
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2004 No. 3391

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004

PART 1

Introductory

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and shall come into force on 1st January 2005.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

“the Act” means the Freedom of Information Act 2000(1);

“applicant”, in relation to a request for environmental information, means the person who made the request;

“appropriate records authority”, in relation to a transferred public record, has the same meaning as in section 15(5) of the Act;

“the Commissioner” means the Information Commissioner;

“the Directive” means Council Directive 2003/4/EC(2) on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC;

“environmental information” has the same meaning as in Article 2(1) of the Directive, namely any information in written, visual, aural, electronic or any other material form on—

- (a) the state of the elements of the environment, such as air and atmosphere, water, soil, land, landscape and natural sites including wetlands, coastal and marine areas, biological diversity and its components, including genetically modified organisms, and the interaction among these elements;
- (b) factors, such as substances, energy, noise, radiation or waste, including radioactive waste, emissions, discharges and other releases into the environment, affecting or likely to affect the elements of the environment referred to in (a);
- (c) measures (including administrative measures), such as policies, legislation, plans, programmes, environmental agreements, and activities affecting or likely to affect the elements and factors referred to in (a) and (b) as well as measures or activities designed to protect those elements;
- (d) reports on the implementation of environmental legislation;
- (e) cost-benefit and other economic analyses and assumptions used within the framework of the measures and activities referred to in (c); and

(1) 2000 c. 36.

(2) OJNo. L 41, 14.2.2003, p.26.

- (f) the state of human health and safety, including the contamination of the food chain, where relevant, conditions of human life, cultural sites and built structures inasmuch as they are or may be affected by the state of the elements of the environment referred to in (a) or, through those elements, by any of the matters referred to in (b) and (c);

“historical record” has the same meaning as in section 62(1) of the Act;

“public authority” has the meaning given by paragraph (2);

“public record” has the same meaning as in section 84 of the Act;

“responsible authority”, in relation to a transferred public record, has the same meaning as in section 15(5) of the Act;

“Scottish public authority” means—

- (a) a body referred to in section 80(2) of the Act; and
- (b) insofar as not such a body, a Scottish public authority as defined in section 3 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002⁽³⁾;

“transferred public record” has the same meaning as in section 15(4) of the Act; and

“working day” has the same meaning as in section 10(6) of the Act.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3), “public authority” means—

- (a) government departments;
- (b) any other public authority as defined in section 3(1) of the Act, disregarding for this purpose the exceptions in paragraph 6 of Schedule 1 to the Act, but excluding—
 - (i) any body or office-holder listed in Schedule 1 to the Act only in relation to information of a specified description; or
 - (ii) any person designated by Order under section 5 of the Act;
- (c) any other body or other person, that carries out functions of public administration; or
- (d) any other body or other person, that is under the control of a person falling within subparagraphs (a), (b) or (c) and—
 - (i) has public responsibilities relating to the environment;
 - (ii) exercises functions of a public nature relating to the environment; or
 - (iii) provides public services relating to the environment.

(3) Except as provided by regulation 12(10) a Scottish public authority is not a “public authority” for the purpose of these Regulations.

(4) The following expressions have the same meaning in these Regulations as they have in the Data Protection Act 1998⁽⁴⁾, namely—

- (a) “data” except that for the purposes of regulation 12(3) and regulation 13 a public authority referred to in the definition of data in paragraph (e) of section 1(1) of that Act means a public authority within the meaning of these Regulations;
- (b) “the data protection principles”;
- (c) “data subject”; and
- (d) “personal data”.

(5) Except as provided by this regulation, expressions in these Regulations which appear in the Directive have the same meaning in these Regulations as they have in the Directive.

⁽³⁾ 2002 asp 13.

⁽⁴⁾ 1998 c. 29, to which a relevant amendment is made by section 68 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (c. 36) with regard to the extension of the meaning of “data”.

Application

3.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4), these Regulations apply to public authorities.

(2) For the purposes of these Regulations, environmental information is held by a public authority if the information—

(a) is in the authority's possession and has been produced or received by the authority; or

(b) is held by another person on behalf of the authority.

(3) These Regulations shall not apply to any public authority to the extent that it is acting in a judicial or legislative capacity.

(4) These Regulations shall not apply to either House of Parliament to the extent required for the purpose of avoiding an infringement of the privileges of either House.

(5) Each government department is to be treated as a person separate from any other government department for the purposes of Parts 2, 4 and 5 of these Regulations.