



PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

The Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District (District) often receives requests to view public records held by us and/or to make copies of those records. Pursuant to the California Public Records Act (PRA), California Government Code Section 6250 et seq, it is the District's policy to provide access to such public records and to make copies upon request. As used in this policy, the phrase "public records" is as defined in California Government Code Section 6252(e) and includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business, which has been prepared, owned, used, or retained by the District, regardless of physical form or characteristics.

The [Summary of the California Public Records Act 2004 \(PDF\)](#), prepared by the Office of the Attorney General, California Department of Justice, provides details on the PRA. It is the District's intention and desire to conform to the provisions of the PRA. Please bring to the District's attention any identified deviation from the provisions of the PRA.

How to Request Access to Review Public Records

Most public records maintained by the District are available for public inspection. Under Government Code Sections() you can make a Public Records Act request in person, over the phone, or in writing.

In-Person Request. Most public records are available for inspection during regular business hours, generally Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., except for county holidays. Appointments are recommended as District Staff availability may be intermittent due to out of office field work, ad-hoc complaint or emergency response, or if assisting other persons. For the most efficient processing, the District requests that you make an appointment so District Staff can have the records available and provide space for you to review them.

Phone Request. You may also make a request verbally, in person or by phone at (707) 433-5911. These requests will be noted by District Staff and responded to in the proper manner.

Written Request. Written requests may be submitted by postal mail, e-mail, FAX, or online. Requests should be identified as a request for public information under the Public Records Act and to the attention of "Information Request."

- Postal Mail: Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, 150 Matheson St., Healdsburg, CA 95448

- E-mail: airquality@sonoma-county.org.
- FAX: (707) 433-4823.
- Online: The District's "Contact" page on its web site provides an online form that may be used to submit an information request. It is located at: nosocoair.org/contact.

Request Details

Public records requests should describe the requested records with sufficient detail to enable District Staff to identify and locate the information sought. Identifying the appropriate records is easiest when the request is specific and focused. Staff can help requestors narrow down the scope of their search by describing the technology used, how the record is maintained, the physical location of the record, and provide suggestions on how to address any practical barriers to disclosure. To the greatest possible extent, please include the following and similar information so that the District may respond to your request:

- Company and/or Individual Names
- Dates of Correspondence
- Descriptions
- Names
- Permit Numbers
- Reports
- Street Addresses
- Submittals

The request must also contain an address, phone number, and/or email address so the District can respond to the request. Requested records that can be disclosed will be made available for review and duplication. The District is required to provide copies of information in its native format, but it is not required to make custom reports or analyses of the information or to convert electronic file formats.

Not Everything is Released

Not all records are automatically open to the public. The District may refuse to disclose any records which are exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Cal Gov Code §§ 7930.100 — 7930.215). Examples of items that may not be disclosed include some items listed under specific exemptions such as home addresses of employees, personnel files or medical files, to name a few. Additionally local government can also determine something is exempt on a case-by-case basis if "on the facts of the particular case the public interest served by not making the record public clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the record" (Cal Gov

Code § 7922.000). Information may also be withheld if the information was submitted to the District with a reasonable expectation that the District would keep it confidential ([*Black Panther Party v. Kehoe* \(1974\) 42 Cal.App.3d 645 \[117 Cal.Rptr. 106\]](#)).

Unique trade processes or production that if disclosed would affect adversely the competitive position of an owner or operator may be deemed confidential and may not be disclosed (Cal Gov Code § 7924.305, § 7924.510, § 7929.420). Emissions of an air contaminant which has an ambient air quality standard or has been designated as a hazardous air pollutant cannot be deemed confidential (Cal Gov Code § 7924.510).

When inspecting public records, they may not be removed from the location where they are being inspected. They may not be reorganized, destroyed, defaced, or altered (Cal Gov Code § 6200). The District reserves the right to have personnel present during the inspection of records to safeguard these public interests.

Copies

The Public Records Act allows the public entity to charge for the cost of duplication (Cal Gov Code § 7922.575). The requesting party must be notified of the cost of producing the records before the records are made available. If the requesting party agrees to the cost, when payment is received the requested records shall be made available. When viewing public records, if copies are needed, each page must be tagged to be copied with a colored post-it note and return the file or files intact to the District staff.

The District charges \$0.10 per reproduced page. Charges are waived for less than 25 copies, or for any sized documents that are to be provided in an electronic format and already exist in that format. The copy charges may be applied to records that need to be scanned if they do not already exist in an electronic format.

If there is a large volume of material requested and to be produced such that it is unduly burdensome for the District to provide copies, you will be notified that you may make other arrangements to review and have the documents copied at your expense ([*California First Amendment Coalition v. Supreme Court* \(3rd District 1998\) 67 Cal.App.4th 159, 166](#)).

Response Time

The Public Records Act requires the District to respond to requests for public information within 10 days (Cal Gov Code § 7922.535). The response will tell you whether the information you request is available, how you can view it or get copies, the cost of providing the copies, which (if any) of the records are not subject to disclosure, and how to make an appointment, if needed.

Occasionally, unusual circumstances will require more than 10 days, but not more than 14 additional days, to respond to a request. In this case, you will be notified before the 10-day time

limit. In these circumstances, a mutually agreeable time in the future will be established for the inspection of records that will be provided. Unusual circumstances are defined in the PRA as the following, but only to the extent reasonably necessary for the proper processing of the particular request:

- The need to search for and collect the requested records that are in storage or archives, or from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the District office.
- The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records that are demanded in a single request.
- The need for consultation, including but not limited to District legal counsel, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having substantial interest in the determination of the request, or among two or more components of the agency having substantial subject matter interest therein.
- The requested records are currently being used by District personnel or other members of the public or may need to be reviewed to determine if the records contain confidential or otherwise exempt information.

Definitions (Cal Gov Code Title 1, Div. 10, Pt. 1, Ch. 2)

- "District" means the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District or any employee authorized to act on its behalf.
- "Emission Data" means measured or calculated concentrations or weights of air contaminants emitted into the ambient air. Data used to calculate emission data are not emission data.
- "Person" includes any natural person, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, firm, or association.
- "Production Data" means information disclosing the actual quantity of material used to produce an article having commercial value, as well as information disclosing the actual quantity produced.
- "Public Record" includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business, which has been prepared, owned, used, or retained by the District, regardless of physical form or characteristics.
- "Writing" means handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, photocopying, transmitting by electronic mail or facsimile, and every other means of recording upon any tangible thing, form of communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combination thereof, and all papers, maps, magnetic or paper tapes, photographic films and prints, magnetic or punched cards, discs, drums, and any record thereby created, regardless of the manner in which the record has been stored.