



**For Immediate Release  
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### **Audit report finds shortfalls in City of White Rock's FOI processes**

**VICTORIA**—Information and Privacy Commissioner Michael McEvoy has found it takes the City of White Rock too long to respond to access requests. The findings were published in *Audit & Compliance Report F18-02: City of White Rock Duty to Assist*.

The “duty to assist” applicants is an essential component of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) and requires public bodies to make every reasonable effort to assist each applicant openly, accurately and completely, and without delay.

The audit found that in 2016 and 2017, White Rock failed to meet legislated timelines in 46% of sampled files and, when late, took an average of 16 business days past the legislated timeline to respond to FOI requests. Recurrent applicants faced more substantial delays, as they typically waited an average of 13 days longer than other applicants to receive a response. The City also did not retain all relevant documentation in 26% of sampled files.

“These are significant shortfalls, as the City responded late to applicants almost half of the time. While a large number of requests come from recurrent applicants that might make more sophisticated and complex requests, I have to emphasize that this does not exempt the City from fulfilling its duty to respond in a timely way,” said Commissioner McEvoy.

Though the City does have serious issues to address, the audit did find examples that the City conducted adequate searches for records, rarely applied fees, and released records when available with minimal severing.

The Commissioner recommended that White Rock:

- fully document all FOI requests;
- forward requests to departments to search for records as soon as possible; and
- respond to all FOI requests without delay and within legislated timelines.

“While this audit found some areas of strength, there are several practices that require immediate improvement. Ensuring sufficient resources are available to support the FOI program will be a first step to help the City meet its duty to assist.”

White Rock was selected for the audit based on the high number of complaints and requests for review related to the City over the past five years. A majority of the complaints concerned the City's duties under FIPPA, and whether an adequate search for records was conducted.

*Audit & Compliance Report F18-02 City of White Rock Duty to Assist* is available for download at <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/reports/audit-compliance/>.

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