

**751—2.5(17A,22) Requests for treatment of a record as a confidential record and its withholding from examination.** The custodian may treat a record as a confidential record and withhold it from examination only to the extent that the custodian is authorized by Iowa Code section 22.7, another applicable provision of law, or a court order, to refuse to disclose that record to members of the public.

**2.5(1) *Persons who may request.*** Any person who would be aggrieved or adversely affected by disclosure of a record and who asserts that Iowa Code section 22.7, another applicable provision of law, or a court order, authorizes the custodian to treat the record as a confidential record, may request the custodian to treat that record as a confidential record and to withhold it from public inspection.

**2.5(2) *Request.*** A request that a record be treated as a confidential record and be withheld from public inspection shall be in writing and shall be filed with the custodian. The request must set forth the legal and factual basis justifying such confidential record treatment for that record, and the name, address, and telephone number of the person authorized to respond to any inquiry or action of the custodian concerning the request. A person requesting treatment of a record as a confidential record may also be required to sign a certified statement or affidavit enumerating the specific reasons justifying the treatment of that record as a confidential record and to provide any proof necessary to establish relevant facts. Requests for treatment of a record as such a confidential record for a limited time period shall also specify the precise period of time for which that treatment is requested.

A person filing such a request shall, if possible, accompany the request with a copy of the record in question from which those portions for which such confidential record treatment has been requested have been deleted. If the original record is being submitted to the commission by the person requesting such confidential treatment at the time the request is filed, the person shall indicate conspicuously on the original record that all or portions of it are confidential.

**2.5(3) *Failure to request.*** Failure of a person to request confidential record treatment for a record does not preclude the custodian from treating it as a confidential record. However, if a person who has submitted business information to the commission does not request that it be withheld from public inspection under Iowa Code section 22.7(3) or 22.7(6), the custodian of records containing that information may proceed as if that person has no objection to its disclosure to members of the public.

**2.5(4) *Timing of decision.*** A decision by the custodian with respect to the disclosure of a record to members of the public may be made when a request for its treatment as a confidential record that is not available for public inspection is filed, or when the custodian receives a request for access to the record by a member of the public.

**2.5(5) *Request granted or deferred.*** If a request for such confidential record treatment is granted, or if action on such a request is deferred, a copy of the record from which the matter in question has been deleted and a copy of the decision to grant the request or to defer action upon the request will be made available for public inspection in lieu of the original record. If the custodian subsequently receives a request for access to the original record, the custodian will make reasonable and timely efforts to notify any person who has filed a request for its treatment as a confidential record that is not available for public inspection of the pendency of that subsequent request.

**2.5(6) *Request denied and opportunity to seek injunction.*** If a request that a record be treated as a confidential record and be withheld from public inspection is denied, the custodian shall notify the requester in writing of that determination and the reasons therefor. On application by the requester, the custodian may engage in a good faith, reasonable delay in allowing examination of the record so that the requester may seek injunctive relief under the provisions of Iowa Code section 22.8 or other applicable provision of law. However, such a record need not be withheld from public inspection for any period of time if the custodian determines that the requester had no reasonable grounds to justify the treatment of that record as a confidential record. The custodian shall notify the requester in writing of the time period allowed to seek injunctive relief or the reason for the determination that no reasonable grounds exist to justify the treatment of that record as a confidential record. The custodian may extend the period of good faith, reasonable delay in allowing examination of the record so that the requester may seek injunctive relief only if no request for examination of that record has been received, or if a court directs the custodian to treat it as a confidential record, or to the extent permitted by another applicable provision of law, or with the consent of the person requesting access.

**2.5(7) Processing of business confidentiality claims.**

*a. Applicability/availability.* Businesses which provide information to the commission in applications, reports or otherwise in recorded form, or from or about which information is obtained and recorded by the commission, may request that information not be disclosed to others for reasons of business confidentiality. Until such time as a request for confidentiality is received by the commission, the information provided to the commission will be available to the public pursuant to subrule 2.3(3). If a claim is received after the information itself is received, the commission will make such efforts as are administratively practicable to associate the claim with all copies of the previously received information. However, the commission cannot ensure that such efforts will be effective, in light of the possibility of prior disclosure or dissemination of the information beyond the commission's reasonable control.

