



**PORTLAND**  
DISTRICT HEALTH

Your Health Service  
Our Community



## Freedom of Information

### Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 1982 gives you the right to access your information held in Portland District Health (PDH) medical records. FOI also allows you to amend incorrect information in your records and to request an explanation or a summary of the information.

### Information held by PDH

Your medical record at PDH includes health information collected during your inpatient and outpatient attendances. The information is used to assist in your ongoing care and treatment. Such information includes details of current and past illnesses or injuries, operations performed, pathology results and medications taken and prescribed.

### How long does PDH keep my information?

PDH complies with legal requirements for information retention. Inpatient records are kept for a minimum of 15 years, or longer if the patient was a child when receiving treatment. Outpatient records are kept for a minimum of seven years from the patient's last date of attendance. X-rays are kept for a minimum of five years after creation. Records of deceased patients are kept for 10 years from the date of death. At the end of their retention period, records are destroyed.

### How to apply

Applications must be in writing to the FOI Officer, either on a *Freedom of Information Request Form* (available from the Health Information Service or our website) or by letter.

Your request must clearly describe the documents you are requesting to access and whether you wish to view the record or obtain a copy. Applications must be accompanied with the Application Fee.

If the documents are about your personal affairs, you should also provide evidence of your identity, eg. a photocopy or electronic copy of your current Drivers License.

If you ask for documents on behalf of another person, we may ask you for a consent form signed by that person.

### How long will I have to wait?

The Freedom of Information Act requires PDH to complete your request within 30 days from the date that it was received.

**Note: This time limit only applies if your request is sufficiently clear for the FOI officer to process it and the application fee has been paid or waived.**



Address: Bentinck St, Portland, 3305 PH: 03 5521 0333  
Email: [pdh@swarh.vic.gov.au](mailto:pdh@swarh.vic.gov.au) Web: [www.pdh.net.au](http://www.pdh.net.au)  
Facebook: [www.fb.com/portlanddistricthealth](http://www.fb.com/portlanddistricthealth) Twitter: @PDHvic

The information contained in this document is intended to be a guide only and is correct at the time of publishing.  
Issued: May 2016 This information will be reviewed by the PDH Consumer Advisory Committee



## Costs

There are two costs associated with making a FOI request:

- The application fee and
- The access charges.

The total cost will vary according to each request. The application fee is a fixed cost which is non-refundable.

The only exception is for people suffering hardship who can ask PDH to waive the application fee, but you will need to provide evidence that payment of the fee would cause you financial hardship, eg. a photocopy or electronic copy of your current health care card.

Access charges relate to the costs incurred in granting access to the documents that you have requested. These costs may or may not apply, depending on the nature of your request. The following table outlines these costs. All fees and charges are exempt from GST.

## Application Fees

**\$28.40** (non-refundable unless fee is waived)

## Access Charges

Search: \$21.30 per hour or part hour

Supervision: \$5.30 per quarter hour

Photocopying: 20c per black & white A4 pg

Providing access in another form:

The reasonable costs incurred by PDH in providing the copy.

## Rates valid:

**01 July 2017–30 June 2018**

## Your Rights of Review

In accordance with the Act, this department will, whenever possible, make information available. However, the Act does allow for the department to refuse access to information/documents in certain circumstances.

If you disagree with the decision of Portland District Health under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, you can ask for the decision to be reviewed. You may want to seek review if:

- you sought certain documents and were not given full access
- someone is to be granted access to information that is about you
- the agency has informed you that it will impose a charge for processing your request
- your application to have your personal information amended was not accepted.

There are two ways you can ask for review of a decision:

- Internal review by the agency
- External review by the Freedom of Information Commissioner.

The Freedom of Information Commissioner can hear complaints about an agency's handling of a request. If the request involves health information, you can also contact the Health Services Commissioner.

For further information, please contact the Freedom of Information Officer on **(03) 5521 0341** or visit:

[www.foi.vic.gov.au/find/legislation](http://www.foi.vic.gov.au/find/legislation)

[www.health.vic.gov.au/foi.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foi.htm)



Address: Bentinck St, Portland, 3305 PH: 03 5521 0333  
Email: [pdh@swarh.vic.gov.au](mailto:pdh@swarh.vic.gov.au) Web: [www.pdh.net.au](http://www.pdh.net.au)  
Facebook: [www.fb.com/portlanddistricthealth](http://www.fb.com/portlanddistricthealth) Twitter: @PDHvic

