

## **TIPS FOR REQUESTING PUBLIC INFORMATION**

1. The more specific and clear the request, the more quickly we can locate and provide the public information. If your request is unclear or its scope is broad, TCEQ staff may ask you to clarify or narrow your request, which will extend the time it takes for you to receive the requested information. Reviewing our [central registry database](#) will provide you with the TCEQ regulatory program areas associated with the facility and allow you to specify your request. The more specific your request, with date ranges and the type of information you seek from which program areas, the more quickly TCEQ staff can provide the information.
2. [You can view our online records and databases at no charge.](#)
3. The sites the TCEQ regulates are each assigned an “RN” number. Generally, if there is no RN number for a site, the TCEQ will not have any information related to the site. In some very rare cases, the Superfund Section or the incident database may have some limited information related to a site with no RN number.
4. Because the cost is usually less than providing hard copies of information, the TCEQ will assume that you request information in electronic format, unless you specifically request otherwise. When you request information in microfilm/microfiche format, there may be a delay associated with converting the information to PDF format, then redacting the confidential information from the PDF file. If you are seeking both electronic data and data stored in other mediums (e.g. hard copies and/or microfilm/microfiche), requesting electronic data in a separate request from the other information may allow us to respond to your request more quickly.
5. You may also inspect information in person at the TCEQ office location where the information is stored, often at a reduced charge or no charge. These sources may contain the information you seek, or may help you specify your request.
6. The TCEQ is required by law to provide existing, non-confidential information. If you request confidential information, the TCEQ will likely seek an opinion from the Attorney General regarding whether the material must be released, which may take 60 days or more to receive. Because confidential information can take several months to process, you may wish to request the non-confidential information first, then, based on your review, request the confidential information if you find you need it.
7. When you indicate that you do not wish to receive confidential information, you agree that the TCEQ will remove or redact the information for which it would normally seek an Attorney General opinion. Some information is confidential by

law and will be redacted without input from the Attorney General. You can ask the Attorney General to review these redactions.

8. If some of the information you request involves a third party's interests, that third party may ask the Attorney General to determine if the information should be released.
9. The TCEQ is not required to, and will not, forward your request to another governmental entity to locate additional responsive information.
10. The TCEQ is not required to create documents, answer questions, or perform legal research when responding to a PIR, nor is it required to compile or extract information if it is made available by giving you access to our files.
11. You will be able to view copyrighted material that resides in the TCEQ's files, but TCEQ staff will not reproduce this material for you. Federal Copyright restrictions may apply to this material and you are responsible for your own compliance.
12. The Texas Public Information Act (TEX. GOV'T CODE [ch. 552](#)) allows TCEQ to recover certain costs incurred to provide the requested public information to you, and allows the TCEQ to require a deposit in some circumstances. While TCEQ staff strive to provide an accurate estimate of these costs, it is merely an estimate and the invoiced amount will likely be different. This difference can be up to 20% more than the estimate without notice to you. If the actual amount exceeds more than 20% of the estimate, the TCEQ will provide you with a revised estimate before completing the work. TCEQ is not required to provide an estimate for costs under \$40, but will provide one as a courtesy if included in your request.
13. If you request "any and all" information related to a company or facility, you will likely receive a large cost estimate.
14. You may receive multiple invoices for the information you request. For example:
  - Your request may require a deposit and a final invoice.
  - If you choose to accept voluminous information as it becomes available, you will receive an invoice with each installment of information.
  - If part of the information is sent to the Attorney General for a determination on its release, you will receive a separate invoice for information the Attorney General determines should be released.