

Application to access information

Use this form if you want to apply to access information held by a Northern Territory public sector organisation. Lodge the completed form with the organisation that holds the information you want.

Your name and contact details:
Title (please circle): Ms / Mrs / Miss / Mr / Dr / _____ Postal Address: _____
First Name: _____
Family Name: _____
Phone: (B/H) _____ (A/H) _____
Email: _____ Fax: _____

Name the Organisation that holds the information you want:

Describe the information you want:
Please provide as much detail about the information you want, eg, dates created, location, subject matter, who was involved. (Attach another sheet of paper with more details, if necessary.)

Preferred form of access: (please tick)

Copies
 Inspection
 Other (specify, eg, electronic copy) _____

Application fee - \$30: (please tick relevant box)

If your Application is only for records that contain personal information about you, there is no Application fee. But if your Application is for information that is not about you, or for a mix of non-personal and personal information, you must pay an Application fee. In some cases, the fee may be waived or reduced.

- I limit my Application to records that contain personal information about me (No Application fee)
- I attach a \$30 cheque / money order / receipt* for the Application fee
- I attach a completed *Application to Waive/Reduce Fees* form in relation to the Application fee.

***You may pay the fee to any Receiver of Territory Monies and attach the receipt to your Application.**

Processing fee: (please tick if relevant)

A processing fee may be charged to cover costs of processing the Application. If your Application is only for records that contain personal information about you, the processing fee is more limited. In some cases, the fee may be waived or reduced.

- I understand that I may have to pay a processing fee in relation to the Application.
- I attach a completed *Application to Waive/Reduce Fees* form in relation to the processing fee.

Identification: (please tick if relevant)

The organisation needs proof of your identity. You may attach a copy of an identification document (eg. driver's licence, passport, etc) if you are posting or faxing this form. If you are applying in person to the organisation, you may produce your identification document to an official, or they may be able to confirm your identity in some other way. If the organisation needs more, it will contact you.

- I attach a copy of an identification document

Sign Here _____

Date ____/____/____

NOTES**Privacy**

The *Information Act* requires you to supply your name and an address for correspondence, as well as sufficient details to identify the information you want. Additional contact details will assist the organisation to process your Application. Some personal information may have to be disclosed to other people in order to satisfy consultation requirements under the Act and make an informed decision on your Application. If you want to discuss privacy issues, you may contact the Information Officer within the organisation.

More information

For more information about access to NT government information under the *Information Act* you can visit www.infocomm.nt.gov.au, or contact the Office of the Information Commissioner — phone 1800 005 610 or 8999 1500, fax 8981 3812, email infocomm@nt.gov.au, or post PO Box 3750, Darwin NT 0801.

For help filling out this form, contact the Information Officer for the organisation that holds the information you want (for details, contact the Government Switchboard on 8999 5511).

Information Act

Applying for NT government information (FOI)

What information can I apply for?

You can apply to access most government information held by NT public sector organisations. That includes information about you. It includes computer records. Organisations do not have to recreate records that have been destroyed or create new documents from memory.

Where do I apply?

Apply to the organisation that you think holds the information you want. For example, the NT Police, the Department of Health and Community Services, the Ombudsman and the Department of Justice are public sector organisations. Before you make an Application, it can help to contact the Information Officer in the organisation to talk about the information you want, and the requirements of the organisation. If you do not know who to contact in the organisation, you can try the Government Switchboard (8999 5511) or the Office of the Information Commissioner (8999 1500).

How do I apply?

You don't have to use a form but it will usually help with processing if you complete an Application form. Forms are available from the Office of the Information Commissioner and from most organisations. Your Application must:

- be in writing;
- include your name and address (a telephone contact number will also help);
- describe the information you want with enough detail to identify it; and
- if you apply for more than just personal information about you, be accompanied by a \$30 Application fee.

You should include proof of identity with your Application. The requirements for identification may vary between organisations. The organisation will contact you if more information is needed.

What do I ask for?

Government organisations hold a lot of information. So it may not be very useful if you ask for *“everything you have about my car accident”*. It will be much more helpful if you describe the information you want in detail, for example: *“I want all police reports and photographs relating to a car accident I had on 16 May 2002 at about 8:00pm on the Stuart Highway 30 km north of Katherine. I drove a white Holden ute licence number 123 456, and the other car was a green Ford sedan driven by Tom Jones. Sergeant Smith came, took photos and interviewed both of us.”*

Often, contacting the organisation's Information Officer before you complete the Application form can help you to work out the best way to ask for the information you want.

What does it cost?

If you are applying for personal information about you there is no Application fee, but you may be charged for costs of providing access to the information, for example, 20 cents per page for standard photocopies.

If you want more than just personal information about you, there is a \$30 Application fee as well as a fee for dealing with the Application (a “processing fee”), eg, for time spent on searching, consultation and decision-making. The organisation may give you a written estimate of the processing fee and require you to pay a 50% deposit before it processes your application further. You may apply to the organisation to waive or reduce the fees in special circumstances.

How long will it take?

The organisation has 30 days from receiving a valid Application to locate the information and decide if access will be granted. More time might be needed, for example, if your Application is transferred to another organisation — if it relates to large amounts of information — if extensive searches are required — or if consultation with a third party is required. The organisation will inform you if it needs more time.

What if I am refused access?

The organisation may decide that you are not entitled to access some or all of the information you asked for. There must be a good reason to refuse you access to information. For example, the information may be exempt under the *Information Act* because disclosure would be contrary to the public interest, or the information may no longer exist. The organisation must inform you in writing of the reasons if it refuses access. You may ask the organisation to review a decision to refuse access (“internal review”). If you are still not satisfied after that internal review, you may complain to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

Is there another way?

An application under the *Information Act* is just one way to access government information. Information about the activities of public sector organisations is published electronically and in hard copy form. Reports and statistics are accessible on the websites of organisations and in libraries. There are other administrative and legal ways to access government information. The Information Officer in the organisation can discuss what is already available and options for access.

More Information

The Office of the Information Commissioner has issued guidelines on many aspects of Freedom of Information and Privacy in the Northern Territory. You may access them on the Internet at www.infocomm.nt.gov.au or request hardcopies by telephone on 1800 005 610 or (08) 8999 1500.

Information Officers in each government organisation may be contacted through the NT Government Switchboard on 8999 5511.