



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Communications

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION UNIT

NOTICE TO ALL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

The Freedom of Information Unit was established to monitor, advise, undertake training and report on compliance of Public Authorities with the Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 22:02 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago ("FOIA").

The FOIA gives members of the public the general right to access information in the possession of public authorities and the right to amend personal information that is incorrect or misleading. The Act seeks to ensure that greater levels of transparency, accountability and openness are maintained by public bodies and also facilitates public participation by members of the public.

In accordance with the FOIA, Public Authorities are required to fulfil the following statutory obligations:-

Publication of Statements

Pursuant to Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the FOIA, Public Authorities are required to publish on an annual basis their statements setting out the particulars of the organization and functions, indicating, as far as practicable, the decision-making powers and other powers affecting members of the public that are involved in those functions and particulars of any arrangement that exists for consultation with, or representation by, members of the public. The Act requires that the statement be published in the Gazette and in a daily newspaper circulating in Trinidad and Tobago.

Appointment of Designated and Alternate Officers

Pursuant to Section 7 (1) (a) (vi) of the FOIA, Public Authorities are required to appoint a Designated Officer to assist with the administration of the Act. The Designated Officer is responsible for the initial receipt of, and action upon, notices under Section 10 (notice requiring a public authority to specify a document in its statement), requests for access to an official document under Section 13 and applications under Section 36 for the correction of personal information.

It is highly recommended that Public Authorities also appoint an Alternate Officer. An Alternate Officer assists the Designated Officer in the administration of the Act within each Public Authority.

Submission of Quarterly Return Forms

Pursuant to Section 40 of the FOIA, the Minister with the responsibility for Freedom of Information shall prepare an annual report on the operation of the FOIA within Trinidad and Tobago. In this regard, all Public Authorities are required to submit the requisite information to the Ministry in relation to the operation and administration of the FOIA. This is usually done through the completion of Quarterly Return Forms which are submitted to the Freedom of Information Unit, within two (2) weeks after the end of each quarter. Quarterly Return Forms can be obtained on the FOIA Unit's website at www.foia.gov.tt. The completed Quarterly Return Forms can be submitted via post to the Unit or via email to foia@gov.tt.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT PUBLIC AUTHORITIES WHICH FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED OBLIGATIONS ARE IN BREACH OF THEIR STATUTORY DUTIES. AS SUCH, ALL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES ARE URGED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE FOIA IN A TIMELY AND EXPEDITIOUS MANNER.

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