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City Clerk

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City of Southgate

Promulgated Rules for Examination and Inspection of Records

Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, *et seq.*

The following rules have been established to accommodate requests to inspect records in conjunction with a City of Southgate FOIA request:

1. Upon receiving a request to inspect City records, the City shall furnish the requesting person with a reasonable opportunity and reasonable facilities for inspection and examination of the public records requested.
2. To prevent excessive and unreasonable interference with the discharge of a public body's normal operations, a person or organization shall be allowed to inspect public records during usual business hours, at a maximum of four hours per day. The public does not have unlimited access to City offices or facilities, and a person may be required to inspect records at a specified counter or table, and in view of City personnel.
3. To protect public records from loss, unauthorized alteration, mutilation, or destruction, City officials, appointees, staff or consultants/contractors assisting with inspection of public records shall prohibit the use of pen and ink in the inspection area. Pencils shall be allowed for the purpose of taking notes.
4. A person cannot remove books, records or files from the place the City has provided for the inspection. No documents shall be removed from the office of the custodian of those documents without permission of that custodian, except by court order, subpoena or for audit purposes. The City official shall be given a receipt listing the records being removed if proper permission, as stated above, is submitted to the City custodian of the records.
5. In coordination with the official responsible for the records, the FOIA coordinator shall determine on a case-by-case basis when the City will provide copies of original records, to allow for redaction of information, to protect old or delicate original records, or because the original record is a digital file or database not available for public inspection. A fee will be charged for copies made to enable public inspection of records, according to the City's FOIA policy.
6. Due to limited staffing of the Clerk's office, a twenty (20) hour maximum time limit per topic to be reviewed has been imposed on persons wishing to view documents in the clerk's office. Should the examination of documentation exceed the twenty hour limit, the requestor will be required to pay an estimated deposit, payable in advance, to cover time expended in the search/review of records by the city employee, including the cost of City personnel to observe and supervise the examination of records. This deposit will be required in advance of any further inspection by the individual requesting the information. As FOIA rules mandate, this labor rate will be calculated based on the lowest paid employee capable of doing the requested work.
7. The requestor shall schedule, in advance, a mutually agreed upon time for review/inspection of records.