POL011
Access to Information

The printed copy of this document may be superseded without notice. Please refer to the on-line electronic version on the Canadian Blood Services Intranet for the most current version.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles guiding Canadian Blood Services' commitment to making corporate information accessible to the public and to identify exceptions to disclosure of this information. Canadian Blood Services considers public access to information a key component of its commitment to openness and transparency and its accountability to stakeholders.

Policy

This policy is guided by a commitment to make accessible to the public information concerning Canadian Blood Services and its work. Categories of information available for public access include:

- General information about the mission, vision, values and functions of Canadian Blood Services;
- Public statements, including statements by the Chair of the Board and the CEO;
- Canadian Blood Services' annual reports, performance reviews, and system progress reports;
- Approved minutes of Board of Directors' meetings;
- Audited financial statements;
- Health Canada inspection activities and Canadian Blood Services' responses;
- Publications; and
- Research funding, including project descriptions and amounts awarded.

Disclosure Process

Responses will be provided within 30 business days after a sufficiently detailed request is received. An applicant will be notified if an extension of up to thirty business days to respond to the request is required where:

- a large number of records is requested or must be searched, or meeting the time line would interfere with the operations of Canadian Blood Services; or
- more time is needed to consult with a third party before Canadian Blood Services can decide whether to release the third party's information.
Canadian Blood Services may partially or wholly deny a request:
  o In accordance with the exceptions set out or referred to in this Policy;
  o If the request would place an excessive burden upon Canadian Blood Services' resources;
  o If the request is vexatious and/or repetitive; or
  o If the information, or part of it, is not in the custody or under the control of Canadian Blood Services.

Where information is subject to an exception to disclosure and can reasonably be severed from a document, Canadian Blood Services will release the remaining part of the document that is not subject to the exception.

This policy may be administered on a cost recovery basis. Canadian Blood Services shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that cost recovery does not operate as a barrier to access to information.

**Exceptions to Disclosure**

Canadian Blood Services is committed to openness and transparency. However, the effective function of the organization, confidentiality concerns and the need to protect staff and other stakeholders requires some information to be excluded from disclosure. Categories of information with restrictions on disclosure include:

1. Information on Canadian Blood Services' internal deliberations and communications, including deliberations of the Board of Directors where confidentiality is reasonably necessary to ensure the proper conduct of business.

2. Statistics, research, surveys and public opinion polls conducted by or on behalf of Canadian Blood Services that are the basis for policy formulation, planning or other internal decision making.

3. Information which, if disclosed, could endanger or compromise the security or proper conduct of any employees, operations, activities, investigations, audits, facilities, or systems.

4. Information relating to labour relations, collective bargaining and arbitration.

5. Information that is subject to solicitor/client privilege, litigation privilege or settlement privilege.

6. Information that will be published or released within 60 days of the request.

7. Information collected or retained by or on behalf of Canadian Blood Services subsidiaries, or third-party insurance administrators, including, but not restricted to incident or investigation-related information.

8. Information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to be harmful to government relations or negotiations, including information provided to Canadian Blood Services either implicitly or explicitly in confidence.

9. Canadian Blood Services' trade secrets, intellectual property, or financial, commercial, scientific or technical information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause harm to Canadian Blood Services or threaten its competitive position.
10. Unpublished research, the disclosure of which may harm a researcher’s priority of publication or contravene intellectual property rights.

11. Financial, commercial, scientific, proprietary or technical information, or intellectual property about a third party, unless Canadian Blood Services is legally obligated to disclose the information.

Complaints and Remedies
Canadian Blood Services provides a dispute resolution mechanism where an individual disagrees with a decision to withhold information from disclosure. Requests must be filed in writing within 15 days of the date of Canadian Blood Services’ response to an access to information request to the following:

Canadian Blood Services
Privacy & Access to Information Office
1800 Alta Vista Dr
Ottawa, ON K1G 4J5
Fax: (613) 739-2586
Email: ati@blood.ca

Policy Scope
This policy applies to all non-personal, non-public corporate information and shall be interpreted in accordance with Canadian Blood Services’ Code of Conduct and any applicable provincial privacy legislation.

Roles and Responsibilities
The Chief Privacy Officer is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining operational policies, guidelines, processes and practices to give effect to this policy; for addressing questions and concerns in the context of this policy; and for providing a dispute resolution mechanism to members of the public with whom there is disagreement regarding access to information.

The Privacy & Access to Information Office is responsible for managing access to information requests for Canadian Blood Services’ corporate information. The Privacy & Access to Information Office also manages responses to federal and provincial government bodies processing access to information requests involving the disclosure of Canadian Blood Services’ corporate information.

All Employees are responsible for following policies and guidelines related to the release of Canadian Blood Services’ non-personal, non-public corporate information and for ensuring appropriate security classification levels are applied to corporate information to assist in the identification of sensitive information that may be excluded from disclosure.

Compliance
Failure to comply with this policy, including the release of information excluded from disclosure under this policy, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, as determined by Canadian Blood Services.
Definitions

The Board of Directors ("the Board") supervises Canadian Blood Services' management of its business and affairs. The Board of Directors includes the Board itself, Board committees and any other bodies created under the authority or supervision of the Board or a Board committee.

References

POL002 Public Disclosure of Recalls
POL012 Personal Information Protection
002 Information Classification Standard
Access to Information (ATI) Guidelines for Employees

Approval

Approved By: [Signature]

Approver Name and Title: Judie Leach Bennett, Vice-President, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary

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