



## Town of Harwich

### Public Records Request Instructions & Guidelines

Emily J. Mitchell, Town Clerk & Records Access Officer  
(508) 430-7516 x 5 [emitchell@town.harwich.ma.us](mailto:emitchell@town.harwich.ma.us)

732 Main Street, Harwich, MA 02645

*In compliance with Chapter 121 of the Acts of 2016 & 950 CMR 32.00*

The following instructions and guidelines are designed to help you better understand Public Record Requests and assist the Records Access Officer (RAO) in fulfilling requests. This form may be used to make a request but it is not required. The Town of Harwich offers this form as a means to assist the public and provide a streamlined method for requests to be presented and managed.

The Town Clerk has been designated the RAO for the Town of Harwich. All Public Record Requests must be presented to the Town Clerk. The RAO is also designated to assist citizens during the Public Records Request process. Any questions can be directed to the RAO. (Contact Information Above)

#### **If you choose to utilize this form please follow these instructions:**

1. Fill out the Public Records Request form including your name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.
2. Please be as specific as possible as to what information you wish to obtain. If your request is general in nature the RAO may contact you and ask for more specific information to help fulfill your request in a timely manner.
3. Please specify which method of communication you prefer; i.e. you'd like to be contacted by the RAO via e-mail, phone call or through the mail. *(As directed in the Public Records Laws, the preferred method of communication is e-mail.)*
4. After completing the Public Records Request form you can send it via e-mail (*preferred*), print it out and mail it or drop it off in person at the Town Clerk's Office.
5. Once your request has been received by the RAO it will be date stamped. You should expect confirmation that your request has been received from the RAO, within 24 hours or less.
6. The RAO must respond to your request **within 10 Business Days**. A response may include:
  - a. Producing the requested record(s);
  - b. Denying the request, citing specific exemption(s);
  - c. Confirming receipt and date of request;
  - d. Identifying the record(s) and correct custodian of the requested record(s), if not the RAO;
  - e. Outlining what will be withheld or redacted (*If known or applicable*) and providing exemptions;
  - f. Identifying records being produced or intended to be produced and (*if applicable*) a detailed explanation of the reason(s) for the inability to provide the information within the allotted timeframe;
  - g. When you can expect a full response to your request;
  - h. Ask for further clarification or suggest a modification to your request if it can reduce time and cost;
  - i. The RAO may ask for more time to comply with your request;
  - j. If fees are going to be charged, an itemized good-faith estimate.
7. The RAO has a total of **25 Business Days** to provide a full response to your request unless:
  - a. The RAO appeals to the Supervisor of Records (*Secretary of State*) for good cause, or you the requestor, grant additional time to comply in writing.

As stated previously, the RAO's response shall be in electronic format (*e-mail*) unless you, the requestor, specify otherwise.

## **Categories of public records generally maintained by the Town\***

Accounting Records  
Annual Reports  
Applications  
Audio/Video Recordings  
Contracts  
Decisions  
Documents or correspondence obtained by or generated by a Public Body or public employee  
E-mails  
Financial Statements  
Permits  
Photographs  
Reports

*\*Some information is exempt from the Public Records Law and can be withheld by the Town. If this is the case, you will be provided an explanation as to which records are exempt as well as the provisions within the law allowing for the exemption. You may appeal these exemptions to the Supervisor of Records.*

### **Inspection of Public Records:**

Any person may request to examine or be furnished copies of public records during regular office hours. The Town Clerk's Office is open Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Not all records are immediately available. It is strongly encouraged to contact the Clerk's Office first.

### **Fees:**

The Public Records Law allows the RAO to assess a reasonable fee for producing records other than those "freely available", such as on-line or already in electronic format. Here are the fees that could be assessed:

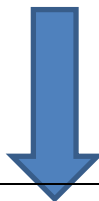
1. 5¢ a page for black and white photocopies
2. Actual cost of electronic storage device (or requestor could provide their own)
3. Not more than \$25.00 per hour to produce records.

If fees are intended to be assessed, you will be provided an itemized good-faith estimate in writing. Fees will not exceed the actual cost for reproducing, searching for or complying with the public record(s) request.

Fees may only be collected if an estimate was provided to you in writing and you agreed to pay the fees. RAO may deny a request if fees from prior request(s) are unpaid.

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FILLABLE PDF PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM  
(Next Page)





**Town of Harwich**  
**Public Records Request Form**

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(508) 430-7516 x 5 [emitchell@town.harwich.ma.us](mailto:emitchell@town.harwich.ma.us)  
732 Main Street, Harwich, MA 02645

Date Received by Records  
Access Officer

E-mail  Mail  In-Person

Instructions: Complete the form below and submit either via e-mail, mail, or in person.

Name of Requestor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Information Requested (*Please be as specific as possible*):

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*(Attach more pages if necessary)*

Preferred Method of Response:  E-mail  Mail  In-Person