

Public Records

Emergency Proclamation Regarding Public Records Act

NEW: On March 24, Gov. Inslee issued [Proclamation 20-28](#) suspending the portions of the Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act that require in-person meetings or contact and making additional temporary changes. We are in the process of updating these questions to reflect the new proclamation. Check back soon for updates.

Special thanks to Assistant Attorney General Morgan Damerow for his assistance in drafting these PRA FAQs.

NEW: Is the five-business day response deadline in RCW 42.56.520(1) still in effect during this emergency?

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On March 24, 2020, the Governor issued [Proclamation 20-28](#), temporarily waiving the requirement in [RCW 42.56.520\(1\)](#) to respond to a request for public records within five business days.

Specifically, the Governor waived the following language in **BOLD**:

Responses to requests for public records shall be made promptly by agencies, the office of the secretary of the senate, and the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives. ***Within five business days of receiving a public record request***, an agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives must respond in one of the ways provided in this subsection.

This means that local governments are still required to “promptly” respond to a public records request with a letter that includes one of the allowable responses from RCW 42.56.520(1), but are not required to do so within five business days.

This temporary waiver is currently in effect **until midnight on April 23, 2020**. After that time, unless the Governor extends the expiration date of the waiver, the waiver will cease and the five-day response deadline will be back in effect.

Local governments should prominently post on their website and/or communicate to the public through other means that the five-business day response time has been suspended by the proclamation but will make all feasible efforts to respond promptly to requests for records.