

POLICY ADVISORY - MINISTERS' CALENDARS AND ITINERARIES

TOPIC

Treatment of ministers' calendars and itineraries under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act). See also Sections A.2 and C.4.13 of the cross-government Policy and Procedures Manual (the Manual).

BACKGROUND

Ministers' calendars and itineraries are primary sources of information about ministers' activities.

There are several types of records referred to as a minister's calendar or itinerary:

Events/announcements calendars -- identify announcements and public appearances of the Premier and Cabinet ministers; structured like a monthly calendar.

Minister's daily calendar/itineraries -- prepared by individual ministers' offices, listing the minister's daily meetings and other commitments in chronological order. Includes official activities as minister and may also include personal, caucus and constituency activities. More detailed than events calendars. Format, frequency of issue, and level of detail vary between ministries.

Minister's events calendars -- may be produced by individual ministers' offices. Used as a planning tool to identify the minister's major commitments over a 30 to 90 day period.

All three categories may include a brief description of the event and identify other persons or corporate bodies involved.

FOIPP PROVISIONS

Applicants have the right to request access to any record in the custody or under the control of a public body, including ministers' itineraries and calendars. (See subsection 4(1) of the Act and Section C.I of the Manual.)

Information from calendars and itineraries can be released on a routine basis, if not before but certainly after the event, if no exceptions under the Act apply. Where information in calendars and itineraries is not routinely disclosed, information that is not excepted under the Act must be disclosed in response to a formal request.

Information in itineraries and calendars that may be excepted from disclosure includes:

- information relating to a minister's activities in his/her capacity as an MLA, for example, a meeting with Caucus or constituency business. This information is excluded from the Act: see definition of "public body" in Schedule 1 of the Act. However, consider whether there is any harm in disclosing these records;
- information relating to a minister's personal life, for example, family or medical appointments (see section 22 of the Act and Section C.4.13 of the Manual);
- information relating to meetings with individuals who are not representing corporate society or non-profit organization interests (see section 22 of the Act and Section C.4.13 of the Manual);
- information relating to Cabinet deliberations (see section 12 of the Act and Section C.4.2 of the Manual);
- information that is policy advice (see section 13 of the Act and Section C.4.4 of the Manual);
- information relating to meetings with individuals who represent corporate society (see section 17 of the Act and Section C.4.8 of the Manual);
- information that would threaten the minister's safety (see section 19 of the Act and Section C.4.10 of the Manual).



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. If there are frequent requests for the minister's calendar or itinerary, consider routinely releasing a summary after the event. Are there ways to make release of information in calendars and itineraries easier?
2. Record descriptions of events in a brief, factual and professional manner in the calendar or itinerary.
3. Unless subject to exceptions, patterns of meetings with groups or organizations are releasable.
4. If possible, annotate or organize the calendar/itinerary to more clearly separate personal, constituency and ministerial issues. This will speed up the line by line review.
5. Contact your ministry's Director or Manager of Information and Privacy for more detailed assistance in developing your minister's calendar and itinerary system.

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