the purpose of carrying out the objective of the Act (including but not limited to developing or assisting in the development of any standard or limitation under the Act, or determining whether any person is in violation of any such standard or limitation); or
 - (ii) Provided to or obtained by EPA under section 509(a) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1369(a).
- (2) Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 308 of the Act if it was provided in response to a request by EPA made for any of the purposes stated in section 308, or if its submission could have been required under section 308, regardless of whether section 308 was cited as the authority for any request for the information, whether an order to provide the information was issued under section 309(a)(3) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1319(a)(3), whether a civil action was brought under section 309(b) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1319(b), and whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.

- (3) Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 509(a) of the Act if it was provided in response to a subpoena issued under section 509(a), or if its production could have been required by subpoena under section 509(a), regardless of whether section 509(a) was cited as the authority for any request for the information, whether a subpoena was issued by EPA, whether a court issued an order under section 307(a), or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.
- (4) This section specifically does not apply to information obtained under section 310(d) or 312(g)(3) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1320(d), 1322(g)(3).
- (c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.207, 2.209, 2.211 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.
- (d) [Reserved]
- (e) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 applies to information to which this section applies, except that information which is effluent data or a standard or limitation is not eligible for confidential treatment. No information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.
- (f) **Availability of information not entitled to confidential treatment.** Section 2.210 does not apply to information to which this section applies. Effluent data, standards or limitations, and any other information provided or obtained under section 308 of the Act which is determined under this subpart not to be entitled to confidential treatment, shall be available to the public notwithstanding any other provision of this part. Effluent data and standards or limitations provided in response to a subpoena issued under section 509(a) of the Act shall be available to the public notwithstanding any other provision of this part. Information (other than effluent data and standards or limitations) provided in response to a subpoena issued under section 509(a) of the Act, which is determined under this subpart not to be entitled to confidential treatment, shall be available to the public, unless EPA determines that the information is exempt from mandatory disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b) for reasons other than reasons of business confidentiality and cannot or should not be made available to the public.
- (g) **Disclosure of information relevant to a proceeding.**
 - (1) Under sections 308 and 509(a) of the Act, any information to which this section applies may be released by EPA because of the relevance of the information to a proceeding, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Release of information to which this section applies because of its relevance to a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).
 - (2)-(4) The provisions of § 2.301(g) (2), (3), and (4) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (g) (2), (3), and (4), respectively of this section.
- (h) **Disclosure to authorized representatives.**
 - (1) Under sections 308 and 509(a) of the Act, EPA possesses authority to disclose to any authorized representative of the United States any information to which this section applies, notwithstanding the fact that the information might otherwise be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Such authority may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (h)(2) or (h)(3) of this section.
 - (2)-(3) The provisions of § 2.301(h) (2) and (3) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (h) (2) and (3), respectively, of this section.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40003, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.303 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Noise Control Act of 1972.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:

(1) **Act** means the Noise Control Act of 1972, 42 U.S.C. 4901 *et seq.*

(2) **Manufacturer** has the meaning given it in 42 U.S.C. 4902(6).

(3) **Product** has the meaning given it in 42 U.S.C. 4902(3).

(4) **Proceeding** means any rulemaking, adjudication, or licensing conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act, except for determinations under this subpart.

(b) **Applicability.** This section applies only to information provided to or obtained by EPA under section 13 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 4912, by or from any manufacturer of any product to which regulations under section 6 or 8 of the Act (42 U.S.C. 4905, 4907) apply. Information will be deemed to have been provided or obtained under section 13 of the Act, if it was provided in response to a request by EPA made for the purpose of enabling EPA to determine whether the manufacturer has acted or is acting in compliance with the Act, or if its submission could have been required under section 13 of the Act, regardless of whether section 13 was cited as authority for the request, whether an order to provide such information was issued under section 11(d) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 4910(d), and whether the information was provided directly to EPA by the manufacturer or through some third person.

(c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.207 and 2.209 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.

(d) [Reserved]

(e) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 applies without change to information to which this section applies; however, no information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.

(f) [Reserved]

(g) **Disclosure of information relevant to a proceeding.**

(1) Under section 13 of the Act, any information to which this section applies may be released by EPA because of its relevance to a matter in controversy in a proceeding, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Release of information because of its relevance to a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).

(2)-(4) The provisions of § 2.301(g) (2), (3), and (4) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (g) (2), (3), and (4), respectively, of this section.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40003, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.304 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:

- (1) **Act** means the Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.
- (2) **Contaminant** means any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in water.
- (3) **Proceeding** means any rulemaking, adjudication, or licensing process conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act, except for any determination under this part.

