

**TITLE 1  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**CHAPTER 13  
PUBLIC RECORDS AND PROCEEDINGS**

**SUBCHAPTER 1  
FREEDOM OF ACCESS**

**§400. Short title**

This subchapter may be known and cited as "the Freedom of Access Act."

**§401. Declaration of public policy; rules of construction**

The Legislature finds and declares that public proceedings exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of the Legislature that their actions be taken openly and that the records of their actions be open to public inspection and their deliberations be conducted openly. It is further the intent of the Legislature that clandestine meetings, conferences or meetings held on private property without proper notice and ample opportunity for attendance by the public not be used to defeat the purposes of this subchapter.

This subchapter does not prohibit communications outside of public proceedings between members of a public body unless those communications are used to defeat the purposes of this subchapter.

This subchapter shall be liberally construed and applied to promote its underlying purposes and policies as contained in the declaration of legislative intent.

**§402. Definitions**

**1. Conditional approval.** Approval of an application or granting of a license, certificate or any other type of permit upon conditions not otherwise specifically required by the statute, ordinance or regulation pursuant to which the approval or granting is issued.

**1-A. Legislative subcommittee.** "Legislative subcommittee" means 3 or more Legislators from a legislative committee appointed for the purpose of conducting legislative business on behalf of the committee.

**2. Public proceedings.** The term "public proceedings" as used in this subchapter means the transactions of any functions affecting any or all citizens of the State by any of the following:

- A. The Legislature of Maine and its committees and subcommittees;
- B. Any board or commission of any state agency or authority, the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and any of its committees and subcommittees, the Board of Trustees of the Maine Maritime Academy and any of its committees and subcommittees, the Board of Trustees of the Maine Community College System and any of its committees and subcommittees;
- C. Any board, commission, agency or authority of any county, municipality, school district or any regional or other political or administrative subdivision;

D. The full membership meetings of any association, the membership of which is composed exclusively of counties, municipalities, school administrative units or other political or administrative subdivisions; of boards, commissions, agencies or authorities of any such subdivisions; or of any combination of any of these entities;

E. The board of directors of a nonprofit, nonstock private corporation that provides statewide noncommercial public broadcasting services and any of its committees and subcommittees;

F. Any advisory organization, including any authority, board, commission, committee, council, task force or similar organization of an advisory nature, established, authorized or organized by law or resolve or by Executive Order issued by the Governor and not otherwise covered by this subsection, unless the law, resolve or Executive Order establishing, authorizing or organizing the advisory organization specifically exempts the organization from the application of this subchapter; and

G. The committee meetings, subcommittee meetings and full membership meetings of any association that:

(1) Promotes, organizes or regulates statewide interscholastic activities in public schools or in both public and private schools; and

(2) Receives its funding from the public and private school members, either through membership dues or fees collected from those schools based on the number of participants of those schools in interscholastic activities.

This paragraph applies to only those meetings pertaining to interscholastic sports and does not apply to any meeting or any portion of any meeting the subject of which is limited to personnel issues, allegations of interscholastic athletic rule violations by member schools, administrators, coaches or student athletes or the eligibility of an individual student athlete or coach.

**3. Public records. The term "public records" means any written, printed or graphic matter or any mechanical or electronic data compilation from which information can be obtained, directly or after translation into a form susceptible of visual or aural comprehension, that is in the possession or custody of an agency or public official of this State or any of its political subdivisions, or is in the possession or custody of an association, the membership of which is composed exclusively of one or more of any of these entities, and has been received or prepared for use in connection with the transaction of public or governmental business or contains information relating to the transaction of public or governmental business, except:**

A. Records that have been designated confidential by statute;

B. Records that would be within the scope of a privilege against discovery or use as evidence recognized by the courts of this State in civil or criminal trials if the records or inspection thereof were sought in the course of a court proceeding;

C. Legislative papers and reports until signed and publicly distributed in accordance with legislative rules, and records, working papers, drafts and interoffice and intraoffice memoranda used or maintained by any Legislator, legislative agency or legislative employee to prepare proposed Senate or House papers or reports for consideration by the Legislature or any of its committees during the legislative session or sessions in which the papers or reports are prepared or considered or to which the paper or report is carried over;

C-1. Information contained in a communication between a constituent and an elected official if the information:

- (1) Is of a personal nature, consisting of:
    - (a) An individual's medical information of any kind, including information pertaining to diagnosis or treatment of mental or emotional disorders;
    - (b) Credit or financial information;
    - (c) Information pertaining to the personal history, general character or conduct of the constituent or any member of the constituent's immediate family; or
    - (d) Complaints, charges of misconduct, replies to complaints or charges of misconduct or memoranda or other materials pertaining to disciplinary action; or
  - (2) Would be confidential if it were in the possession of another public agency or official;
- D. Material prepared for and used specifically and exclusively in preparation for negotiations, including the development of bargaining proposals to be made and the analysis of proposals received, by a public employer in collective bargaining with its employees and their designated representatives;
- E. Records, working papers, interoffice and intraoffice memoranda used by or prepared for faculty and administrative committees of the Maine Maritime Academy, the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System when the subject matter is confidential or otherwise protected from disclosure by statute, other law, legal precedent or privilege recognized by the courts of this State. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply to the boards of trustees and the committees and subcommittees of those boards, which are referred to in subsection 2, paragraph B;
- F. Records that would be confidential if they were in the possession or custody of an agency or public official of the State or any of its political or administrative subdivisions are confidential if those records are in the possession of an association, the membership of which is composed exclusively of one or more political or administrative subdivisions of the State; of boards, commissions, agencies or authorities of any such subdivisions; or of any combination of any of these entities;
- G. Materials related to the development of positions on legislation or materials that are related to insurance or insurance-like protection or services which are in the possession of an association, the membership of which is composed exclusively of one or more political or administrative subdivisions of the State; of boards, commissions, agencies or authorities of any such subdivisions; or of any combination of any of these entities;
- H. Medical records and reports of municipal ambulance and rescue units and other emergency medical service units, except that such records and reports must be available upon request to law enforcement officers investigating criminal conduct;
- I. Juvenile records and reports of municipal fire departments regarding the investigation and family background of a juvenile fire setter;
- J. Working papers, including records, drafts and interoffice and intraoffice memoranda, used or maintained by any advisory organization covered by subsection 2, paragraph F, or any member or staff of that organization during the existence of the advisory organization. Working papers are public records if distributed in a public meeting of the advisory organization;
- K. Personally identifying information concerning minors that is obtained or maintained by a municipality in providing recreational or nonmandatory educational programs or services. This paragraph does not apply to records governed by Title 20-A, section 6001 and does not supersede Title 20-A, section 6001-A;

