

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY PUBLIC ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT DATA

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act gives members of the public, the right to see and/or have copies of public data that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) keeps. The law also controls how we keep government data and what we tell you when you ask to see the data that we have.

The law states that all the data DPS or a governmental entity has are public (can be seen by anybody) unless there is a state or federal law that classifies the data as not public.

You have the right to look at all public data that DPS keeps.

You may initially request and receive public information over the phone, in person, through the mail, or via e-mail. If it is not possible to give you the information in the way you ask, we will contact you to decide on another way to give you the information you asked for. If your request is complicated or we do not fully understand your request, we may require that you make your request in writing.

If your request relates to one of DPS's divisions or areas, you may directly contact the person listed in the Data Practices Contact List titled "[Where to Send Requests for Information and Data](#)" for that division with your data request. If you have a DPS-wide request or do not know which division to contact to view public data, contact Sydnee Woods, Data Practices Compliance Official/General Counsel, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000 Town Square Tower, St. Paul, MN 55101. Ms. Woods can be reached at (651) 201-7170. You can make your request during normal office hours, of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

You also have the right to make a standing request. Standing requests expire after 60 days. You may ask to see:

- Specific types of data or data elements;
- Specific documents or portions of documents;
- Entire records, files or data bases;
- All public data DPS keeps.

In your request, you should say that you are making a data request under the MGDPA. Tell us as clearly as you can what information you want to see. If we are not sure exactly what information you are requesting, we will ask you clarifying questions, but you don't have to tell us who you are or explain why you are asking for the data.

We will let you know as soon as we can whether or not we have the data you are asking for. If you are asking for public data and we have the data, we will let you see or have copies of the data right away. If we need more time to identify, find or copy the data you are asking for, we will let you know and we will tell you when we will be able to give you the data. The MGDPA gives agencies a reasonable amount of time to respond to requests for public data.

- **We don't have to give you data we don't keep.**
If DPS doesn't have the data you are asking for, we will tell you right away. The law does not require that we collect or create data for you in order to respond to your request.

- **We may not have to give you public data in the form you want.**

If we have the data you're asking for, but we don't keep the data in the form you want, we may not be able to give you the data in that form. If we can't put the data in the form you want, you may have the data in our format and convert it to the form you want. If we can put the data in the form you want, we will let you know how long it will take us to provide the data and how much it will cost. Then you can decide if you want the data in that form or not. We may request you pre-pay before we provide you the data.

- **DPS cannot charge you a fee for looking at public data.**

You have the right to look at public data at no cost. We will let you look at computerized data on a computer screen, or print a copy, so that you can inspect the data at no charge.

You also may inspect public data on your own computer, and you may print or download the data using your own computer, at no cost.

We can't charge you a fee for separating public data from data that are not public.

- **You have the right to have public data explained in a way you understand.**

If you have any questions about the meaning of public data that DPS keeps, please contact a division contact listed in Data Practices Contact List titled "[Where to Send Requests for Information and Data](#)" or contact Sydnee Woods, Data Practices Compliance Official/General Counsel, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000 Town Square Tower, St. Paul, MN 55101, telephone number (651) 201-7170, and ask for an explanation.

- **You have the right to have copies of the public data that we keep.**

You have the right to have a copy of any data that you have a right to see. This includes the right to have copies of all or parts of specific documents, files, records, data bases or types of data that we keep. If you ask for the copies in electronic form, and we keep the data in electronic form, we will give you the data in electronic form.

To ask for a copy of public data that DPS keeps, contact the division representative listed in the attachment or contact Sydnee Woods, Data Practices Compliance Official/General Counsel, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000 Town Square Tower, St. Paul, MN 55101, telephone number (651) 201-7170.

In your request, say that you are making a request for copies of data under the MGDPA. Tell us as clearly as you can what types of data or information you want copies of. If we have any question about the copies you are requesting, we will ask you. You don't have to tell us who you are or explain why you are asking for the data.

Once we have your request, we will provide the copies you asked for as soon as reasonably possible, depending on how many copies you are requesting and how many staff we have available to respond to your request.

- **We have the right to charge you a reasonable fee for providing copies.**

We will charge you a fee for making copies of the data you ask for according to DPS policy. If you ask us to fax the copies to you, the fee will not include long distance phone charges. If you request a certified copy of a document, we will charge you a fee to certify the document.

If you are requesting copies of data that have commercial value, we will charge you a fee in addition to the fee for the copies.

- We may require payment in advance.
- **You have the right to know why you can't see or get copies of data that are not public.**

If the information you ask for is not public data, we will tell you that when you make your request, or we will notify you in writing as soon as possible. We also will tell you which specific law makes the information not public. If you ask, we will put this in writing for you.
- **You have the right to see and have copies of summary data.**

Summary data are statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data on individuals. We will prepare summary data for you if you make a request in writing (letter, fax, e-mail, etc.) to Sydnee Woods, Data Practices Compliance Official/General Counsel, Department of Public Safety, 445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000 Town Square Tower, St. Paul, MN 55101, telephone number (651) 201-7170, and pay us the cost of preparing the data.
- We may require prepayment of this cost. When we receive your request, we will contact you to make detailed arrangements to prepare the summary data and provide a cost estimate.
- We will let you or someone else prepare the summary data if:
 - You explain in writing why you want to prepare the data;
 - If you agree not to release any of the private or confidential data used to prepare the summary data; and
 - If we determine that giving you access to private and confidential data will not compromise those data.

If you have any questions about how to access public data that we keep, please contact John M. Harrington, who is our responsible authority, or Sydnee Woods, who is our compliance official, at Department of Public Safety, 445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000 Town Square Tower, St. Paul, MN 55101, telephone number (651) 201-7170.

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