



Right to Know Policy and Procedure

Revised: March 2016

Public Access to Information

I. GENERAL

This policy establishes the District's procedures for meeting its obligations under the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law, which was revised in 2008. It applies to all requests for "public records." This document establishes the framework within which the district will exercise its administrative discretion in the future. The district recognizes the value of making information available to the public, and is committed to continually improving public access to public information and fostering public participation in the decision-making process.

The Office of Open Records may promulgate regulations setting forth different or additional requirements and procedures, and these should be consulted.

A. *Open Records Officer*

The District has designated the following person who shall serve as its Open Records Officer. All requests for public records are administered by the Open Records Officer. Requests should be directed to the Open Records Officer at the following address:

Name: Maryruth Wagner, District Manager

Backup Officer: Tracey K. Oman, Administrative Assistant

Address: 702 Sawmill Road, Suite 204, Bloomsburg, PA 17815

Phone: 570-784-1310 ext. 102 Fax: 570-784-3247

Email: maryruth.wagner@columbiaccd.org



B. **Requests for Public Records**

All Right to Know Law requests must be received by the District's Open Records Officer. A requester may make, and the Conservation district may fulfill verbal, written (including email or fax) or anonymous verbal or written requests for access to records under this policy. If the requester wishes to pursue the relief and remedies provided for under the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law (i.e. pursue an appeal of a denial), the request must be in writing.

Requests must describe the records sought with sufficient specificity to enable the District to ascertain which records are being requested. The request must include the name and address to which the response is to be sent.

If the district receives a request for a public record that is not in the possession of the district, the Open Records Officer will: 1) notify the requester that they do not possess the record requested; 2) direct the request to appropriate persons in another agency.

C. **Classification of Records**

“Public Records” are defined as

1. Information that documents a transaction or activity of the district, and that is created, received or retained pursuant to law or in connection with a transaction, business or activity of the District,
2. **Except** where a record meets any of the following:
 - a. it falls into one the exemptions under the RTK law,
 - b. access is restricted under any state or federal law or regulation or
 - c. it is protected by a legal privilege, such as attorney-client privilege.



Records Exempt from being Public Records

Under the law some types of records are not available to the public. In this category are personal notes, computer security information, draft minutes, notes from an executive session, confidential proprietary information or trade secrets, medical information, personal identifiers, employee records, labor relations, criminal and non-criminal investigative records, non-real estate tax records, driver records, attorney-client communications, or records that if disclosed could jeopardize state or federal funds. This is a partial list of the exempted records. For a complete list the requester may request a copy of Section 708 of the Right to Know Law from the district. The district will assume that the requester is not asking for these types of records unless specifically requested. In most cases, these exempted records will not be provided.

D. Procedures for Reviewing Requests for Public Records

Operating Procedures

The District's Open Records Officer will ensure that the Operating Procedures described in this Policy are followed.

Reviewing Records

Following the submittal of a request, the district will make every effort to fulfill the request within five (5) business days of receipt by the District's Open Records Officer. This may include notifying the requestor that the records will be made available for review and copying at the District.

