



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

265 – OPEN RECORDS

GENERAL ORDER: 2025-31
ISSUED: July 17, 2025

EFFECTIVE: July 17, 2025

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:
Assistant Chief Craig Sarnow
DATE: June 4, 2025

ACTION: Amends General Order 2023-30 (May 29, 2023)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): 10.1.1, 10.2.1

ROLL CALL VERSION

**Contains only changes to current policy.
For complete version of SOP, see SharePoint.**

265.35 PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING PUBLIC REQUESTS FOR RECORDS

- A. Record requests can be made verbally or in writing. Requests will be handled as soon as practicable and without delay in the order in which they are received. Basic requests taken over the counter will be handled immediately, if possible.
2. Requests made in writing, by letter or e-mail will be timed-stamped as soon as possible and logged at Open Records. Verbal requests are taken in person only. Written requests will have detailed documentation on the ~~Open Records case management form~~ **Front Counter Open Records Request form**.
3. Requests involving “sensitive” issues, e.g., employment/privacy consideration, Internal Affairs Division confidentiality, high profile police investigation/action, or executive personnel involvement require notification to the Open Records supervisor. ~~Open Records staff should document the notification on the Open Records case management form.~~
4. All media requests require notification to the Open Records supervisor, who will make **necessary** notifications to the **inspector of the Administration Bureau and the manager of the Public Information Office**.
5. Requests involving disciplinary or personnel records will be routed to the ~~Civil Investigations Section~~ **Internal Affairs Division Open Records** supervisor, after being received and recorded at Open Records.
7. Data requests require notification to the appropriate ~~assistant chief or inspector~~ **work location commanding officer or manager**. The appropriate ~~assistant chief or inspector~~ **work location commanding officer or manager** will be responsible for the gathering and vetting of the appropriate statistical data. This data will be returned to Open Records in a timely manner for redaction and dissemination. Time to locate this data will be tracked and reported to Open Records. Questions regarding the release or redaction of this information will be directed to the Open Records commanding officer or supervisor. A receipt letter will be sent for written requests for this type of data.

B. REQUESTS FOR VIDEO AND AUDIO

5. Ensure that the requester is offered the opportunity to qualify for a fee waiver by collecting information using the applicable form in accordance with [Wis. Stat. § 19.35\(3\)\(h\)\(3-5\)](#). If redaction fees are to be imposed, ensure that applicable redaction charges are calculated according to [Wis. Stat. § 19.35\(3\)\(h\)\(6\)](#). Once any potential fees are calculated, send the requester a pre-payment form with the estimated costs, in accordance with [Wis. Stat. § 19.35\(3\)\(h\)\(7\)](#).

C. SENSITIVE REQUESTS

3. All information related to the disposition of the record release will be documented ~~on~~ in the Open Records case management ~~form~~ system.

D. CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION RECORDS

2. In instances where the release of records could jeopardize a current or ongoing investigation, the release of records will require approval by the assistant chief or inspector of the respective Criminal Investigation Bureau division or his/her designee. Contact can be made either by email or phone.
3. Information related to the decision and disposition of the record release will be documented ~~on~~ in the Open Records case management ~~form~~ system.

E. MEDIA REQUESTS

1. The Open Records supervisor or commanding officer will notify the ~~manager of the~~ Public Information Office and appropriate assistant chief or inspector of all media requests. ~~A follow-up email shall be sent to the manager of the Public Information Office for any verbal notification. Open Records staff will document the notification and/or manager of the Public Information Office instruction along with the original request document. The request will be time stamped immediately upon arrival.~~ This notification will be made by providing a continually updated document maintained by Open Records. Media requests from national news outlets will be forwarded to the Public Information Office for review. The Public Information Office shall advise Open Records on the appropriate release of records requested.
2. Redactions will be made by Open Records in accordance with the law. Open Records will contact the city attorney for legal advice as necessary. ~~Prior to release of the requested records, the manager of the Public Information Office will again be notified via email or phone alerting him/her of the impending release.~~
3. Information related to the decision and disposition of the record release, including any reasons for nondisclosure, will be documented ~~on~~ in the Open Records case management ~~form~~ system.

F. REQUEST INVOLVING COMMAND STAFF MEMBERS

1. Request for records concerning the command staff requires notification to the

Open Records supervisor or the commanding officer. Notification should include an attachment with the original request. The Open Records supervisor or commanding officer will make the appropriate notifications to the Office of the Chief. Open Records staff should document the notification ~~on~~ in the Open Records case management ~~form~~ system.

G. REQUESTS FOR EMPLOYEE RECORDS/DEPARTMENT MEMBER INFORMATION RECORD (PM5 HARD CARD) REQUEST

1. Records request for Milwaukee Police Department member(s) information record require notification to the Open Records supervisor and the ~~police information systems director~~ Police Human Resources Administrator, or his/her designee. Open Records staff should document the notification ~~on~~ in the Open Records case management ~~form~~ system.
2. If the release is approved, the information record(s) shall be ordered by contacting the Human Resources Division ~~personnel manager~~ administrator and/or designee. Open Records will consult with the Internal Affairs Division regarding release of the record and make all appropriate redactions. Notification pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 19.356](#) must be provided to the member prior to release of member information records with demerit(s) listed. When the information record is ready for release, it will be hand carried to Open Records. Interdepartmental mail is not to be used. See department member notification requirements below.

Note: If the media makes the request, notification to the manager of the Public Information Office will be required in addition to the above.

H. REQUEST FOR DEPARTMENT MEMBER EMAIL, TEXT MESSAGING, OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

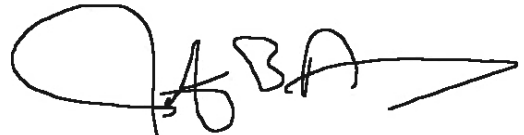
1. Public record requests for Milwaukee Police Department members' email require notification to the Open Records supervisor, Open Records legal advisor, ~~police information systems director~~ and commanding officer. A copy of the request should be emailed with the notification. Open Records staff should document the notification ~~on~~ in the Open Records case management ~~form~~ system.
2. If the media makes the request, notification to ~~the manager~~ of the Public Information Office will be required.
3. ~~Open Records may notify the director or the commanding officer of the Information Technology Division to produce a copy of the requested emails.~~ Open Records will make requests for the requested emails through the City of Milwaukee Information Technology Management (ITMD) Help Desk Portal. ITMD will conduct the search and provide a copy of the requested emails to Open Records.

265.45 REDACTION REQUIREMENTS

B. LOCATION AND COPY COSTS

1. Fees imposed for copies and labor shall be actual costs, except where a specific fee is established:
 - a. ~~.25~~ .15 cents per copied page.
3. The department may require prepayment if the total costs are more than \$5. For large public records requests, Open Records shall establish a reasonable estimate of the total compliance costs and require prepayment. Contact the city attorney for legal advice as necessary.

Note: The cost of staff time for redaction of records shall not be passed on to the requestor except for when the fee is established (e.g., [Wis. Stat. § 19.35\(3\)\(b\)](#)).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.B.N.' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

JEFFREY B. NORMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

JBN:mfk