

How do I access information about myself from the police?

Freedom of Information (FOI) Request

This guide is specific to municipal police departments in BC and does not apply to the RCMP.

What is a Freedom of Information (FOI) request?

An FOI is a request submitted to a public body asking them to send you any information that they have recorded about a particular topic.

You can ask specific police departments for any information they have ever collected about you, **even if you haven't been charged with a crime.**

The police have to give you this information about yourself because:

1. The police are a public body and,
2. Public bodies are **legally required** to respond to requests from the public for their personal information.

The **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)** entitles you to access and review BC government records, including records that have been collected about you.

The information you receive about yourself through a police FOI request could include:

- Bodycam footage
- Photos and videos that the police took of you and your belongings
- Police officer's written notes about you
- Which departments your information was shared with (e.g. hate crimes unit, graffiti unit, etc.)

Does it cost money to make an FOI request?

No, you should not be asked to pay to make an FOI request for your own information from the police.



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REDACTED

When information is redacted from the records you receive, you will see thick black lines covering the parts you are not allowed to see.

This information is only removed from the files you receive. It is not permanently deleted from police records.



Can I make an FOI request about someone else?

No, not unless, you can provide proof to the police that:

- You have that person's written consent

OR

- You have legal authority to act for that person

If you request information about yourself and it includes information about someone else, the other person's information will be redacted from the record given to you.

When can I make an FOI request?

You can request your information at any time.

Your information will be kept for at least one year to allow you a chance to use the FOI process, and there is no maximum on how long your information is stored.

Each public body has their own limits on how long they store information before it is destroyed.

Where do the police store information about me?

BC municipal police save information they've gathered about people on a database called the Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME-BC).

When you submit an FOI request for your records, they have to find your information in the PRIME database. FOI requests are the only way for the public to access information stored in PRIME.

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Filing an FOI Request

Application Options

A) In-Person

- Find the FOI request form on the police department's website, print it, fill it out, and bring it with you, along with your ID to the police department. They will photocopy your ID card to confirm proof of your identity.

OR

- Arrive at the police station with your ID and request a printed copy of the form to fill out there. They will photocopy your ID card to confirm proof of your identity.

B) Electronically / Email

- Find the FOI request form on the police department's website, fill it out and submit the request form with a photocopy of your ID card by email to the police department.



IMPORTANT

If writing in English is difficult for you or you have a physical disability that interferes with making a written request, you can submit a verbal request.

Templates

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests from BC Municipal Police

Use the information in this template to help you fill out your freedom of information request form.



Specific Requests for Your Information

Please provide all materials, including but not limited to police reports, witness reports, witness statements, bodycam footage, police notes, and CPIC and PRIME files, related to or stemming from an incident that occurred on or about **< ENTER TIME OF ARREST >** on **<ENTER DATE OF ARREST>** at **<ENTER LOCATION OF ARREST INCLUDING ADDRESS AND CITY>**, involving **<ENTER YOUR NAME>** and officer badge # **<ENTER BADGE NUMBER>** and other officers.

General Requests for Your Information

Please provide a copy of all information held by **<ENTER MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENT>** about or referencing myself **<ENTER YOUR NAME>**, including but not limited to any information held in CPIC and PRIME; records of any queries of my name made in CPIC, PRIME or other databases, including the individuals who made those queries; emails; and reports. Date Range: **<ENTER DATE RANGE>**.