

# Cable Companies' Record Retention & Cable Subscriber Privacy

## FCC Consumer Facts

### Background

Cable operators serving 1,000 or more subscribers must maintain certain records and make these files available for public inspection.

### Rules

The rules applicable to these files are:

- Cable operators are required to maintain and make available to the public the following files: political files; sponsorship identification; Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) reports; commercial records for children's programming; ownership records; the location of the system's principal head end; and a list of television broadcast stations carried by the system in fulfillment of the must-carry requirements.
- The public inspection files must be available at the office that the cable operator maintains for the ordinary collection of subscriber charges, resolution of subscriber complaints and other business, or at any accessible place in the community served by the system (such as a public registry for documents or an attorney's office).
- The public inspection files must be made available to the public at any time during regular business hours.
- Cable operators must honor requests made in person to reproduce documents contained in the public inspection files.
- FCC rules allow cable operators to charge a reasonable fee for copies.
- Requests for copies of documents in the public inspection files must be fulfilled within a reasonable time, not to exceed seven days.

### Rules (cont'd.)

- Cable operators may choose, but are not required, to honor requests for copies made by mail. If a consumer wants access to a public inspection file, he or she should request the file in person.

### Filing a Complaint with the FCC

If your cable operator fails to comply with the public inspection file requirements, you can file a complaint with the FCC. There is no charge for filing a complaint. You can file your complaint using an online complaint form found at [www.fcc.gov/complaints](http://www.fcc.gov/complaints). You can also file your complaint with the FCC's Consumer Center by calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554.

### What to Include in Your Complaint

The best way to provide all the information the FCC needs to process your complaint is to thoroughly complete the online complaint form. When you open the online complaint form, you will be asked a series of questions that will take you to the particular section of the form you need to complete. If you do not use the online complaint form, your complaint should indicate the following:

(More)



### What to Include in Your Complaint (cont'd.)

- your name, address, email address and phone number where you can be reached;
- name, phone number and location (city and state) of the company that you are complaining about; and
- any additional details of your complaint, including time, date and nature of the conduct or activity you are complaining about and identifying information for any companies, organizations or individuals involved.

### Can I Find Out What Information My Cable Operator Has Collected About Me?

A cable operator is required to notify its subscribers at least once every year (and new subscribers at the time the service begins) about the nature of any personally identifiable information about them that will be collected. The operator must notify the subscriber of the scope, frequency and purpose of the information collected, the period during which this information will be maintained, the times and places at which the subscriber may have access to such information and any limitations placed on the cable operator with respect to the collection and disclosure of this information, as well as the subscriber's rights to enforce these limitations. In addition, cable operators must provide subscribers access to all personally identifiable information about them at reasonable times and at a convenient place. Cable operators must also provide subscribers reasonable opportunities to correct any errors contained in the information.

### What Action Can I Take Against My Cable Operator if it has Violated Subscriber Privacy Provisions?

You may file suit in a United States district court. The court may award actual damages, punitive damages, reasonable attorneys' fees and other reasonable litigation costs.

#### For More Information

For information about other telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau website at [www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau](http://www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs-bureau), or contact the FCC's Consumer Center using the information provided for filing a complaint.

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*For this or any other consumer publication in an accessible format (electronic ASCII text, Braille, large print or audio), please write or call us at the address or phone number below, or send an email to [FCC504@fcc.gov](mailto:FCC504@fcc.gov).*

*To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, visit [www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/).*

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