



Office of the Information and  
Privacy Commissioner of Alberta

# **ACCESS to INFORMATION LAWS**

in Alberta

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## **FOIP**

*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

## **HIA**

*Health Information Act*

## **PIPA**

*Personal Information Protection Act*



# ABOUT THE OIPC

The Information and Privacy Commissioner enforces how Alberta's access to information laws are applied to ensure the purposes are achieved. The Commissioner reports to all members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and is independent from government ministers and departments.

You may ask the OIPC to:

- Review a public, health or private sector organization's decision that relates to your request to access information, including a failure to respond
- Review a response to your request for correction of your information
- Review a public body's decision to release information about you in response to another access request (FOIP Act only)

To ask for a review of your request for access or correction, you must:

- Send your request to the OIPC in writing within the timelines set out in the laws
- Provide the OIPC with a copy of your request for access or correction and a copy of the response to your request.

This document is meant to assist you in understanding Alberta's access to information and privacy laws, and is not intended as a substitute for legal advice. The official versions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *Health Information Act* and *Personal Information Protection Act* and their regulations are available from Alberta Queen's Printer at [www.qp.alberta.ca](http://www.qp.alberta.ca).

# FOIP

## *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act) applies to “public bodies”, such as government ministries or departments, government agencies, boards and commissions, school boards and charter schools, universities and colleges, municipalities, and police.

Under the FOIP Act, you have the right to:

- Request access to any information from a public body, including your personal information
- Ask a public body to make a correction to your personal information
- Ask the OIPC to review a public body’s decision to withhold information from you in response to your access to information request
- Ask the OIPC to review a public body’s response to your request to correct your personal information
- Ask the OIPC to review when a public body has not responded to your access request within timelines
- Ask the OIPC to review a decision to release your information in response to another access request

To make an access request, submit it in writing to the public body that you think has the information. Provide enough detail to help find the information. You can ask to look at or receive a copy of the records.

## Access Request and Review Process

For more information on submitting a request to review a response to an access to information request, visit [www.oipc.ab.ca](http://www.oipc.ab.ca). You can also find information on the steps to take to submit an access to information request to a public, health or private sector organization. You must submit your request to access information directly to the public, health or private sector organization.

# HIA

## *Health Information Act*

The *Health Information Act* (HIA) applies to “custodians”, such as Alberta Health Services, Covenant Health, the Ministry of Health, pharmacies and pharmacists, physicians, optometrists, registered nurses, dentists, and their health service providers or employees.

Under HIA, you have the right to:

- Request access to your own health information from a health custodian
- Ask the OIPC to review a health custodian’s decision to withhold information from you in response to your request for health information
- Ask for a correction of your health information
- Ask the OIPC to review a health custodian’s response to your request to correct your health information

To make an access request, submit it in writing to the health custodian that you think has the information. Provide enough detail to help find the information. You can ask to look at or receive a copy of the records.

## **Fees for Making FOIP or HIA Requests**

An initial fee of \$25 may be required when requesting access to information. Additional fees may be charged depending on the extent of the request. You must be provided with an estimate of fees and you must accept the fees before your request is processed.

A fee does not apply to requesting your personal or health information except for the cost of producing a copy of the record. Fees can be waived in some situations, and you may ask the OIPC to review a decision to charge a fee.

There is no fee associated with asking the OIPC to review a decision made by a public body or health custodian.

# PIPA

## *Personal Information Protection Act*

The *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) applies to private sector “organizations”, such as businesses, employees, partnerships, trade unions and professional regulatory bodies.

Under PIPA, you have the right to:

- Request access to your personal information from an organization
- Ask for a correction of your personal information
- Ask the OIPC to review a private sector organization’s response to your request for access or correction

Ask the OIPC to review a situation where your personal information may have been collected, used or disclosed improperly.

To make an access request, submit it in writing to the private sector organization that you think has the information. Provide enough detail to help find the information. You can also ask to look at or receive a copy of the records.

You may be charged a fee for processing your request as a customer. No fees can be charged if requesting your information as an employee. You must be provided with an estimate of fees and you must accept the fees before your request is processed.

Fees can be waived in limited circumstances, and you may ask the OIPC to review a decision to charge a fee.

There is no fee associated with asking the OIPC to review a decision made by a private sector organization.



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For more information visit:  
[www.oipc.ab.ca](http://www.oipc.ab.ca)

You may also contact us by phone:  
(780) 422-6860 (Edmonton office)  
(403) 297-2728 (Calgary office)  
1-888-878-4044 (toll-free)



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