

PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE ROSS COUNTY, OHIO

INTRODUCTION

We are an open government. We welcome participation by our citizens. We believe openness leads to a better informed public, which leads to more transparent government and better public policy. Citizens are entitled to access government records and the Public Records Act should be interpreted liberally in favor of disclosure.

HOURS AND COSTS

You may make in person public records requests for the Ross County Sheriff's Office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays, excluding government holidays. For after hours, or non in person requests, they can be made by visiting <https://rosssheriff.com/>

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 149.43(B)(1), which states "a state or local law enforcement agency or a prosecuting attorney's office may charge a requester the actual cost associated with preparing a video record for inspection or production, not to exceed seventy-five dollars per hour of video produced, nor seven hundred fifty dollars total. As used in this division, "actual cost," with respect to video records only, means all costs incurred by the state or local law enforcement agency or a prosecuting attorney's office in reviewing, blurring or otherwise obscuring, redacting, uploading, or producing the video records, including but not limited to the storage medium on which the record is produced, staff time, and any other relevant overhead necessary to comply with the request. A state or local law enforcement agency or a prosecuting attorney's office may include in its public records policy the requirement that a requester pay the estimated actual cost before beginning the process of preparing a video record for inspection or production." As such, if a request includes a video record, including but not limited to body worn cameras, surveillance footage, video interviews, etc., the Ross County Sheriff's Office requires that before the record will be produced that this estimated cost be paid. If your request includes a video record, the Sheriff's Office will provide an estimated cost prior to beginning the processing of records for your request.

For copies of public records on 8.5 x 11 inch one sided paper in black ink, the copy cost is five cents (0.05) per page. We may require you to pay the estimated copy costs before copies are made. All other copies (photos, disks, etc.) will be provided at actual cost. If records are mailed to you, we may charge you, in advance, postage and the cost of mailing materials.

All payments need to be in the form of a cashier's check or money order made payable to the Ross County Sheriff's Office.

HOW TO MAKE A PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

We will provide prompt inspection of public records and copies of public records in a reasonable period of time. When you make a request, we will ask you to complete a "Public Records Request Form," which will help us locate the records and expedite your request. You are not legally required to fill out the form, identify yourself, or give the purpose of your request. If the records cannot be provided while you wait, we will contact you when the records are available.

DEFINITION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

Under Ohio law, public records are those items that meet all of the following elements:

1. any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, including an electronic record;
2. that is created or received by, or coming under the jurisdiction of a public office; and
3. that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. This does not include records kept for our administrative convenience.

You may ask for a copy of our records retention schedule, which will familiarize you with the types of records available.

RECORDS THAT WILL NOT BE RELEASED

Under Ohio law, some records that meet the above three elements will still be withheld from release because state or federal law makes the record confidential. Some commonly-requested records that are confidential include:

1. Attorney-client privileged information and trial preparation records
2. Social Security numbers
3. Records of ongoing investigations
4. Medical records
5. BMV records
6. Records that a judge ordered to be sealed per a statute

Address and other miscellaneous information of Peace Officer, firefighter, EMT, prosecutor, assistant prosecutor, children's services worker, or corrections officer [R.C. 149.43(A)(7)].

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, only to address commonly requested items that cannot be released, if you have questions in regards to whether or not an item is a public record subject to release, please refer to Ohio Revised Code 149.43 (the Ohio Attorney General also has an extensive section on their website with FAQ's and other useful information which can be accessed at <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/>).

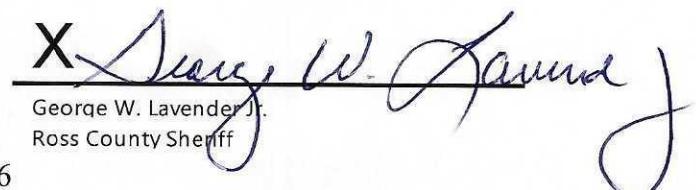
LIMITATIONS

We may limit to ten the number of public records mailed to you, unless you certify in writing that you do not intend to use the records for commercial purposes.

We will not provide copies of public records that we create or receive after your original request is completed.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNs

If you have questions or concerns about Ohio Public Records law, please contact your state legislator. You can find contact information at www.Ohio.gov .



George W. Lavender, Jr.
Ross County Sheriff

Adopted: February 03, 2026