



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
and protecting your personal information

## **Press Release**

### **For immediate release**

28 January 2009

### **ICO issues new guidance to help public authorities when charging for EIR requests**

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has published new guidance to help public authorities identify appropriate charges for requests received under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

When dealing with requests for information under EIR, public authorities are permitted to charge a reasonable amount. [Charging for environmental information](#) clearly states that where charges are applied, they must only cover actual costs incurred by the public authority in producing the information, for example the cost of paper, printing and postage. Unlike the charging regime for freedom of information requests, public authorities dealing with an EIR request cannot charge for the amount of time taken to identify, locate and retrieve information, which may be done when the appropriate limit has been exceeded.

By making information available through public registers or lists of environmental information, public authorities can increase the amount of information available free of charge to the public. Information can also be provided through facilities where individuals can visit and view information at no cost.

Gerrard Tracey, Assistant Commissioner at the ICO, said: "The introduction of the FOI Act and EIR has encouraged greater openness and transparency among public authorities. This guidance helps clarify that where authorities make a charge for EIR requests, they must be reasonable. Organisations are

also advised on the information to include and make available to individuals when drafting the schedule of charges.”

The guidance also provides advice on how to notify requesters of a charge and includes examples of factors that should not be taken into account when deciding a reasonable charge.

The training DVD *Tick tock* is also available for public authorities dealing with requests under the Freedom of Information Act and EIR. A copy of the guidance and *Tick tock* can be downloaded at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk) or ordered by contacting the ICO on 08456 306 060.

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the ICO press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner’s Office promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. For more information about the Information Commissioner’s Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)