

III. Definitions of Terms and Acronyms Used in the Report

A. Agency-specific acronyms or other terms.

DOT	Department of Transportation
OST	Office of the Secretary
OIG	Office of Inspector General
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
USCG	United States Coast Guard
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
SLSDC	Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
MARAD	Maritime Administration
RSPA	Research and Special Programs Administration
BTS	Bureau of Transportation Statistics
Remanded Appeal	An appeal request, particularly a “no records” appeal, sent back to the original action office or forwarded to another office when the requester provides additional information either clarifying the documents sought or providing additional search parameters. The action office considers the request as if it were a new request, responding directly to the requester. Remanded appeal responses may again be appealed; appeal rights are provided if the remanded appeal response is a denial, partial denial or “no records” determination.

B. Basic terms expressed in common terminology.

1. **FOIA/PA Request** -- Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act request. A FOIA request is generally a request for access to records concerning a third party, an organization, or a particular topic of interest. A Privacy Act request is a request for records concerning oneself; such requests are also treated as FOIA requests.
2. **Initial Request** -- a request to a federal agency for access to records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
3. **Appeal** -- a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a full denial or partial denial of access to records under the FOIA, or any other FOIA determination such as a matter pertaining to fees.
4. **Processed Request or Appeal** -- a request or appeal for which an agency has taken a final action on the request or the appeal in all respects.

5. **Multi-track Processing** -- a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis. A requester who has an urgent need for records may request expedited processing (see below).
6. **Expedited Processing** -- an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester has shown an exceptional need or urgency for the records which warrants prioritization of his or her request over other requests that were made earlier.
7. **Simple Request** -- a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the volume and/or simplicity of records requested.
8. **Complex Request** -- a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the volume and/or complexity of records requested.
9. **Grant** -- an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.
10. **Partial Grant** -- an agency decision to disclose a record in part in response to a FOIA request, deleting information determined to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA exemptions; or a decision to disclose some records in their entirety, but to withhold others in whole or in part.
11. **Denial** -- an agency decision not to release any part of a record or records in response to a FOIA request because all the information in the requested records is determined by the agency to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA exemptions, or for some procedural reason (such as no record is located in response to a FOIA request).
12. **Time Limits** -- the time period pursuant to the FOIA for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily 20 working days from proper receipt of a “perfected” FOIA request).
13. **Perfected Request** -- a FOIA request for records which adequately describes the records sought, which has been received by the FOIA office of the agency or agency component in possession of the records, and for which there is no remaining question about the payment of applicable fees.
14. **Exemption 3 Statute** -- a separate federal statute prohibiting the disclosure of a certain type of information and authorizing its withholding under FOIA subsection (b)(3).

15. **Median Number** -- the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
16. **Average Number** -- the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.