(b) **Applicability.**

- (1) This section applies only to information—
 - (i) Which was provided to or obtained by EPA pursuant to a requirement of a regulation which was issued by EPA under the Act for the purpose of—
 - (A) Assisting the Administrator in establishing regulations under the Act;
 - (B) Determining whether the person providing the information has acted or is acting in compliance with the Act; or
 - (C) Administering any program of financial assistance under the Act; and
 - (ii) Which was provided by a person—
 - (A) Who is a supplier of water, as defined in section 1401(5) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300f(5);
 - (B) Who is or may be subject to a primary drinking water regulation under section 1412 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300g-1;
 - (C) Who is or may be subject to an applicable underground injection control program, as defined in section 1422(d) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300h-1(d);
 - (D) Who is or may be subject to the permit requirements of section 1424(b) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300h-3(b);
 - (E) Who is or may be subject to an order issued under section 1441(c) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300j(c); or
 - (F) Who is a grantee, as defined in section 1445(e) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300j-4(e).
 - (2) This section applies to any information which is described by paragraph (b)(1) of this section if it was provided in response to a request by EPA or its authorized representative (or by a State agency administering any program under the Act) made for any purpose stated in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, or if its submission could have been required under section 1445 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 300j-4, regardless of whether such section was cited in any request for the information, or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.
- (c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.207, 2.209, and 2.211 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.
 - (d) [Reserved]
 - (e) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 applies to information to which this section applies, except that information which deals with the existence, absence, or level of contaminants in drinking water is not eligible for confidential treatment. No information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.

- (f) **Nondisclosure for reasons other than business confidentiality or where disclosure is prohibited by other statute.** Section 2.210 applies to information to which this section applies, except that information which deals with the existence, absence, or level of contaminants in drinking water shall be available to the public notwithstanding any other provision of this part.
- (g) **Disclosure of information relevant to a proceeding.**
- (1) Under section 1445(d) of the Act, any information to which this section applies may be released by EPA because of the relevance of the information to a proceeding, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Release of information to which this section applies because of its relevance to a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).
- (2)-(4) The provisions of § 2.301(g) (2), (3), (4) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (g) (2), (3), and (4), respectively, of this section.
- (h) **Disclosure to authorized representatives.**
- (1) Under section 1445(d) of the Act, EPA possesses authority to disclose to any authorized representative of the United States any information to which this section applies, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Such authority may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (h)(2) or (h)(3) of this section.
- (2)-(3) The provisions of § 2.301(h) (2) and (3) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (h) (2) and (3), respectively, of this section.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40003, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.305 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended.

- (a) **Definitions.** For purposes of this section:
- (1) **Act** means the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended, including amendments made by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*
- (2) **Person** has the meaning given it in section 1004(15) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 6903(15).
- (3) **Hazardous waste** has the meaning given it in section 1004(5) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 6903(5).
- (4) **Proceeding** means any rulemaking, adjudication, or licensing conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act including the issuance of administrative orders and the approval or disapproval of plans (e.g. closure plans) submitted by persons subject to regulation under the Act, but not including determinations under this subpart.
- (b) **Applicability.** This section applies to information provided to or obtained by EPA under section 3001(b)(3)(B), 3007, or 9005 of the Act, 42 U.S.C 6921(b)(3)(B), 6927, or 6995. Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under sections 3001(b)(3)(B), 3007, or 9005 of the Act if it was provided in response to a request from EDA made for any of the purposes stated in the Act or if its submission could have been required under those provisions of the Act regardless of whether a specific section was cited as the authority for any request for the information or whether the information was provide directly to EPA or through some third person.

- (c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.207 and 2.209 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.
- (d) [Reserved]
- (e) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 applies without change to information to which this section applies; however, no information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.
- (f) [Reserved]
- (g) **Disclosure of information relevant in a proceeding.**
 - (1) Under sections 3007(b) and 9005(b) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 6927(b) and 6995(b)), any information to which this section applies may be disclosed by EPA because of the relevance of the information in a proceeding under the Act, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Disclosure of information to which this section applies because of its relevance in a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).
 - (2)-(4) The provisions of § 2.301(g) (2), (3), and (4) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (g) (2), (3), and (4), respectively, of this section.
- (h) **Disclosure to authorized representatives.**
 - (1) Under sections 3001(b)(3)(B), 3007(b), and 9005(b) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 6921(b)(3)(B), 6927(b), and 6995(b)), EPA possesses authority to disclose to any authorized representative of the United States any information to which this section applies, notwithstanding the fact that the information might otherwise be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Such authority may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (h)(2) or (h)(3) of this section.
 - (2)-(3) The provisions of § 2.301(h) (2) and (3) are incorporated by reference as paragraphs (h) (2) and (3), respectively, of this section.
 - (4) At the time any information is furnished to a contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency under this paragraph (h), the EPA office furnishing the information to the contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency shall notify the contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency that the information may be entitled to confidential treatment and that any knowing and willful disclosure of the information may subject the contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency and its employees to penalties in section 3001(b)(3)(B), 3007(b)(2), or 9005(b)(1) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 6921(b)(3)(B), 6927(b), or 6995(b)).

[43 FR 40003, Sept. 8, 1978, as amended at 50 FR 51662, Dec. 18, 1985]

§ 2.306 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Toxic Substances Control Act.

