

Fisher County Appraisal District

Open Records Policy and Procedure

What is an Open Records request?

An Open Records request is a request for public information contained in the files or records of a Texas governmental agency, including the Hockley County Appraisal District. Open Records or Public Information requests are governed by provisions of the Public Information Act (<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index.shtml>), Texas Government Code, Chapter 552.

An Open Records request must be for the inspection or copies of an existing document or record. The district is not required to generate a new document to respond to a request.

What is “public information?”

Public information is information that has been written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by the District.

All District information is presumed to be available to the public. However, the Texas Property Tax Code, state law and judicial decisions have established certain exceptions regarding the disclosure of such information that is deemed “Confidential.”

What kinds of information does the District have?

Information written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained by the District is public information and available to the public, unless it is made confidential by law. The Texas Property Tax Code directs that certain information, such as financial records compiled in the course of analysis, Open Space applications, and specific designated owners, is confidential. Exceptions to the general rule that government information is public information may also be found in the Texas Public Information Act and other statutes.

How do I request public information from the Fisher County Appraisal District

To request public information from this district, put your request in writing and mail, hand deliver, fax, or e-mail it as follows:

- Mail to: Fisher County Appraisal District, PO Box 516, Roby , TX 79543
- Hand Deliver to: Fisher County Appraisal District, 107 E. North 1st Street, Roby , TX 79543

- Email: fishercad@sbcglobal.net
- Fax to: Fisher County Appraisal District (325) 776-2636

What should I include in my request?

Be sure to include contact information, including your name, address, and telephone number. We must have this information to respond to your request; we may also need to contact you to clarify your request.

Describe the documents that you want with as much detail as possible. If you don't know exactly what documents you need, describe the information you are seeking as specifically as possible. If your description is not clear or could result in a very large number of documents, we will contact you to determine if your request can be clarified or narrowed. If you are uncertain about what documents to ask for, you may find it helpful to contact us before you submit your request, so we can assist you in preparing your request. You may tell us your purpose in requesting the information if you believe that would help us locate the documents you seek, but this information is not required. In fact, state law prohibits us from asking you the purpose of your request.

How long will it take to fill my request?

We will respond to your request within 10 business days after we receive your request. Possible responses to your request could include:

- If the information is readily available and clearly public, we will provide copies of the requested documents or tell you when and where you may examine the documents;
- If the documents cannot be produced for examination or duplication within 10 business days because they are in active use or in storage, we will tell you when and where the requested documents will be available to you;
- If we must program or manipulate electronic data to respond to your request, we will tell you what work must be done, the estimated costs, and the estimated time;
- If the requested information is clearly exempt from public disclosure, we will tell you which provisions of the Public Information Act, the Property Tax Code, or other statutes apply to your request; or
- In the unlikely situation that it is unclear whether the information you are requesting is open to the public, we will notify you that we are submitting a request to the Attorney General for an opinion concerning the records you have requested.

How much will I be charged? Will I be notified in advance?

The Fisher County Appraisal District charges for the costs of responding to Open Records requests in accordance with state law. If the estimated cost for your request exceeds \$40, we will notify you of the estimated cost before we fill your request. We require payment in advance when the estimated cost of producing copies is \$50.00 or greater.

The most common charges include:

<u>Standard-size (up to 8 ½ x 14-inch) paper copies</u>	<u>\$ 0.10 per page</u>
<u>Non-standard (oversize) paper copies</u>	<u>\$ 0.50 per page</u>
<u>CD</u>	<u>\$ 1.00 each</u>
<u>Diskette</u>	<u>\$ 1.00 each</u>
<u>Audio cassette</u>	<u>\$ 1.00 each</u>
<u>Personnel (non-programming)</u>	<u>\$ 15.00 per hour</u>
<u>Personnel (programming)</u>	<u>\$ 28.50 per hour</u>
<u>Overhead</u>	<u>20% personnel costs</u>
<u>Shipping/postage</u>	<u>Actual costs</u>

Internal Procedures after an Open Records Request is filed with the Fisher County Appraisal District

- Each Open Records Request will be date stamped on the day it was received in the office.
- Open Records Request are logged into the Fisher County Appraisal District Open Records Request Log.
- Information such as:
 - o Received From
 - o Date Received
 - o Received By
 - o Delivery Method: Mail Certified Mail E-mail Fax Other
 - o Information Requested

Will be entered into the Open Records Request Log.

- If the documents cannot be produced for examination or duplication within 10 business days because they are in active use or in storage, we will tell you when and where the requested documents will be available to you;
- If we must program or manipulate electronic data to respond to your request, we will tell you what work must be done, the estimated costs, and the estimated time;
- If the requested information is clearly exempt from public disclosure, we will tell you which provisions of the Public Information Act, the Property Tax Code, or other statutes apply to your request; or
- In the unlikely situation that it is unclear whether the information you are requesting is open to the public, we will notify you that we are submitting a request to the Attorney General for an opinion concerning the records you have requested.

Internal Procedures after an Open Records Request is completed by an employee of the Fisher County Appraisal District

- Information such as:
 - o Date Completed
 - o Completed By
 - o Delivery Method
 - o Fee Amount
 - o Other Comments

Will be entered into the Open Records Request Log Book.

- All correspondence will also be attached to the Request and filed in the Open Records Request Log.