

BUTLER COUNTY AREA COURTS PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

17. PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

Pursuant to O.R.C. 149.43 (B)(1), the Butler County Area Court will promptly prepare and make available a public record for inspection to any person at all reasonable times during regular business hours. Upon request, the Court will make copies of the requested public record at a cost of \$.05 a page and within a reasonable period of time. If a requester seeks a copy of a compact disc recording of any trial proceedings, the cost is \$.50 for each such disc. The Court will mail, transmit, or deliver copies of a requested court record to the requester within a reasonable time from the request.

If a request for a public record is denied, in part or in whole, the Court will provide the requester with an explanation, including any legal authority, setting forth why the request was denied. If the initial request was in writing, the explanation will also be provided to the requester in writing.

If the requester makes an ambiguous or overly broad request, or has difficulty in making a request for public records, such that the court cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested, the Court may deny the request but shall provide the requester with an opportunity to revise the request by informing the requester of the manner in which the records are maintained by the court and accessed in the ordinary course of the court's duties.

Unless specifically required by state or federal law, a requester is not required to provide his identity or the intended use of the public record. In order to enhance the Court's response to a public records request to help identify, locate, and deliver a public record to a requester, the Court may ask the requester to put the request in writing, may ask for the requester's identity, and may inquire about the intended use of the information, but such a request is not mandatory and the requester may refuse to put the request in writing, may refuse to reveal his identity, and may refuse to reveal the intended use of the information, subject to the limitation, set forth below, regarding commercial purposes.

The Court may require the requester to pay a deposit, in advance, for the cost involved in providing a copy of the public record. The Court will permit the requester to choose to have the public record duplicated on paper, upon the

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same medium upon which the court keeps it, or upon any other medium which the court determines that it can reasonably be duplicated as an integral part of the normal operations of the Court. When a requester makes a choice as to the type of medium the record will be reproduced, the Court will provide a copy of it in accordance with that choice.

A. Exempt Information

When filing a case document as defined in Ohio R. Superintendence 44(C), it is the party's responsibility to redact all personal identifiers. A personal identifier means social security numbers, except for the last four digits; financial account numbers, including, but not limited to, debit card, charge card, and credit card numbers; and employer and employee identification numbers. When personal identifiers are omitted from a case document submitted to the Court or filed with the court, the parties shall submit or file that information on a separate form provided by the Court. The responsibility for omitting personal identifiers from a case document rests solely with the filing party. The Court will not review case documents to confirm that the party has omitted personal identifiers, and the Court will not refuse to accept or file the document on that basis.

If any party or person who is the subject of information in a case document requests that the Court restrict public access to information contained in a case document, the party and the court will follow the procedures contained in Ohio R. Superintendence 45(E) and Ohio R. Superintendence 45 (F).

B. COPIES

The Butler County Area Court hereby limits the number of public records requested by a person that the Butler County Area Court will transmit by United States mail to ten per month, unless the person requesting the records certifies to the Butler County Area Court, in writing, that the person does not intend to use or forward the requested records, or the information contained in them, for commercial purposes. Commercial purposes does not include news reporting, the gathering of information to assist citizens in the understanding of Court activities, or non-profit educational research.

The Court hereby prohibits any person from making a copy of any public record at the Court. Instead, court personnel shall make a copy of a public record for any person who requests that public record.

C. BULK DISTRIBUTION

Any person, upon request, shall receive bulk distribution of information and court records, provided that the bulk distribution does not require creation of a new compilation, as defined in Ohio R. Superintendence 44(M). The court has no obligation to prepare a new compilation for any person. The requestor of bulk distribution shall choose how the information is to be provided, whether on paper, on the same medium upon which the court keeps the information, or upon any other medium that the court determines it can be reasonably duplicated as an integral part of its normal operations, unless the choice requires a new compilation. The bulk distribution shall include a time or date stamp indication the compilation date. The person who receives a bulk distribution of information in court records for redistribution shall keep the information current and delete inaccurate, sealed, or expunged information in accordance with Ohio R. Superintendence 26.