- (a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:
 - Act** means the Toxic Substances Control Act, 15 U.S.C. 2601 *et seq.*
 - Chemical substance** has the meaning given it in section 3(2) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2602(2).
 - EPA Legal Office** means the EPA Office of General Counsel and any EPA office over which the EPA General Counsel exercises supervisory authority.

Proceeding means any rulemaking, adjudication, or licensing conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act, except for determinations under this subpart.

- (b) **Applicability.** This section applies as set forth in 40 CFR 703.1.
- (c) **Basic rules that apply without change.** Sections 2.210, 2.211, 2.212, 2.214, and 2.215 of this part apply without change to information to which this section applies. Unless otherwise specified in this section, the provisions in §§ 2.201 through 2.205 and 2.208 do not apply to information subject to this section. Instead, the provisions of 40 CFR part 703 provide the requirements and procedures relevant to confidentiality determinations for information submitted to EPA under the Act.
- (d) **Disclosure in special circumstances.**
 - (1) EPA intends to make disclosures pursuant to a request under section 14(d)(4), (5), or (6) of the Act for information to which this section applies in accordance with the requirements of the Act and any applicable EPA guidance required by section 14(c)(4)(B) of the Act.
 - (2) Section 2.209 applies to information to which this section applies, except that:
 - (i) The notification specified in § 2.209(b)(2) is 15 business days.
 - (ii) The following two additional provisions apply to § 2.209(c):
 - (A) The official purpose for which the information is needed must be in connection with the agency's duties under any law for protection of health or the environment or for specific law enforcement purposes; and
 - (B) EPA notifies the other agency that the information was acquired under authority of the Act and that any knowing disclosure of the information may subject the officers and employees of the other agency to the penalties in section 14(h) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 2613(h)).
- (e) **Disclosure of information relevant in a proceeding.**
 - (1) Under section 14(d)(7) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 2613(d)(7)), any information to which this section applies may be disclosed by EPA when the information is relevant in a proceeding under the Act, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. However, any such disclosure shall be made in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the information to the extent practicable without impairing the proceeding. Disclosure of information to which this section applies because of its relevance in a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (e).
 - (2) The provisions of § 2.301(g)(2) through (4) apply to disclosures under this paragraph (e).
- (f) **Disclosure of information to contractors and subcontractors.**
 - (1) Under section 14(d)(2) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 2613(d)(2)), any information to which this section applies shall be disclosed by EPA to a contractor or subcontractor of the United States if, in the opinion of the Administrator, the disclosure is necessary for the satisfactory performance of their work in connection with the Act, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Subject to the limitations in this paragraph (f), information to which this section applies may be disclosed:

- (i) To a contractor or subcontractor with EPA, if the EPA program office managing the contract first determines in writing that such disclosure is necessary for the satisfactory performance by the contractor or subcontractor of the contract or subcontract; or
- (ii) To a contractor or subcontractor with an agency other than EPA, if the EPA program office which provides the information to that agency, contractor, or subcontractor first determines in writing, in consultation with the General Counsel, that such disclosure is necessary for the satisfactory performance by the contractor or subcontractor of the contract or subcontract.

(2) The provisions of § 2.301(h)(2)(ii) through (iv) apply to disclosures under paragraph this (f).

(3) At the time any information is furnished to a contractor or subcontractor under this paragraph (f), the EPA office furnishing the information to the contractor or subcontractor shall notify the contractor or subcontractor that the information was acquired under authority of the Act and that any knowing disclosure of the information may subject the contractor or subcontractor and its employees to the penalties in section 14(h) of the Act (15 U.S.C. 2613(h)).

(g) *Disclosure of information when necessary to protect health or the environment against an unreasonable risk of injury.*

(1) Under section 14(d)(3) of the Act (15 U.S.C 2613(d)(3)), any information to which this section applies shall be disclosed by EPA if the Administrator determines that disclosure is necessary to protect health or the environment against an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment, without consideration of costs, or other non-risk factors, including an unreasonable risk to a potentially exposed or susceptible subpopulation identified as relevant by the Administrator under the conditions of use. However, any disclosure shall be made in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the information to the extent not inconsistent with protecting health or the environment against the unreasonable risk of injury. Disclosure of information to which this section applies because of the need to protect health or the environment against an unreasonable risk of injury shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).

(2) If any EPA office determines that there is an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment and that to protect health or the environment against the unreasonable risk of injury it is necessary to disclose information to which this section applies that otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart, the EPA office shall notify the EPA Legal Office in writing of the nature of the unreasonable risk of injury, the extent of the disclosure proposed, how the proposed disclosure will serve to protect health or the environment against the unreasonable risk of injury, and the proposed date of disclosure. Such notification shall be made as soon as practicable after discovery of the unreasonable risk of injury. If the EPA office determines that the risk of injury is so imminent that it is impracticable to furnish written notification to the EPA Legal Office, the EPA office shall notify the EPA Legal Office orally.

