

PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT:

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY INTAKE, PROCESS AND RESPOND
TO REQUESTS

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Fail to Respond
- Provide Inadequate Responses
- Release Confidential Information

VIOLATIONS OF THE ACT


Civil Lawsuits

Criminal Penalties

Fines

Damage to Reputation of
Organization

Loss of Trust From the Public



DEALING
WITH THE
INCREASING
NUMBER OF
REQUESTS

- Online Management System
- Training
- Central Point of Contact
- Open Records Process

**BENEFITS OF AN
ONLINE
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM**

Submit requests
online

Assign requests to
specific
department

Allows requesters
to agree to certain
exclusions

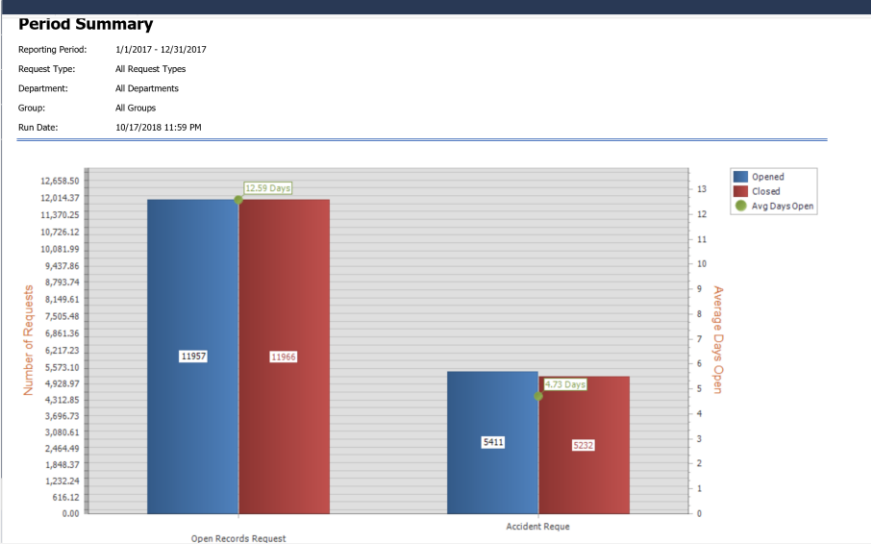
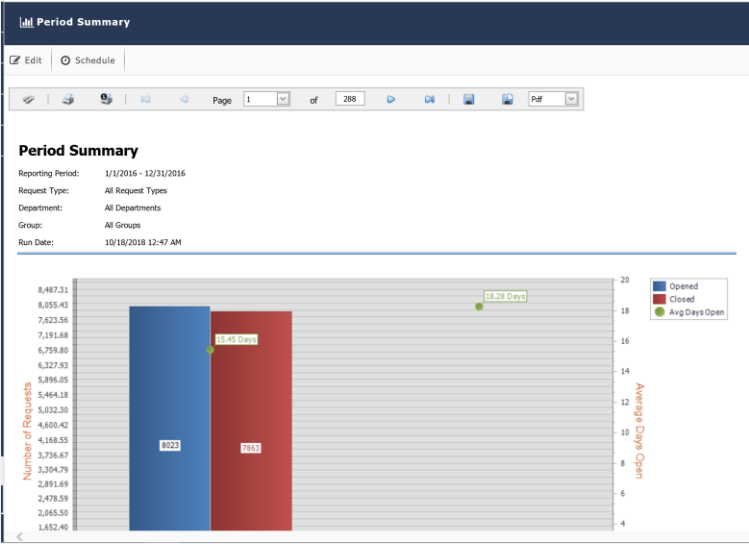
Save templates to
easily email
requesters

Document actions
and
communication
with the requester

RUNNING REPORTS

2016

2017



SAVE TEMPLATES

The screenshot displays a software interface with a central dropdown menu titled "System Responses". The menu lists the following options: "Accident Report - NOT ORR", "Base Template", "Bill (< \$40)", "Bill (> \$40)", "City of Alrington - Bill (<\$40)", "City of Arlington - Bill (>\$40)", "City of Arlington - Clarification Letter", "City of Arlington - Day 10", "City of Arlington - Municipal Court...", "City of Arlington - No Responsive R...", "City of Arlington - Responsive Lette...", "Clarification Letter", "INTERAGENCY RESPONSE", "Letter of Reinspection for Copyright", and "No Responsive Records".

Below the dropdown menu, there is a "Save Options" section with the following checkboxes and input fields:

- Change Status to
- Change Completed/Closed to
- Remember this response
- Add to Answers

The interface also features a top toolbar with icons for undo, redo, and other functions, and a bottom toolbar with "Design", "HTML", and "Preview" tabs.

TRAINING

- Identifying common types of confidential information
- Awareness of deadlines
- Clarifying a request
- Knowing when to send a cost estimate

NEW FORMATS OF INFORMATION




Body worn camera footage



Text messages on personal devices



Social media posts/comments



DEALING WITH
THE INCREASE
IN NEW
FORMATS OF
INFORMATION

- Know the deadlines and retention periods for new formats of information
- For example, a request for body worn camera footage must include
 - (1) the date and approximate time of the recording;
 - (2) the specific location where the recording occurred; and
 - (3) the name of one or more persons known to be a subject of the recording.

IDENTIFY WHEN A REQUEST SHOULD BE CLARIFIED/NARROWED

- If a request is unclear or very broad, then you can send a written request for clarification or modification.
- The requestor has 61 days to clarify or modify a request, which must be stated in the request for clarification. The request is considered withdrawn if the clarification or modification is not received within 61 days.
- For deadline purposes, the day we receive clarification or modification from a requestor is considered the day the city received the request and the 10 day time period starts over.



BENEFITS OF A COST ESTIMATE

Estimate over \$40

- Send a cost estimate letter. Sending a cost estimate does NOT pause or reset the City's legal deadlines.
- You must still gather the records and request legal review within 10 business days.

Estimate over \$100

- Send a cost estimate letter
- Do not have to process the request until you collect a deposit of at least 50%
- Sending a request resets the City's legal deadlines: the 10 day deadline starts over on the date that the deposit or modification is received.

HAVE A PROCESS IN PLACE

- Assign requests to the appropriate department
- Have a liaison for each department who is the point of contact for requests
- Train all employees on the open records process and how to identify confidential information
- Have a central point of contact for all requests
- Have the right tools, such as an online management system and software for locating and gathering large amounts of information