

* Updated on December 23, 2013

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assure compliance with the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, 65 P.S. §66.1 et seq., as amended, to provide prompt and efficient access to public records of the City of Reading, to preserve the integrity of records, and to minimize the financial impact to the residents of the City of Reading regarding the resources utilized in the receipt and processing of public record requests and the retrieval and copying of public records, and to protect the privacy rights of individuals who submit sensitive information to the City that is considered non-public, confidential, or privileged under the Right-to-Know Law.

This policy replaces all prior inconsistent City policies.

Records that can be Requested in person without a Right-to-Know Request

The following records* can be requested in person by going to the department offices listed below:

- **Zoning and Planning- City Hall, First Floor, Room 1-41:**

- Zoning Permits
- Zoning Hearing Board decisions
- Zoning Hearing Board applications

- **Building and Trades- City Hall, Third Floor, Room 1-41:**

- Permits (building, plumbing, electric, and mechanical)
- Certificates of Occupancy
- Stop Work Orders

- **Property Maintenance- City Hall, First Floor, Room 1-30:**

- Housing permits
- Quality of Life Ordinance tickets
- Property Maintenance Inspection Reports (issued on Jan. 1, 2005 or later)
- Notices of Violation (issued on Jan 1. 2007 or later)
- Copies of placards posted on unsafe/condemned properties

- Due to limitations on our staff, the City reserves the right to limit requests to no more than 3 separate records or for records of more than (3) properties in a 24-hour period. If you need to request more than three separate records at one time, you may be required to submit a Right-to-Know Request.

Requests

1. Requests for public records shall be submitted in writing and signed by the requester. The request shall include the name and address to which the Law Department should address its response. The City will not accept anonymous requests for records.
2. All requests for public records shall be specific in identifying and describing each public record

requested.

3. In no case shall the City of Reading be required to create a public record which does not exist or to compile, maintain, format or organize a public record in a manner in which the City of Reading does not currently compile, maintain, format or organize the public record.
4. All requests for access to public records of the City of Reading shall be directed to the Law Department of the City of Reading. The Law Department is located on the second floor in Room 2-54, City Hall, and is accessible to the public between the business hours of 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday, (except on holidays), via facsimile to 610-655-6427, or at solicitor@readingpa.gov [1] solicitor@readingpa.gov [1]. Requests will be addressed within five days of receipt.
5. The requester should also provide additional contact information such as a telephone number, facsimile number and e-mail address to facilitate the processing of a request.
6. A request may be submitted using the City's "[Right-to-Know Law Request Form](#) [2]." Forms are available for pickup outside of the Law Department at the address below.
7. To expedite processing, the written request shall state explicitly - both on the enclosure envelope or fax cover sheet and in the written request - that the communication is made for the purpose of requesting access to public records under the Law.
8. All requests for records shall be mailed or delivered to:

City of Reading Law Department
Room 2-54
815 Washington Street
Reading, PA 19601
solicitor@readingpa.gov [1]
Fax: 610-655-6427

Submittal of a request to any other address or facsimile number does not give rise to any obligation on the part of the City to respond to it, nor can it serve as a basis for the deemed denial of the request.

Fees

If a written request for records is granted in whole or in part, the following fees will be charged to the requester:

- **Fees for duplication of public records shall be as follows:**

○ Photocopy	\$0.25 per page
○ Certification of a public record	\$5.00 per record to certify
○ Copying records onto electronic media	Actual Cost
○ Specialized Documents	Actual Cost
○ Postage	Actual Cost to the City of Reading of mailing the record
○ Facsimile/Microfiche/Other Media	Actual Cost

- **Prepayment**

- Estimate Cost Exceeds \$100 ? In the event the estimated cost of fulfilling a request submitted under this Part is expected to exceed \$100, the Open Records Officer shall obtain payment of 50% of the expected cost in advance of fulfilling (copying) the request to avoid unwarranted expense of City of Reading resources.
- Prior to Release ? The City may obtain the Cost of the records prior to releasing the records.

- **Redaction** - A fee to redact documents may not be charged. If a requester wishes to inspect rather than receive a copy of a record and the records contains both public and non-public information, the

City shall redact the non-public information and shall charge for copies, in accordance with the above fee schedule, it must make of the redacted material in order for the requester to view the public record. Should the requester choose to obtain copies of the redacted documents after reviewing the records, no additional fee may be charged.

- **Statutory Fees** ? If a separate statute authorizes the City to charge a set amount for a certain type of record, the City may charge no more than that statutory amount.
- **Conversion to Paper** ? If a record is only maintained electronically or in other non-paper media, duplication fee shall be limited to the lesser of the fee for duplication on paper or the fee for duplication in the original media unless the requester specifically requests for the record to be duplicated in the more expensive media.
- *Certification ? legal verification of a public record performed at the behest of the requester, does not include notarization*
- *Photocopy ? either a single sided copy or one side of a double-sided black and white copy of a standard 8.5"x11" page*
- *Specialized Documents ? non-standard sized documents including but not limited to blue prints or color copies*

All costs must be paid by check or money order payable to the ?City of Reading?.

Questions:

Any additional questions regarding this policy may be directed to the City of Reading Law Department at 610-655-6208. Prior to requesting copies of information from the City you may contact via telephone or visit the Law Department in room 2-54, City Hall to obtain a request form, or you can print out the attached request form. Upon return please have the attached request form completed and either drop off or mail the form to 815 Washington Street Room 2-54, Reading PA 19601 and/or fax the completed request form to 610-655-6427. Once received the request will be date and time stamped.

If you have any questions regarding the Right to Know Law you can contact the City of Reading Law Department at 610-655-6208 or visit the attached link to the Open Records Office in Harrisburg, PA.

[Right-To-Know Law Request Form \(Adobe PDF\)](#) [2]

<http://openrecords.state.pa.us/> [3]

Source URL (retrieved on Feb 17 2017 - 3:44pm): <https://www.readingpa.gov/content/right-know-policy>

Links:

[1] <mailto:solicitor@readingpa.gov>

[2] <https://www.readingpa.gov/content/right-know-request-form>

[3]

<http://openrecords.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=4434&PageID=466460>&level=