

**PUBLIC RECORDS MODEL RULES
OF
COLUMBIA COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The purpose of these rules is to establish the procedures Columbia County Public Transportation Authority (“CCPTA”) will follow in order to provide access to public records. These rules provide information to persons wishing to request access to public records of CCPTA and establish a process for both requestors and CCPTA staff that are designed to best assist members of the public in obtaining such access.

The purpose of the act is to provide the public full access to information concerning the conduct of government, mindful of individual’s privacy rights, and the desirability of the efficient administration of government. The act and these rules will be interpreted in favor of disclosure. In carrying out its responsibilities under the act, CCPTA will be guided by the provisions of the act describing its purposes and interpretation.

These rules are based upon the provisions of the Public Records Act (RCW 42.17/RCW 42.56), and the model rules published by the Attorney General’s Office and found at Washington Administrative Code 44-14-010 through 44-14-080, and the comments thereto by the Washington State Attorney General’s Office.

Rule 1: Agency Description—Contact Information—Public Records Officer:

1. Columbia County Public Transportation Authority is a provider of public transportation services and van pool services within the Walla Walla Valley area. CCPTA’s central office is located at 507 W Cameron St, Dayton, WA 99328.
2. Any person wishing to request access to public records of CCPTA, or seeking assistance in making such a request, should contact the public records officer of CCPTA:

Public Records Officer
Columbia County Public Transportation Authority
507 W Cameron St.
Dayton, WA 99328
Phone: (509) 382-1647
Fax: (509) 382-3004
Email: publicrecordsrequest@ccptransit.org
Website: ccptransit.org

3. The Public Records Officer will oversee compliance with the act, but another CCPTA staff member may process the request. Therefore, these rules will refer to the public records officer “or designee.” The public records officer or designee, and CCPTA will provide the “fullest assistance” to requestors; insure that public records

are protected from damage or disorganization; and prevent fulfilling public records requests from causing excessive interference with the essential functions of CCPTA.

Rule II: Availability of Public Records:

1. Hours for Inspection of Public Records: Public records are available for inspection and copying at CCPTA. Hours of Inspection: 9AM to 2PM Monday through Friday (excluding legal holidays). Records must be inspected at the offices of CCPTA.
2. Records Index: CCPTA finds maintaining an index is unduly burdensome and would interfere with agency operations. The requirements would unduly burden or interfere with CCPTA's operations in the following ways: CCPTA is a small agency and does not have the sufficient administrative staff to maintain such an index, given the other demands and other record-keeping and reporting requirements that are imposed upon CCPTA by law, including those regulations promulgated by the Department of Transportation.
3. Organization of Records: CCPTA will maintain its records in a reasonably organized manner. CCPTA will take reasonable actions to protect records from damage and disorganization. A requestor shall not take CCPTA records from CCPTA offices without the permission of the public records officer or designee. A variety of records are available on the CCPTA website at www.ccptransit.org. Requestors are encouraged to view the documents available on the website prior to submitting a records request.
4. Making a Request for Public Records:
 - a) Any person wishing to inspect or copy public records of CCPTA should make the request in writing on CCPTA's request form, or by letter, fax or email addressed to the public records officer, and including the following information:
 - Name of Requestor;
 - Address of Requestor;
 - Other contact information, including phone number and email address;
 - Identification of the public records adequate for the public records officer or designee to locate records; and
 - The date and time of day of the request
 - b) If the requestor wishes to have copies of the records made instead of simply inspecting them, he or she should so indicate and make arrangements to pay for the copies or a deposit. Pursuant to Section 5, standard photocopying will be provided at .15 cents per page.

- c) A form is available for use by requestors at the office of the public records officer and the CCPTA office at 507 W. Cameron Street, Dayton, WA 99328.
- d) The public records officer or designee may accept requests for public records that contain the above information by telephone or in person. If the public records officer or designee accepts such request, he or she will confirm receipt of the information and the substance of the request in writing.

Rule III: Processing of Public Records Requests – General:

1. Providing Fullest Assistance: CCPTA is charged by statute with adopting rules which provide for how it will “provide full access to public records”, “protect records from damage or disorganization”, “prevent excessive interference with other essential functions of the agency”, “provide fullest assistance” to requestors, and provide “the most timely possible action” on public records requests. The public records officer or designee will process requests in the order allowing the most requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.
2. Acknowledging Receipt of Request: Within five (5) business days of receipt of the request, the public records officer will do one or more of the following:
 - a) Make the records available for inspection or copying;
 - b) If copies are requested and payment of a deposit for the copies, if any, is made, or terms of payment are agreed upon, send the copies to the requestor;
 - c) Provide a reasonable estimate of when records will be available; or
 - d) If the request is unclear or does not sufficiently identify the requested records, request clarification from the requestor. Such clarification may be requested and provided by telephone. The public records officer or designee may revise the estimate of when the records will be available; or
 - e) Deny the request.
3. Consequences of Failure to Respond: If CCPTA does not respond in writing within five (5) business days of the receipt of the request for disclosure, the requestor should consider contacting the public records officer to determine the reasons for the failure to respond.
4. Protecting Rights of Others: In the event that the requested records contain information that may affect the rights of others and may be exempt from disclosure, the public records officer may, prior to providing the records, give notice to such others whose rights may be affected by the disclosure. Such notice shall be given so as to make it possible for those other persons to contact the requestor and ask him or her to revise the request, or, if necessary, seek an order from a court to prevent or limit the disclosure. The notice to the affected persons will include a copy of the request.

