



Access & Privacy

Requesting Information



What are Your Access & Privacy Rights?

The MGA, along with HRM's Privacy Policy and Routine Access Policy, ensure your access and privacy rights are protected, that you can obtain information when you want it and if you have any questions or concerns about how HRM is managing your personal information, a process for expressing your views is available.

You have the right to:

- Request access to any information, including your personal information, that is held by HRM
- Request that HRM correct your personal information if it is not accurate
- Be informed as to what controls HRM has in place on the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information
- Request an independent review of any access and privacy decisions made by HRM

For more information, visit: halifax.ca/irm/index.html

How do I file a request for information?

In accordance with the Routine Access Policy, start by making an informal request to the appropriate Business Unit within HRM that your request relates to. If you are told that the information is not routinely available, then you can file an access (FOIPOP) request. An access request can be filed by completing Form #1 which is available online at: <http://www.halifax.ca/irm/Forms.html> or by submitting a request in writing, clearly identifying that you are filing an access request. There is a \$5 application fee for access to general records. There is no charge for applications for personal information or correction of personal information.

How do I file a Privacy Inquiry or a Privacy Complaint?

To file a privacy request, please contact the Access & Privacy Office at: 902-.943.2148 or by email at: accessandprivacy@halifax.ca.

If the privacy or access request is for records held by Halifax Regional Police (HRP) or Halifax Water (HW), please contact them directly at: 902-490-3202 (HRP) or 902-490-6207 (HW).



What is access & privacy?

The Municipal Government Act (MGA), which provides authority for most of the activities and operations of municipal governments in Nova Scotia, also contains provisions relating to access and privacy. These provisions are found in Part XX of the Act.

The guiding purpose of access and privacy is:

- Access to Information – provides the public with the right to request a copy of any record within the custody or control of a municipal public body
- Protection of Privacy – provides individuals with the right to access their own personal information and prevents the unauthorized collection, use and disclosure of that information.

During the course of conducting municipal business, a great deal of information is produced and accumulated. The legislation supports the belief that every record held by a municipal body, is subject to release. There are limited exemptions from release which are designed to:

- protect against the unreasonable invasion of personal privacy
- prevent unfair advantages occurring in commercial or government transactions
- protect law enforcement activities
- safeguard the business conducted by government.

What is a “municipality and a municipal public body” under Part XX of the MGA?

The Act defines a municipality as a regional municipality and defines a municipal public body as a committee, community council, agency, authority, board or commission that either have a majority of the members appointed by the municipality or the body is under the authority of the municipality.

What is considered a record under the legislation?

Anything recorded in any form is considered a record. This includes:

- written & post-it notes
- typed reports, correspondence, notes, etc.
- e-mails including any text messaging or other forms of electronic communication
- notebooks, day-timers, journals, etc.
- office and working files
- invoices, expense claims, accounting records, etc.
- any piece of information capable of reproduction
- maps, drawings, photos, audio files or video tapes, etc.

What is personal information?

Information about an identifiable individual is considered to be personal information. This includes:

- name
- address
- phone number
- email address
- characteristics
- status
- an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to an individual – SIN, employee #
- educational & employment history
- personal history
- opinions
- references about an individual
- an individual’s own views or opinions .

HRM is committed to being an open and accountable government and to protecting the privacy of personal information.