(3) Upon receipt of notification under paragraph (g)(2) of this section, the EPA Legal Office shall make a determination in writing whether disclosure of information to which this section applies that otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment is necessary to protect health or the environment against an unreasonable risk of injury. The EPA Legal Office shall also determine the extent of disclosure necessary to protect against the unreasonable risk of injury as well as when the disclosure must be made to protect against the unreasonable risk of injury.

(4) If the EPA Legal Office determines that disclosure of information to which this section applies that otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment is necessary to protect health or the environment against an unreasonable risk of injury, the EPA Legal Office shall furnish notice to each

affected business of the contemplated disclosure and of the Legal Office's determination. Such notice shall be made in writing, via either electronic notice as described in 40 CFR 703.5(h) or by certified mail, return receipt requested, at least 15 business days before the disclosure is to be made. The notice shall state the date upon which disclosure will be made. However, if the EPA Legal Office determines that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect against an imminent and substantial harm to health or the environment, no prior notification is necessary.

[88 FR 37165, June 7, 2023]

§ 2.307 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section;

- (1) **Act** means the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 136 *et seq.*, and its predecessor, 7 U.S.C. 135 *et seq.*
- (2) **Applicant** means any person who has submitted to EPA (or to a predecessor agency with responsibility for administering the Act) a registration statement or application for registration under the Act of a pesticide or of an establishment.
- (3) **Registrant** means any person who has obtained registration under the Act of a pesticide or of an establishment.

(b) **Applicability.** This section applies to all information submitted to EPA by an applicant or registrant for the purpose of satisfying some requirement or condition of the Act or of regulations which implement the Act, including information originally submitted to EPA for some other purpose but incorporated by the applicant or registrant into a submission in order to satisfy some requirement or condition of the Act or of regulations which implement the Act. This section does not apply to information supplied to EPA by a petitioner in support of a petition for a tolerance under 21 U.S.C. 346a(d), unless the information is also described by the first sentence of this paragraph.

(c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.203, 2.206, 2.207, and 2.210 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.

(d) **Initial action by EPA office.** Section 2.204 applies to information to which this section applies, except that the provisions of paragraph (e) of this section regarding the time allowed for seeking judicial review shall be reflected in any notice furnished to a business under § 2.204(d)(2).

(e) **Final confidentiality determination by EPA legal office.** Section 2.205 applies to information to which this section applies, except that—

- (1) Notwithstanding § 2.205(i), the General Counsel (or his designee), rather than the Regional Counsel, shall make the determinations and take the actions required by § 2.205;
- (2) In addition to the statement prescribed by the second sentence of § 2.205(f)(2), the notice of denial of a business confidentiality claim shall state that under section 10(c) of the Act, 7 U.S.C. 136h(c), the business may commence an action in an appropriate Federal district court for a declaratory judgment;
- (3) The following sentence is substituted for the third sentence of § 2.205(f)(2): “With respect to EPA’s implementation of the determination, the notice shall state that (subject to § 2.210) EPA will make the information available to the public on the thirty-first (31st) calendar day after the date of the

business's receipt of the written notice (or on such later date as is established in lieu thereof under paragraph (f)(3) of this section), unless the EPA legal office has first been notified of the business's commencement of an action in a Federal court to obtain judicial review of the determination or to obtain a declaratory judgment under section 10(c) of the Act and to obtain preliminary injunctive relief against disclosure.”; and

- (4) Notwithstanding § 2.205(g), the 31 calendar day period prescribed by § 2.205(f)(2), as modified by paragraph (e)(3) of this section, shall not be shortened without the consent of the business.

(f) [Reserved]

(g) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 applies without change to information to which this section applies; however, no information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.

(h) **Disclosure in special circumstances.**

- (1) Section 2.209 applies without change to information to which this section applies. In addition, under section 12(a)(2)(D) of the Act, 7 U.S.C. 136j(a)(2)(D), EPA possesses authority to disclose any information to which this section applies to physicians, pharmacists, and other qualified persons needing such information for the performance of their duties, notwithstanding the fact that the information might otherwise be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Such authority under section 12(a)(2)(D) of the Act may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (h)(2) or (h)(3) of this section.
- (2) Information to which this section applies may be disclosed (notwithstanding the fact that it might otherwise be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart) to physicians, pharmacists, hospitals, veterinarians, law enforcement personnel, or governmental agencies with responsibilities for protection of public health, and to employees of any such persons or agencies, or to other qualified persons, when and to the extent that disclosure is necessary in order to treat illness or injury or to prevent imminent harm to persons, property, or the environment, in the opinion of the Administrator or his designee.
- (3) Information to which this section applies may be disclosed (notwithstanding the fact that it otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart) to a person under contract to EPA to perform work for EPA in connection with the Act or regulations which implement the Act, if the EPA program office managing the contract first determines in writing that such disclosure is necessary in order that the contractor may carry out the work required by the contract. Any such disclosure to a contractor shall be made only in accordance with the procedure and requirements of § 2.301(h)(2) (ii) through (iv).
- (4) Information to which this section applies, and which relates to formulas of products, may be disclosed at any public hearing or in findings of fact issued by the Administrator, to the extent and in the manner authorized by the Administrator or his designee.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40005, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.308 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:

- (1) **Act** means the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, as amended, 21 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*
- (2) **Petition** means a petition for the issuance of a regulation establishing a tolerance for a pesticide chemical or exempting the pesticide chemical from the necessity of a tolerance, pursuant to section 408(d) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(d).
- (3) **Petitioner** means a person who has submitted a petition to EPA (or to a predecessor agency).

