

EPA Information release

Publication 1491 August 2012

Authorised and published by EPA Victoria, 200 Victoria Street, Carlton

About this policy

Improved access to information and data sets held by government promotes transparency, stimulates innovation, commercial activity and community engagement, gives researchers access to primary data and improves the overall efficiency of government by encouraging re-use.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria's (EPA) 5 Year *Plan* focuses on being accountable and transparent, sharing EPA plans, results, data, information and learnings. This is supported by the Victorian Government's [Public Sector Information Release Framework](#) which focuses on the management and release of public information to Victorians.

This policy articulates EPA's position on information release, associated restrictions and supporting infrastructure.

Policy statement

EPA will release its information to the public according to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) or as per the [EPA information release schedule](#).

EPA will release its information unless one or more of the following restrictions applies:

1. EPA does not own copyright in and does not have permission from the copyright owner to release the information ([Copyright Act 1968](#)).
2. The information's security classification prevents release.
3. Information release is in breach of government policies, statutory or legislative requirements, for example,
 - 3.1. The information is commercially sensitive (Section 60, [Environment Protection Act 1970](#)).
 - 3.2. The information contains personal information that has not been de-identified ([Information Privacy Act 2000](#)).
4. The information is subject to a contract/agreement that does not allow release.
5. The information content is subject to law enforcement activities, court orders, legal proceedings or legal privilege, including legal advice.
6. It is in the public interest for EPA to retain intellectual property (Section 13(1A), [Environment Protection Act 1970](#)).

Definitions

The table below defines key terms used in this document.

Term	Definition
Data	Raw facts without context
De-identified	The removal of identifying information, with the aim of protecting the identity or confidentiality of an individual or organisation
Freedom of Information	The <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i> provides a legislative framework for access to documents held by Victorian public sector organisations. It is underpinned by the principles of open and accountable government and that people have the right to access information that is held about them
Information	Data that has been explained, processed or organised into meaning within a context
Public Sector Information	Information and data generated, created, collected, processed, preserved, maintained, disseminated, or funded by the Victorian public sector

Security classification

Prior to release EPA will assess its information for the risk associated with inappropriate disclosure (in line with the [Victorian Government's Information Security Policy](#), [Copyright Act 1968](#), [Environment Protection Act 1970](#) and [Information Privacy Act 2000](#)).

Assessment determines the level of security classification based on the sensitivity and protection level required. Sensitivity classifications include:

- For Official Use Only
- Sensitive
- Sensitive: Personal
- Sensitive: Legal
- Sensitive: Cabinet.

EPA Information release

Freedom of information

All information released under a Freedom of Information request (as per the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*) is assessed annually for suitability for general release to the public.

EPA Information release schedule

All information is released according to the *EPA information release schedule*.

The *EPA information release schedule* identifies when specific information items will be released.

Release

All information items released are listed in the EPA Publications Database and all datasets released are listed in the EPA Data Directory.

Information release resolution

Contact EPA on 1300 372 842 or contact@epa.vic.gov.au regarding any issues arising from disclosure or non-disclosure of information, including but not limited to:

- information or data quality issues
- breach of an information release restrictions
- information or data availability or accessibility
- dissatisfaction with the service provided.

References

Type of document	Document name	Description	Link
Government guideline	Public Sector Information Release Framework	A Victorian Government initiative to guide the management and release of public sector information by Victorian Government departments and agencies.	http://www.data.vic.gov.au/blog/making-more-government-information-and-data-available/163
Government policy	SEC POL 01 Information Security Management – September 2005 v1.2	Victorian Government Departments and Agencies use identified and approved Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) standards and guidelines to manage ICT security appropriate to the sensitivity of information and assets to be protected	https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/CA257310001D7FC4/pages/policies-and-standards-information-security
Legislation	<i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i>	The Act establishes the powers, duties and functions of EPA Victoria.	Victorian Law Library today
Legislation	<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	Provides a legal framework for access to documents held by Victorian public sector organisations. It is underpinned by the principles of open and accountable government and that people have the right to access information that is held about them.	http://www.foi.vic.gov.au/
Legislation	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i>	Provides a legal framework of the rights belonging to the owner or licensee of literary, artistic and dramatic works, films and sound recordings, to reproduce, perform or otherwise deal with these works.	http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A07378
Legislation	<i>Information Privacy Act 2000</i>	Provides a legal framework for the collection, use, disclosure and holding of personal information.	Privacy Victoria
Tool	EPA information release schedule	A schedule identifying when specific information items will be released.	http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/our-work/publications/publication/2012/august/1492
Tool	EPA publications database	A database of EPA's current publications, reports, guidelines, brochures and information bulletins in PDF format.	http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/publications/
Tool	EPA data directory	A database of released datasets.	To be developed