5. Records Exempt from Disclosure: Some records are exempt from disclosure, in whole or in part. If CCPTA believes that a record is exempt from disclosure and should be withheld, the public records officer will state the specific exemption and provide a brief explanation of why the record, or a portion of the record, is being withheld. If only a portion of a record is exempt from disclosure, but the remainder is nonexempt, the public records officer will redact the exempt portions, provide the nonexempt portions, and indicate to the requestor why portions of the record are being redacted.
6. Inspection of Records:
 - a) Consistent with other demands, CCPTA shall promptly provide space to inspect public records. No member of the public may remove a document from the viewing area or disassemble or alter any document. The requestor shall indicate which documents he or she wishes the agency to copy.
 - b) The requestor must claim or review the assembled records within thirty (30) days of CCPTA's notification to him or her that the records are available for inspection, copying, or pick up. The agency will notify the requestor in writing of this requirement and inform the requestor that he or she should contact the agency to make arrangements to claim or review the records. If the requestor or a representative of the requestor fails to claim or review the records within the thirty (30) day period, or make other arrangements, CCPTA may close the request and refile the assembled records. Other public records requests can be processed ahead of subsequent request by the same person for the same or almost identical records, which can be processed as a new request.
7. Providing Copies of Records: After inspection is complete, the public records officer or designee shall make the requested copies or arrange for copying.
8. Providing Records in Installments: When the request is for a large number of records, the public records officer or designee will provide access for inspection and copying in installments, if he or she reasonably determines that it would be practical to provide the records in that way. If, within thirty (30) days, the requestor fails to inspect the entire set of records, or one or more of the installments, the public records officer or designee may stop searching for the remaining records and close the request.
9. Completion of Inspection: When the inspection of the requested records is complete and all requested copies are provided, the public records officer or designee will indicate that CCPTA has completed a diligent search for the requested records and made any located nonexempt records available for inspection.

10. Closing Withdrawn or Abandoned Requests: When the requestor either withdraws the request or fails to fulfill his or her obligations to inspect the records or pay the deposit or final payment for the requested copies, the public records officer will close the request and indicate to the requestor that CCPTA has closed the request.
11. Later Discovered Documents: If, after CCPTA has informed the requestor that it has provided all available records, CCPTA becomes aware of additional responsible documents existing at the time of the request, it will promptly inform the requestor of the additional documents and provide them on an expedited basis.

Rule IV: Exemptions:

1. The Public Records Act provides that a number of types of documents are exempt from public inspection and copying. In addition, documents are exempt from disclosure if any "other statute" exempts or prohibits disclosure. Requestors should be aware of the following exemptions, outside of the Public Records Act, that restrict the availability of some documents held by CCPTA for inspection and copying (see Appendix A).
2. CCPTA is prohibited by statute from disclosing lists of individuals for commercial purposes.

Rule V: Cost of Providing Copies of Public Records:

1. Cost of Paper Copies: There is no fee for inspecting public records. A requestor may obtain standard black and white photocopies for .15 cents per page. Color copies are not available.
2. Before beginning to make the copies, the public records officer or designee may require a deposit of up to ten percent (10%) of the estimated cost of copying all of the records selected by the requestor. The public records officer or designee may also require the payment of the remainder of the copying costs before providing all the records, or the payment of the cost of copying in installments before providing that installment. CCPTA will not charge sales tax when it makes copies of public records.
3. Cost of Electronic Records: The cost of electronic records shall be \$2.00 for each 400 mb's of information on a CD or DVD with a minimum charge of \$2.00 for information on a CD or DVD. Records that are requested through email will be charged out the same as paper copies if the emails need to be scanned. In the event of a very large request, the public records officer may suggest to the requestor that some type of flash drive may better facilitate their request and that CCPTA will provide that flash drive and bill the requestor for that flash drive at

cost. Under no circumstances will CCPTA accept any media storage device provided by the requestor.

4. Costs of Mailing: CCPTA may also charge actual costs of mailing, including the cost of the shipping container.
5. Payment: Payment may be made by cash, check, or money order to CCPTA.

Rule VI: Review of Denials of Public Records:

1. Petition for Internal Administrative Review of Denial of Access: Any person who objects to the initial denial, or partial denial of a records request, may petition in writing (including email) to the public records officer for a review of that decision. The petition shall include a copy of, or reasonably identify the written statement by the public records officer or designee denying the request.
2. Consideration of Petition for Review: The public records officer shall promptly provide the petition and any other relevant information to the public records officer's supervisor, or other CCPTA official designated by CCPTA to conduct the review. That person will immediately consider the petition and either affirm or reverse the denial within two (2) business days following CCPTA's receipt of the petition, or within such other time as CCPTA and the requestor mutually agree to.
3. Judicial Review: Any person may obtain court review of denials of public records requests pursuant to RCW 47.17.340/42.56.550 at the conclusion of two (2) business days after the denial, regardless of any internal administrative appeal.