(b) **Applicability.**

- (1) This section applies only to business information submitted to EPA (or to an advisory committee established under the Act) by a petitioner, solely in support of a petition which has not been acted on by the publication by EPA of a regulation establishing a tolerance for a pesticide chemical or exempting the pesticide chemical from the necessity of a tolerance, as provided in section 408(d) (2) or (3) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(d) (2) or (3).
- (2) Section 2.307, rather than this section, applies to information described by the first sentence of § 2.307(b) (material incorporated into submissions in order to satisfy the requirements of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, as amended), even though such information was originally submitted by a petitioner in support of a petition.
- (3) This section does not apply to information gathered by EPA under a proceeding initiated by EPA to establish a tolerance under section 408(e) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(e).

(c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201, 2.202, 2.206, 2.207, and 2.210 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.

(d) **Effect of submission of information without claim.** Section 2.203 (a) and (b) apply without change to information to which this section applies. Section 2.203(c), however, does not apply to information to which this section applies. A petitioner's failure to assert a claim when initially submitting a petition shall not constitute a waiver of any claim the petitioner may have.

(e) **Initial action by EPA office.** Section 2.204 applies to information to which this section applies, except that—

- (1) Unless the EPA office has on file a written waiver of a petitioner's claim, a petitioner shall be regarded as an affected business, a petition shall be treated as if it were covered by a business confidentiality claim, and an EPA office acting under § 2.204(d) shall determine that the information in the petition is or may be entitled to confidential treatment and shall take action in accordance with § 2.204(d)(1);
- (2) In addition to other required provisions of any notice furnished to a petitioner under § 2.204(e), such notice shall state that—
 - (i) Section 408(f) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(f), affords absolute confidentiality to information to which this section applies, but after publication by EPA of a regulation establishing a tolerance (or exempting the pesticide chemical from the necessity of a tolerance) neither the Act nor this section affords any protection to the information;
 - (ii) Information submitted in support of a petition which is also incorporated into a submission in order to satisfy a requirement or condition of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 136 *et seq.*, is regarded by EPA as being governed, with respect to business confidentiality, by § 2.307 rather than by this section;

- (iii) Although it appears that this section may apply to the information at this time, EPA is presently engaged in determining whether for any reason the information is entitled to confidential treatment or will be entitled to such treatment if and when this section no longer applies to the information; and
 - (iv) Information determined by EPA to be covered by this section will not be disclosed for as long as this section continues to apply, but will be made available to the public thereafter (subject to § 2.210) unless the business furnishes timely comments in response to the notice.
- (f) **Final confidentiality determination by EPA legal office.** Section 2.205 applies to information to which this section applies, except that—
- (1) Notwithstanding § 2.205(i), the General Counsel or his designee, rather than the Regional counsel, shall in all cases make the determinations and take the actions required by § 2.205;
 - (2) In addition to the circumstances mentioned in § 2.205(f)(1), notice in the form prescribed by § 2.205(f)(2) shall be furnished to each affected business whenever information is found to be entitled to confidential treatment under section 408(f) of the Act but not otherwise entitled to confidential treatment. With respect to such cases, the following sentences shall be substituted for the third sentence of § 2.205(f)(2): “With respect to EPA's implementation of the determination, the notice shall state that (subject to § 2.210) EPA will make the information available to the public on the thirty-first (31st) calendar day after the business's receipt of the written notice (or on such later date as is established in lieu thereof under paragraph (f)(3) of this section), unless the EPA legal office has first been notified of the business's commencement of an action in a Federal court to obtain judicial review of the determination and to obtain preliminary injunctive relief against disclosure; provided, that the information will not be made available to the public for so long as it is entitled to confidential treatment under section 408(f) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(f).”; and
 - (3) Notwithstanding § 2.205(g), the 31 calendar day period prescribed by § 2.205(f)(2), as modified by paragraph (f)(2) of this section, shall not be shortened without the consent of the business.
- (g) [Reserved]
- (h) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 does not apply to information to which this section applies. Such information shall be determined to be entitled to confidential treatment for so long as this section continues to apply to it.
- (i) **Disclosure in special circumstances.**
- (1) Section 2.209 applies to information to which this section applies. In addition, under Section 408(f) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(f), EPA is authorized to disclose the information to other persons. Such authority under section 408(f) of the Act may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (i)(2) or (i)(3) of this section.
 - (2) Information to which this section applies may be disclosed (notwithstanding the fact that it otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart) to a person under contract to EPA to perform work for EPA in connection with the Act, with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, as amended, or regulations which implement either such Act, if the EPA program office managing the contract first determines in writing that such disclosure is necessary in

order that the contractor may carry out the work required by the contract. Any such disclosure to a contractor shall be made only in accordance with the procedures and requirements of § 2.301(h)(2)(ii) through (iv).