L. Records describing security plans, security procedures or risk assessments prepared specifically for the purpose of preventing or preparing for acts of terrorism, but only to the extent that release of information contained in the record could reasonably be expected to jeopardize the physical safety of government personnel or the public. Information contained in records covered by this paragraph may be disclosed to the Legislature or, in the case of a political or administrative subdivision, to municipal officials or board members under conditions that protect the information from further disclosure. For purposes of this paragraph, "terrorism" means conduct that is designed to cause serious bodily injury or substantial risk of bodily injury to multiple persons, substantial damage to multiple structures whether occupied or unoccupied or substantial physical damage sufficient to disrupt the normal functioning of a critical infrastructure;

M. Records or information describing the architecture, design, access authentication, encryption or security of information technology infrastructure, systems and software, including records or information maintained to ensure government operations and technology continuity and to facilitate disaster recovery. Records or information covered by this paragraph may be disclosed to the Legislature or, in the case of a political or administrative subdivision, to municipal officials or board members under conditions that protect the information from further disclosure;

N. Social security numbers;

O. Personal contact information concerning public employees, except when that information is public pursuant to other law. For the purposes of this paragraph:

(1) "Personal contact information" means personal address, telephone number, facsimile number, e-mail address, cellular telephone number, pager number and username, password and uniform resource locator for a personal social media account as defined in Title 26, section 615, subsection 4; and

(2) "Public employee" means an employee as defined in Title 14, section 8102, subsection 1, except that "public employee" does not include elected officials;

P. Geographic information regarding recreational trails that are located on private land that are authorized voluntarily as such by the landowner with no public deed or guaranteed right of public access, unless the landowner authorizes the release of the information;

Q. Security plans, staffing plans, security procedures, architectural drawings or risk assessments prepared for emergency events that are prepared for or by or kept in the custody of the Department of Corrections or a county jail if there is a reasonable possibility that public release or inspection of the records would endanger the life or physical safety of any individual or disclose security plans and procedures not generally known by the general public. Information contained in records covered by this paragraph may be disclosed to state and county officials if necessary to carry out the duties of the officials or the Department of Corrections under conditions that protect the information from further disclosure;

R.

S. E-mail addresses obtained by a political subdivision of the State for the sole purpose of disseminating noninteractive notifications, updates and cancellations that are issued from the political subdivision or its elected officers to an individual or individuals that request or regularly accept these noninteractive communications;

T. Records describing research for the development of processing techniques for fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing or the design and operation of a depuration plant in the possession of the Department of Marine Resources;

Sec. 1 amends §302, sub-§3, ¶U to provide for additional paragraphs

U. Records provided by a railroad company describing hazardous materials transported by the railroad company in this State, the routes of hazardous materials shipments and the frequency of hazardous materials operations on those routes that are in the possession of a state or local emergency management entity or law enforcement agency, fire department or other first responder, except that records related to a discharge of hazardous materials transported by a railroad company that poses a threat to public health, safety and welfare are subject to public disclosure after that discharge. For the purposes of this paragraph, "hazardous material" has the same meaning as set forth in 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 105.5; and

Sec. 2 amends §302, sub-§3, ¶V to provide for additional paragraphs

V. Participant application materials and other personal information obtained or maintained by a municipality or other public entity in administering a community well-being check program, except that a participant's personal information, including health information, may be made available to first responders only as necessary to implement the program. For the purposes of this paragraph, "community well-being check program" means a voluntary program that involves daily, or regular, contact with a participant and, when contact cannot be established, sends first responders to the participant's residence to check on the participant's well-being.

Sec. 3 adds ¶W

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Sec. 4 adds ¶X

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**3-A. Public records further defined.** "Public records" also includes the following criminal justice agency records:

A. Records relating to prisoner furloughs to the extent they pertain to a prisoner's identity, public criminal history record information, as defined in Title 16, section 703, subsection 8, address of furlough and dates of furlough;

B. Records relating to out-of-state adult probationer or parolee supervision to the extent they pertain to a probationer's or parolee's identity, public criminal history record information, as defined in Title 16, section 703, subsection 8, address of residence and dates of supervision; and

C. Records to the extent they pertain to a prisoner's, adult probationer's or parolee's identity, public criminal history record information, as defined in Title 16, section 703, subsection 8, and current address or location, unless the Commissioner of Corrections determines that it would be detrimental to the welfare of a client to disclose the information.

**4. Public records of interscholastic athletic organizations.** Any records or minutes of meetings under subsection 2, paragraph G are public records.

**5. Public access officer.** "Public access officer" means the person designated pursuant to section 413, subsection 1.

**6. Reasonable office hours.** "Reasonable office hours" includes all regular office hours of an agency or official.