

Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District

Public Records Request Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose

The Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District ("SVWID" or "District") is committed to open and transparent government and to providing the public with access to public records in accordance with the Washington State Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW. This policy establishes the procedures the District will follow in receiving, processing, and responding to requests for public records. The District intends that this policy be interpreted and administered consistent with RCW 42.56 and Chapter 44-14 WAC.

2. References

- Chapter 42.56 RCW, Public Records Act
- Chapter 44-14 WAC, Model Rules for Public Records Compliance
- Applicable records retention schedules issued by the Washington State Archives

3. Definitions

3.1 District

Refers to "Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District."

3.2 Public Record

Any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by the District, regardless of physical form.

3.3 Public Records Officer

The individual designated by the Board of Commissioners to oversee compliance with the Public Records Act and process requests.

3.4 Exempt Record

A public record, or portion thereof, that is exempt from disclosure by RCW 42.56 or another applicable law.

3.5 Redaction

The deletion or obscuring of exempt information from an otherwise disclosable record.

3.6 Writing

Includes handwriting, typewriting, printing, photographs, maps, electronic communications, emails, databases, video recordings, sound recordings, and any other means of recording information.

4. Public Records Officer

The Board of Commissioners shall designate a Public Records Officer responsible for:

- Receiving and coordinating responses to public records requests.
- Assisting requestors in identifying records.
- Maintaining public records request logs.
- Coordinating records searches and reviews.
- Preparing exemption and redaction explanations.
- Providing required notices to affected third parties.
- Ensuring compliance with RCW 42.56.

Until otherwise designated by Board action, the Administrative Services Manager shall serve as the Public Records Officer.

5. Availability of Public Records

The District shall make identifiable public records available for inspection and copying unless the records are exempt from disclosure under state or federal law. The District shall provide the fullest assistance to requestors while protecting records from damage or disorganization and preventing excessive interference with essential District functions.

6. Public Records Requests

6.1 Methods of Request

Requests may be submitted via the District's Request for Public Records Form, available electronically on the District website or in hard copy at the District office. Electronic submissions are preferred, however the District will accept requests submitted through other means, in compliance with "providing for the fullest assistance to inquirers" as required per RCW 42.56.100.

Requestors should include:

- Name and contact information;
- Description of the requested records;
- Date range, if known;
- Whether inspection or copies are requested.

6.2 Commercial Use

The District may inquire whether records consisting of lists of individuals are requested for commercial purposes when necessary to comply with RCW 42.56.070.

6.3 No Duty to Create Records

The District is not required to create records that do not already exist in order to respond to a request.

7. Response to Requests

7.1 Five-Business-Day Response

Within five business days after receiving a request, the District shall respond by one of the following:

1. Provide the records;
2. Provide a website link to the requested records if available online;
3. Acknowledge receipt and provide a reasonable estimate of the time needed to respond;
4. Request clarification while providing a reasonable time estimate; or
5. Deny the request in writing, identifying the legal basis for denial.

7.2 Additional Time

Additional time may be required to:

- Locate and assemble records;
- Review records for exemptions;
- Redact exempt information;
- Notify affected third parties;
- Obtain clarification from the requestor.

7.3 Clarification

If a request is unclear, the District may seek clarification. If clarification is not provided, the District may process the clear portions of the request or close the request if no responsive records can be reasonably identified.

7.4 Installments

When a request involves a large volume of records, the District may provide records in installments. Failure to review or claim an installment within thirty (30) days may result in closure of that portion of the request.

8. Inspection of Records

Records shall be available for inspection during normal District business hours at the District office.

The requestor shall not:

- Remove records from the designated area;
- Alter, mark, or damage records; or
- Disassemble records.

District personnel may monitor inspections to preserve record integrity.

9. Copying Charges

The District finds that calculating actual copying costs would be unduly burdensome because of limited administrative resources and therefore adopts the default fee schedule authorized by RCW 42.56.120 and adopted by the District Board of Commissioners Resolution 2026-04.

Unless waived by the Public Records Officer, charges may include:

- \$0.15 per page for paper copies;
- \$0.10 per page for scanned records;
- \$0.05 for each four electronic files uploaded;
- \$0.10 per gigabyte transmitted electronically;
- Actual costs of digital media, storage devices, containers, postage, and delivery.

The District may require a deposit of up to ten percent (10%) of the estimated copying cost before producing records.

Inspection of records is free.

10. Exemptions and Redactions

The Public Records Act contains numerous exemptions, and additional exemptions exist under other state and federal laws. Links to lists of exemptions and prohibitions found outside the PRA are published on the District website.

When records are withheld or redacted, the District shall provide a written exemption log identifying:

- The record withheld or redacted;
- The exemption relied upon; and
- A brief explanation of how the exemption applies.

11. Third-Party Notice

When disclosure may affect the rights of another person or entity, the District may provide notice to that party before disclosure so that the party may seek court protection under RCW 42.56.540.

12. Closure of Requests

The District may close a request when:

- All responsive records have been provided;
- No responsive records exist;
- The requestor fails to inspect records within thirty (30) days;
- The requestor fails to pay required charges;
- The requestor fails to provide requested clarification.

13. Review of Denials

Any person objecting to the denial of a public records request may submit a written request for review to the Public Records Officer.

The District shall review the denial and affirm or reverse the decision within two business days.

14. Public Records Request Log

The Public Records Officer shall maintain a log that documents:

- Date received;
- Requestor information;
- Description of records requested;
- Response deadlines;
- Communications with the requestor;
- Exemptions applied;
- Date fulfilled or closed.