- (3) Information to which this section applies may be disclosed by EPA to an advisory committee in accordance with section 408(d) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. 346a(d).

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40005, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.309 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:

- (1) **Act** means the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972, 33 U.S.C. 1401 *et seq.*
- (2) **Permit** means any permit applied for or granted under the Act.
- (3) **Application** means an application for a permit.
- (b) **Applicability.** This section applies to all information provided to or obtained by EPA as a part of any application or in connection with any permit.
- (c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.207 and 2.209 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.
- (d) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 does not apply to information to which this section applies. Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1414(f), no information to which this section applies is eligible for confidential treatment.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40005, Sept. 8, 1978]

§ 2.310 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended.

(a) **Definitions.** For purposes of this section:

- (1) **Act** means the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended, including amendments made by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, 42 U.S.C. 9601, *et seq.*
- (2) **Person** has the meaning given it in section 101(21) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 9601(21).
- (3) **Facility** has the meaning given it in section 101(9) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 9601(9).
- (4) **Hazardous substance** has the meaning given it in section 101(14) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 9601(14).
- (5) **Release** has the meaning given it in section 101(22) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 9601(22).

(6) ***Proceeding*** means any rulemaking or adjudication conducted by EPA under the Act or under regulations which implement the Act (including the issuance of administrative orders under section 106 of the Act and cost recovery pre-litigation settlement negotiations under sections 107 or 122 of the Act), any cost recovery litigation under section 107 of the Act, or any administrative determination made under section 104 of the Act, but not including determinations under this subpart.

(b) ***Applicability.*** This section applies only to information provided to or obtained by EPA under section 104 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 9604, by or from any person who stores, treats, or disposes of hazardous wastes; or where necessary to ascertain facts not available at the facility where such hazardous substances are located, by or from any person who generates, transports, or otherwise handles or has handled hazardous substances, or by or from any person who performs or supports removal or remedial actions pursuant to section 104(a) of the Act. Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under section 104 of the Act if it was provided in response to a request from EPA or a representative of EPA made for any of the purposes stated in section 104, if it was provided pursuant to the terms of a contract, grant or other agreement to perform work pursuant to section 104, or if its submission could have been required under section 104, regardless of whether section 104 was cited as authority for any request for the information or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.

(c) ***Basic rules which apply without change.*** Sections 2.201 through 2.207 and §§ 2.209 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.

(d) [Reserved]

(e) ***Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.*** Section 2.208 applies without change to information to which this section applies; however, no information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.

(f) [Reserved]

(g)

(1) Under section 104(e)(7)(A) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(e)(7)(A)) any information to which this section applies may be disclosed by EPA because of the relevance of the information in a proceeding under the Act, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Disclosure of information to which this section applies because of its relevance in a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).

(2) The provisions of § 2.301(g)(2) are to be used as paragraph (g)(2) of this section.

(3) In connection with any proceeding involving a decision by a presiding officer after an evidentiary or adjudicatory hearing, except with respect to litigation conducted by a Federal court, information to which this section applies which may be entitled to confidential treatment may be made available to the public, or to one or more parties of record to the proceeding, upon EPA's initiative, under this paragraph (g)(3). An EPA office proposing disclosure of information under this paragraph (g)(3) shall so notify the presiding officer in writing. Upon receipt of such a notification, the presiding officer shall notify each affected business that disclosure under this paragraph (g)(3) has been proposed, and shall afford each such business a period for comment found by the presiding officer to be reasonable under the circumstances. Information may be disclosed under this paragraph (g)(3) only if, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the EPA office determines in writing that, for reasons directly associated with the conduct of the proceeding, the contemplated disclosure would serve the public interest, and the presiding officer determines in writing that the

information is relevant to a matter in controversy in the proceeding. The presiding officer may condition disclosure of the information to a party of record on the making of such protective arrangements and commitments as he finds to be warranted. Disclosure to one or more parties of record, under protective arrangements or commitments, shall not, of itself, affect the eligibility of information for confidential treatment under the other provisions of this subpart. Any affected business shall be given at least 5 days notice by the presiding officer prior to making the information available to the public or to one or more of the parties of record to the proceeding.

(4) In connection with any proceeding involving a decision by a presiding officer after an evidentiary or adjudicatory hearing, except with respect to litigation conducted by a Federal court, information to which this section applies which may be entitled to confidential treatment may be made available to one or more parties of record to the proceeding, upon request of a party, under this paragraph (g)(4). A party of record seeking disclosure of information shall direct his request to the presiding officer. Upon receipt of such a request, the presiding officer shall notify each affected business that disclosure under this paragraph (g)(4) has been requested, and shall afford each such business a period for comment found by the presiding officer to be reasonable under the circumstances. Information may be disclosed to a party of record under this paragraph (g)(4) only if, after consideration of any timely comments submitted by the business, the presiding officer determines in writing that:

- (i) The party of record has satisfactorily shown that with respect to a significant matter which is in controversy in the proceeding, the party's ability to participate effectively in the proceeding will be significantly impaired unless the information is disclosed to him; and
- (ii) Any harm to an affected business that would result from the disclosure is likely to be outweighed by the benefit to the proceeding and the public interest that would result from the disclosure.

