

## Charging work sheet

### Important note

This summary work sheet takes you through the process of deciding whether or not to charge for the supply of official information, and if so, how much. More detailed guidance is found in our guide: [Charging](#). We also have a [sample estimate of costs](#) that can be used to help calculate the charge, and be provided to the requester.

<b>1. Scope the request</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the requester asking for?</li><li>• What information is held and where?</li><li>• Engage with the requester as early as possible about any ambiguities or scope for refinement of the request.</li></ul>
<b>2. Decide on release</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are you going to release some or all of the information?</li><li>• Charging is <b>only</b> permissible if information is being released in response to the request, so you may need to read and review the information first in order to decide to what extent it can be made available.</li></ul>
<b>3. Consider whether it is reasonable to charge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is it reasonable to recover some of the costs involved in releasing the information?</li><li>• Relevant questions include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Will it require <b>considerable</b> labour and materials to release the information?</li><li>- Will it have a <b>significant</b> impact on the agency's ability to carry out its other operations?</li><li>- Has the requester previously made a <b>large volume of time consuming requests</b>? Note that some requesters (for example, MPs and members of the news media) may have good reasons for making frequent requests for official information, and they should not be penalised for this.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>4. Engage with the requester</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with the requester to try and help them clarify the request, and change or refine it in a way that reduces or removes the need to charge. You'll find talking points in our <a href="#">Charging</a> guide that can assist with this.</li></ul>

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<p><b>5. Consider other options for reducing or removing the need to charge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there other ways to meet the request that would reduce or remove the need to charge? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- providing readily retrievable information;</li> <li>- refining the time period covered by the request;</li> <li>- refining the types of document covered by the request;</li> <li>- providing a list of documents potentially in scope, so that the requester can refine the request;</li> <li>- limiting search terms by agreement with the requester;</li> <li>- providing the information in electronic form;</li> <li>- providing the information in an alternative form (eg, inspection or oral briefing); or</li> <li>- providing the information subject to conditions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Calculate the charge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much information is at issue?</li> <li>• How long will it take to complete the activities that can be charged for, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- search and retrieval;</li> <li>- collation;</li> <li>- research (reading and reviewing to identify the information);</li> <li>- editing (excising or redacting information to be withheld);</li> <li>- scanning / copying; and</li> <li>- reasonably required peer review to ensure that these tasks have been carried out correctly.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Remember to exclude activities that cannot be charged for, including deciding whether or not the information can be released and calculating the charge.</li> <li>• Calculate the charge in accordance with the rates specified in the Ministry of Justice <i>Charging Guidelines</i> (\$38/half hour with the first hour free; \$0.20/page with the first 20 pages free).</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our <a href="#">sample estimate of costs</a> can help with this process.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Consider whether the charge should be remitted in full or in part</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should the charge be remitted in full or part because of the public interest in release?</li> <li>• Should the charge should be remitted in full or part because it would cause hardship to the requester?</li> </ul>
<b>8. Communicate the decision to release subject to a charge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This must be done as soon as reasonably practicable and within 20 working days of receipt of the request (unless that timeframe is extended).</li> <li>• Our template <a href="#">charging letter</a> can assist with this.</li> <li>• Ensure that someone is available to the requester to assist them to change or refine their request in order to reduce or remove the need to charge.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Prepare the information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once the requester has accepted the charge and met any part of it required to be paid in advance, prepare the information for release.</li> </ul>
<b>10. Release the information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release the information without undue delay, and within the time period indicated in your letter of decision. Keep the requester up-to-date if unforeseen circumstances delay the release.</li> </ul>