



SOUTH CAROLINA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (“FOIA”) SECTION 30-4-10

The South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) is part of the South Carolina Code of Laws allowing any citizen to have access to public records and to records of meetings of public bodies with some exceptions as defined in the Act.

This policy is applicable to all departments of Laurens County and to any board or commission whose members are appointed by the County Council of Laurens County, South Carolina.

In accordance with FOIA, Laurens County has ten (10) business days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) of receipt of the request to determine if the information requested is publicly available under FOIA. However, if the record is more than twenty-four (24) months old at the date the request is made, the public body has twenty (20) business days to determine if the information requested is publicly available under FOIA. Please note Laurens County is not required to create a public record when one does not exist.

Exemptions

According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, Laurens County may choose to deny a FOIA request based on exemptions noted in the law. Commonly denied requests include:

- Obtaining or using any personal information acquired from a state agency for commercial solicitation; and
- Correspondence or work products of legal counsel for a public body and any other material that would violate attorney-client relationships; and
- Photographs, videos, and other visual images, and audio recordings of and related to the performance of an autopsy, including toxicology reports per Attorney General’s opinion (reference Op. S.C. Att’y Gen., 2016 WL 1167292 [February 24, 2016] for further information); and
- Matters requesting the identity or information tending to reveal the identity of any individual who in good faith makes a complaint or otherwise discloses information, which alleges a violation or potential violation of law or regulation, to a state regulatory agency; and
- Documents or reports being requested in a special format or one that must be created by Laurens County that is not already in existence.

Please take note that you may access Deeds, Easements, Mortgages, Plats, Surveys, and Liens (Tax, Federal, Mechanic’s) by visiting the Laurens County Register of Deeds Office website (laurensdeeds.com).

Laurens County FOIA Request Form

To make a FOIA request, please fill out and submit electronically or mail the online FOIA Request Form to:

Laurens County Administration
Office of the County Attorney
P.O. Box 445
Laurens, South Carolina 29360-0445

Costs associated with FOIA requests are outlined on the FOIA Request Form.

Laurens County will provide a written response, to include the cost for the request, within the appropriate timeline in accordance to FOIA. Any request received after 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, will be considered as having been received the following workday. Upon payment from the cost of the requested documents, all applicable public records will be made available to the requester. Checks or money orders must be made payable to Laurens County; credit or debit cards are not accepted. Laurens County will hold the request for up to three (3) weeks pending payment before closing the FOIA request. For further assistance, please contact the Office of the County Attorney for Laurens County at (864) 681-3156.



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT – REQUEST FORM

DATE OF REQUEST: _____
NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____
SIGNATURE: _____

INFORMATION REQUESTED (please be as specific as possible): _____

(attach additional pages as necessary)

Public records will be made available for inspection and/or copying. Privacy data will be protected.

Fees and Costs

Copies	One Dollar (\$1.00) for the first page and Ten Cents (10¢) per page thereafter
Audio	Five Dollars (\$5.00) per recording
Research	A minimum charge of Fifteen Dollars (\$15.00) per hour for staff time to gather requested documents
Redaction Fees	A minimum charge of Twenty Dollars (\$20.00) per hour for staff time to redact necessary information from requested documents
NOTE:	Some requests may require a good faith deposit if the number of copies is significant or if an excessive amount of staff time is required. Advance notices will be made if a good faith deposit is required.

WARNING:

Section 30-2-50.

- (A) A person or private entity shall not knowingly obtain or use personal information obtained from a state agency, a local government, or other political subdivision of the State for commercial solicitation directed to any person in this State.
- (B) Each state agency, local government, and political subdivision of the State shall provide a notice to all requestors of records pursuant to this chapter and to all persons who obtain records pursuant to this chapter that obtaining or using public records for commercial solicitation directed to any person in this State is prohibited.
- (C) All state agencies, local governments, and political subdivisions of the State shall take reasonable measures to ensure that no person or private entity obtains or distributes personal information obtained from a public record for commercial solicitation.
- (D) A person knowingly violating the provisions of subsection (A) is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined an amount not to exceed five hundred dollars or imprisoned for a term not to exceed one year, or both.