The presiding officer may condition disclosure of the information to a party of record on the making of such protective arrangements and commitments as he finds to be warranted. Disclosure to one or more parties of record, under protective arrangements or commitments, shall not, of itself, affect the eligibility of information for confidential treatment under the other provisions of this subpart. Any affected business shall be given at least 5 days notice by the presiding officer prior to making the information available to one or more of the parties of record to the proceeding.

(5) In connection with cost recovery pre-litigation settlement negotiations under sections 107 or 122 of the Act (42 U.S.C. 9607, 9622), any information to which this section applies that may be entitled to confidential treatment may be made available to potentially responsible parties pursuant to a contractual agreement to protect the information.

(6) In connection with any cost recovery proceeding under section 107 of the Act involving a decision by a presiding officer after an evidentiary or adjudicatory hearing, any information to which this section applies that may be entitled to confidential treatment may be made available to one or more parties of record to the proceeding, upon EPA's initiative, under this paragraph (g)(6). Such disclosure must be made pursuant to a stipulation and protective order signed by all parties to whom disclosure is made and by the presiding officer.

(h) *Disclosure to authorized representatives.*

- (1) Under section 104(e)(7) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(e)(7)), EPA possesses authority to disclose to any authorized representative of the United States any information to which this section applies, notwithstanding the fact that the information might otherwise be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Such authority may be exercised only in accordance with paragraph (h)(2) or (h)(3) of this section.
- (2) The provisions of § 2.301(h)(2) are to be used as paragraph (h)(2) of this section.
- (3) The provisions of § 2.301(h)(3) are to be used as paragraph (h)(3) of this section.
- (4) At the time any information is furnished to a contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government under this paragraph (h), the EPA office furnishing the information to the contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency shall notify the contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency that the information may be entitled to confidential treatment and that any knowing and willful disclosure of the information may subject the contractor, subcontractor, or State or local government agency and its employees to penalties in section 104(e)(7)(B) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 9604(e)(7)(B)).

[50 FR 51663, Dec. 18, 1985, as amended at 58 FR 462, Jan. 5, 1993]

§ 2.311 Special rules governing certain information obtained under the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section:

- (1) **Act** means the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. 1901 *et seq.*
- (2) **Average fuel economy** has the meaning given it in section 501(4) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2001(4).
- (3) **Fuel economy** has the meaning given it in section 501(6) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2001(6).
- (4) **Fuel economy data** means any measurement or calculation of fuel economy for any model type and average fuel economy of a manufacturer under section 503(d) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2003(d).
- (5) **Manufacturer** has the meaning given it in section 501(9) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2001(9).
- (6) **Model type** has the meaning given it in section 501(11) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2001(11).

(b) **Applicability.** This section applies only to information provided to or obtained by EPA under Title V, Part A of the Act, 15 U.S.C. 2001 through 2012. Information will be considered to have been provided or obtained under Title V, Part A of the Act if it was provided in response to a request from EPA made for any purpose stated in Title V, Part A, or if its submission could have been required under Title V Part A, regardless of whether Title V Part A was cited as the authority for any request for information or whether the information was provided directly to EPA or through some third person.

(c) **Basic rules which apply without change.** Sections 2.201 through 2.207 and §§ 2.209 through 2.215 apply without change to information to which this section applies.

(d) [Reserved]

(e) **Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.** Section 2.208 applies without change to information to which this section applies, except that information this is fuel economy data is not eligible for confidential treatment. No information to which this section applies is voluntarily submitted information.

(f) [Reserved]

(g) *Disclosure of information relevant to a proceeding.*

- (1) Under section 505(d)(1) of the Act, any information to which this section applies may be released by EPA because of the relevance of the information to a proceeding under Title V, Part A of the Act, notwithstanding the fact that the information otherwise might be entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart. Release of information to which this section applies because of its relevance to a proceeding shall be made only in accordance with this paragraph (g).
- (2) The provisions of § 2.301(g)(2) are to be used as paragraph (g)(2) of this section.
- (3) The provisions of § 2.301(g)(3) are to be used as paragraph (g)(3) of this section.
- (4) The provisions of § 2.301(g)(4) are to be used as paragraph (g)(3) of this section.

[50 FR 51663, Dec. 18, 1985]

Subpart C—Testimony by Employees and Production of Documents in Civil Legal Proceedings Where the United States Is Not a Party

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 301; Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1970, 5 U.S.C. App.; 33 U.S.C. 361(a); 42 U.S.C. 300j-9; 42 U.S.C. 6911a, 42 U.S.C. 7601(a).

