



# Do you need to access personal information held by Defence?

## Submit a request online or call Defence for support

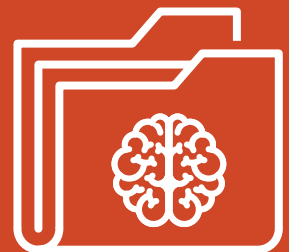
The online information will help you pick the right process to access your personal information and guide you on how to get started.

### Key types of information include:

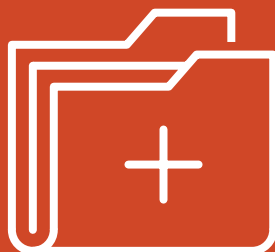
Service  
Records



Psychology  
Records



Health  
Records



Incident  
Inquiry  
Records



For more information go to:

[www.defence.gov.au/information](http://www.defence.gov.au/information) or  
Phone: **1800DEFENCE (1800 333 362)**

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[www.defence.gov.au](http://www.defence.gov.au)





# Applying to access your personal information

## What is the best way for me?

### Administrative access the Information Access Unit

Defence has a dedicated Unit to assist you request your personal records quickly and informally.

- ✓ **Easy access** online or get support over the phone
- ✓ **Quick responses** within 30 days, unless your request is large or complex

The Information Access Unit may refer you to FOI if your request:

- ➔ Requires significant **third party consultation**
- ➔ Includes a significant amount of **sensitive security information**

### The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

**The FOI Act requires you to apply using Administrative Access arrangements before you can request your information under FOI.**

You can use FOI if you're not satisfied with the results of your request, or if your request has taken over 30 days.

The FOI Act provides:

- ✓ **Robust legislated processes** for third party consultations and redactions
- ✓ **Right to internal and external reviews**

For more information go to:

[www.defence.gov.au/information](http://www.defence.gov.au/information)





# Accessing information through the Information Access Unit



## What is it?

**Defence and DVA have dedicated Units to assist in requesting your personal records quickly and informally.**

**This can include:**

- Service records
- Health records
- Disciplinary records
- Incident and investigation reports
- Documents related to DVA Claims

Apply online or seek support over the phone and receive your records within 30 days.

## Considerations

You may not be able to get your documents within 30 days if your request is particularly long or complex, or if there is a large volume of concurrent requests. The Information Access Unit will engage with you and advise if this is the case.

The Information Access Unit can review your request if you're not satisfied, but it cannot be escalated to a formal external review.

Your request may be better handled under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act:

- If a third party may object to the release of the information.
- If there are sensitivity or security issues.

**For more information go to:**

[www.defence.gov.au/information](http://www.defence.gov.au/information) or  
[www.dva.gov.au/accessing-information](http://www.dva.gov.au/accessing-information)



# Accessing information through the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

## What is it?

The FOI Act gives individuals the right to access documents from most Australian Government agencies, including the Department of Defence and Department of Veteran Affairs.

### The FOI Act provides:

- A robust list of reasons (known as 'sections') for denying a request or redacting information
- Right to review by the Information Commissioner
- Third-party consultation processes if your request includes others' information, including individuals, businesses, and governments.

## Considerations

The FOI Act requires you to apply using the **Administrative Access process via the Information Access Unit** before you can request your personal information under FOI.

You can apply under the FOI Act if you're unhappy with the results of your request, or if your request has taken over 30 days.

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Australian Government  
Defence



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

# How to apply to access personal information



## Before you start make sure you have everything you need



**Ensure you know what documents you want**



**Prepare your certified photo identification. You will need one photo ID and one secondary ID both certified**



If you are an existing client of DVA, you can simply provide your DVA Client ID number

### If you're a family member accessing information:

Make sure your family member has given consent for you to access this information, copy of consent will need to be provided with your request.

If the member is deceased, you will need to provide proof of identity, proof of relationship and proof of death with your request.



**If you need help, or you're not sure where to begin.**

Call Defence – 1800 DEFENCE (1800 333 362)

Call DVA – 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

For more information go to:

[www.defence.gov.au/information](http://www.defence.gov.au/information) or  
[www.dva.gov.au/accessing-information](http://www.dva.gov.au/accessing-information)



# Steps to access your personal information

1.

## **Apply online, through your unit or seek support over the phone.**

You can request access through the Information Access Unit online application or, if you're currently serving, through your chain of command.

2.

## **Receive an estimated timeframe for your request.**

Under the Privacy Act, you must receive a response to your request within 30 days. This could be your requested documents, or reasons that an extended timeframe is required.

3.

## **Redactions may be made to your document for privacy and security.**

For the administrative release of personal information, most redactions are made to protect the privacy of third parties where their information may be in your requested document.

4.

## **Receive your requested documents.**

Some documents may be difficult or upsetting to read if they detail traumatic or sensitive events or incidents. It's important to have the right support networks around you when you receive these documents.

**At any point in this process, you may be advised to apply through the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act as a more appropriate mechanism to access your information.**

For more information go to:

[www.defence.gov.au/information](http://www.defence.gov.au/information)

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# 8 steps to releasing information administratively

## 1. Determine validity

Assess whether the request is most appropriate to be released administratively or under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. In most cases, administrative release is the supported and preferred process.

## 2. Verify identity

Confirm the applicant's identity either through their Defence email address (current members) or the provided identification documents.

## 3. Check consent and/or Proof of relationship

If the request is for someone else's information, check the applicant has met the consent requirements or if the member is deceased, proof of relationship and proof of death.

## 4. Acknowledge request

Provide applicant with acknowledgement of request and estimated timeframe for their request. If over 30 days, provide reasons for the potential delay.

## 5. Locate documents

## 6. Apply redactions

These must be in accordance with the Defence department-wide redaction guidelines.

## 7. Compile documents

## 8. Send documents

Documents must be sent with an accompanying letter or email which explains the reasons for any redactions and details escalation and review processes.

For more information go to:

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# Why has information been redacted on my requested document?



## Redactions are made for privacy or security reasons

**Under the Privacy Act, identifying information about third parties must be redacted from the documents provided to you. This is done to protect other people's privacy.**

**Sometimes sensitive information is redacted from documents.**

### **This could include:**

- Operational sensitivities
- Departmental processes
- Information that might cause damage to Australia's security.
- Legal and commercial information

## The process

Redactions are made by the area within the Department who holds the information you request.

They use the Privacy Act and department-wide policy to assess what information poses a risk to release.



**If you have any questions about redactions the Information Access Units can assist.**

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Call DVA – 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

**For more information go to:**

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