*b. Form.* A business which submits information to the commission may assert a business confidentiality claim in the manner prescribed in the application or instruction, if any, otherwise by placing on or attaching to the information, at the time it is submitted, a cover sheet, stamped or typed legend, or other suitable form of notice employing language such as "trade secret," "proprietary," or "company confidential." When only a portion of the information is claimed to be confidential, only that portion shall be deleted from the application, report or other recorded submission, with appropriate reference to a separate claim for business confidentiality, which separate claim shall be submitted as specified above. If a request not to disclose information is filed with the commission, the party shall file together with the document a second copy of the document from which has been deleted the information for which such party wishes to claim confidential treatment. The business shall conspicuously indicate on the face of the original document that it is confidential information and shall file a claim for confidential status in accordance with the provisions of 2.5(7)"c."

A business which has reason to believe that the commission has received information which the business asserts to be confidential may request that such information, described with reasonable specificity, be maintained as confidential, in the same manner as specified above.

*c. Contents of claim.* All claims for confidentiality must be substantiated with the following information:

(1) A statement of all measures the business has taken to protect the confidentiality of the information, and a statement of intent to continue to take such measures;

(2) Practices and policies of other businesses, if known, regarding confidentiality of similar information;

(3) A statement that the information is not, and has not been, reasonably attainable without the consent of the business by other persons other than government bodies by use of legitimate means;

(4) A statement demonstrating that disclosure of the information is likely to cause substantial harm to the business's competitive position;

(5) A reference to any other determinations of confidential status of the information or similar information.

*d. Initial action by commission.* All claims will be reviewed within ten days of receipt for completeness. If the claim does not include the substantiation required by 2.5(7)"c," the business making the claim will be so notified by certified mail. If the substantiation or comment regarding the inapplicability of 2.5(7)"c" is not received by the commission within ten days of the date on the return receipt, the commission will place the information in the public file. Otherwise, all information claimed to be confidential will be treated as such by the commission until further notice. A timely response from the notice under this paragraph will be ruled on by the commission within ten days, based on the compliance with 2.5(7)"c."

*e. Initiation of official determination.* All claims not rejected under 2.5(7)"d" shall receive an official determination when a request for disclosure covering such information is received by the commission or when the commission deems it advisable to make a determination because a request for disclosure is likely to be received or because of administrative burdens in maintaining the information confidential. The procedures and criteria below shall be followed.

*f. Substantive criteria for use in confidentiality determinations.* Determinations shall hold that business information is entitled to confidential treatment for the benefit of a particular person if:

- (1) The business has taken and intends to continue to take reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of the information;
- (2) The information is not readily obtainable by others by legitimate means;
- (3) The claim is not unreasonable in view of the nature of the information, the interests, and normal practices of the business, and the practices of other businesses;
- (4) No statute or rule specifically requires disclosure of the information; and
- (5) There is a substantial likelihood that disclosure of the information would cause substantial harm to the competitive position of the business.

Prior determinations by the courts, the commission or other agencies on the information or similar information shall be given due consideration and effect.

*g. Preliminary determination—opportunity for comment.* The commission shall transmit its preliminary determination regarding a claim for business confidentiality to the claimant by certified mail, notifying the claimant of the opportunity to provide comments within ten days, subject to reasonable extension upon written request, and that failure to comment will be construed to indicate agreement with the preliminary determination. If the determination is in response to a request for disclosure, the person requesting the disclosure shall be sent a similar notice in the same manner within ten days of the request.

*h. Final determination.* A final decision shall be issued within ten days after the close of the comment period to the preliminary determination. If any substantial comments are received, the final decision shall be made by the executive director or the commission's designee. If no substantial comments are received, the claimant and the person requesting disclosure, if any, shall be notified that the preliminary determination is the final decision.

*i. Contested case status.* All procedures within this rule shall not be considered contested case proceedings as provided in Iowa Code chapter 17A.