Source: 50 FR 32387, Aug. 9, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2.401 Scope and purpose.

This subpart sets forth procedures to be followed when an EPA employee is requested or subpoenaed to provide testimony concerning information acquired in the course of performing official duties or because of the employee's official status. (In such cases, employees must state for the record that their testimony does not necessarily represent the official position of EPA. If they are called to state the official position of EPA, they should ascertain that position before appearing.) These procedures also apply to subpoenas *duces tecum* for any document in the possession of EPA and to requests for certification of copies of documents.

(a) These procedures apply to:

- (1) State court proceedings (including grand jury proceedings);
- (2) Federal civil proceedings, except where the United States, EPA or another Federal agency is a party; and
- (3) State and local legislative and administrative proceedings.

(b) These procedures do not apply:

- (1) To matters which are not related to EPA;
- (2) To Congressional requests or subpoenas for testimony or documents;

- (3) Where employees provide expert witness services as approved outside activities in accordance with 40 CFR part 3, subpart E (in such cases, employees must state for the record that the testimony represents their own views and does not necessarily represent the official position of EPA);
- (4) Where employees voluntarily testify as private citizens with respect to environmental matters (in such cases, employees must state for the record that the testimony represents their own views and does not necessarily represent the official position of EPA).
- (c) The purpose of this subpart is to ensure that employees' official time is used only for official purposes, to maintain the impartiality of EPA among private litigants, to ensure that public funds are not used for private purposes and to establish procedures for approving testimony or production of documents when clearly in the interests of EPA.

§ 2.402 Policy on presentation of testimony and production of documents.

- (a) With the approval of the cognizant Assistant Administrator, Office Director, Staff Office Director or Regional Administrator or his designee, EPA employees (as defined in 40 CFR 3.102 (a) and (b)) may testify at the request of another Federal agency, or, where it is in the interests of EPA, at the request of a State or local government or State legislative committee.
- (b) Except as permitted by paragraph (a) of this section, no EPA employee may provide testimony or produce documents in any proceeding to which this subpart applies concerning information acquired in the course of performing official duties or because of the employee's official relationship with EPA, unless authorized by the General Counsel or his designee under §§ 2.403 through 2.406.

§ 2.403 Procedures when voluntary testimony is requested.

A request for testimony by an EPA employee under § 2.402(b) must be in writing and must state the nature of the requested testimony and the reasons why the testimony would be in the interests of EPA. Such requests are immediately sent to the General Counsel or his designee (or, in the case of employees in the Office of Inspector General, the Inspector General or his designee) with the recommendations of the employee's supervisors. The General Counsel or his designee, in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator, or Staff Office Director (or, in the case of employees in the Office of Inspector General, the Inspector General or his designee), determines whether compliance with the request would clearly be in the interests of EPA and responds as soon as practicable.

§ 2.404 Procedures when an employee is subpoenaed.

- (a) Copies of subpoenas must immediately be sent to the General Counsel or his designee with the recommendations of the employee's supervisors. The General Counsel or his designee, in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator or Staff Office Director, determines whether compliance with the subpoena would clearly be in the interests of EPA and responds as soon as practicable.
- (b) If the General Counsel or his designee denies approval to comply with the subpoena, or if he has not acted by the return date, the employee must appear at the stated time and place (unless advised by the General Counsel or his designee that the subpoena was not validly issued or served or that the subpoena has been withdrawn), produce a copy of these regulations and respectfully refuse to provide any testimony or produce any documents. *United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen*, 340 U.S. 462 (1951).

- (c) Where employees in the Office of Inspector General are subpoenaed, the Inspector General or his designee makes the determination under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section in consultation with the General Counsel.
- (d) The General Counsel will request the assistance of the Department of Justice or a U.S. Attorney where necessary to represent the interests of the Agency and the employee.

§ 2.405 Subpoenas *duces tecum*.

Subpoenas *duces tecum* for documents or other materials are treated the same as subpoenas for testimony. Unless the General Counsel or his designee, in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator or Staff Office Director (or, as to employees in the Office of Inspector General, the Inspector General) determines that compliance with the subpoena is clearly in the interests of EPA, the employee must appear at the stated time and place (unless advised by the General Counsel or his designee that the subpoena was not validly issued or served or that the subpoena has been withdrawn) and respectfully refuse to produce the subpoenaed materials. However, where a subpoena *duces tecum* is essentially a written request for documents, the requested documents will be provided or denied in accordance with subparts A and B of this part where approval to respond to the subpoena has not been granted.

§ 2.406 Requests for authenticated copies of EPA documents.

Requests for authenticated copies of EPA documents for purposes of admissibility under 28 U.S.C. 1733 and Rule 44 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure will be granted for documents which would otherwise be released pursuant to subpart A. For purposes of Rule 44 the *person having legal custody of the record* is the cognizant Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator, Staff Office Director or Office Director or his designee. The advice of the Office of General Counsel should be obtained concerning the proper form of authentication.