



COLORADO
State Archives



Access Policy

First Choice for Service

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The Colorado State Archives (hereafter referred to as “CSA”), as the official custodian and trustee of the State’s records in its holdings, provides public access to its collections as openly and efficiently as possible. This policy’s purpose is to inform the public of CSA’s relevant rules regarding access to the records in CSA’s holdings.

2. Records Request Form

Access to all CSA records is facilitated by the submission of a formal request via the following methods:

1. Filling out the online records request form found at <https://archives.colorado.gov/request>
2. Mailed to the Research Room of the Colorado State Archives at 1313 Sherman Street, Room 120, Denver, CO 80203
3. Emailed to the Research Room of CSA at dpa_research@state.co.us
4. Phoned to the Research Room of CSA at 303-866-2358 during business hours.

3. Colorado Open Records Act (“CORA”) Requests

CORA requests are not required to view records in CSA holdings.

CSA does not accept direct CORA requests. CORA requests are submitted by the requester directly to the government office, department, or agency that created the record.

4. Public Access to Government Records

The majority of records held at CSA are open to the public, and any record in the CSA’s holdings can be requested. There may be some instances in which records contain restricted information, even though the record itself is not considered restricted. CSA will abide by the record originator’s statutes, rules, or guidance on whether restricted elements of a record can be accessible to the public. This access policy outlines restricted or excluded types of records.

5. Birth and Death Records

Birth and Death Certificates - Official birth and death certificates are not available at the Colorado State Archives. Please contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for access.

Other Vital Records - CSA does hold certain birth and death records from a limited number of counties in the form of hospital indices. These records are open to the public. Access to these indices is limited to birth records 100 years old and older and death records that are 75 years old or older.

6. Governor Records

Colorado's Territorial and Statehood Governors records are open to the public. There is an exception for records designated as "work product prepared for elected officials" or records otherwise exempt from public disclosure under the Colorado Open Records Act (§ 24-72-200.1, *et seq.*, C.R.S.). These records are closed, with restrictions placed by the Colorado Governor's office, and are generally restricted from public access for 25 years from the end of their term, although the exact time restriction is specific to each Governor. Upon receiving a request for a restricted record from a governor's collection, CSA will contact the current governor's legal counsel on the requester's behalf to determine whether access can be granted.

7. Legal Records

7.1 Interpretation

In this section 7, "Authorized Requester" refers to the following:

- The parties named in court cases
- The party's legal representation
- The originating agency of the record

7.2 Access to Legal Records

As outlined below, certain legal records are restricted from access by the general public and may only be accessed by an authorized requester. CSA will permit access to persons not an authorized requester upon receiving:

- A Court Order authorizing access or a letter authorizing access from the originating agency of the record, or
- A written statement from an authorized requester expressly granting permission to a third party to access the records and valid photo IDs of both the authorized requester and the third party being given access.

7.3 Divorce Records

Divorce Decrees - The divorce decree is the only document in a divorce record that is accessible by the public.

Case Files - Divorce records that are 100 years or older are restricted from access except to an authorized requester. If a divorce case that is more recent than 100 years old is requested, CSA will require a valid, government issued photo ID before access is given. CSA will also require an Order of Entry of Appearance for new attorneys that are not listed on the requested divorce case.

7.4 Adoption Records

Adoption records are restricted to the general public. CSA will not provide access to any adoption record without a letter of permission from the county court in which the case originated that include the following:

- The name of the requester
- The case number
- Direct contact information for the individual approving the request
- Any restrictions to access

Colorado Revised Statutes §19-5-305 provides the foundation on who is allowed access to adoption records. For more information, please refer to the Colorado Judicial Department's [Access to Adoption Records](#).

7.5 Other Court Records Excluded from Public Access

As required by the Colorado Revised Statutes and in accordance with the Colorado Judicial Department, there are a number of court case types and commonly filed court case records that are not available for public access. These include but are not limited to conservatorships, guardianships, sexual assault cases, capital punishment cases, and cases involving a minor. Authorized requesters are allowed access with a valid, government issued photo ID. CSA will also require an Order of Entry of Appearance for new attorneys that are not listed on the requested court case.

For more information, please refer to the Colorado Judicial Department's [Public Access to Court Records Policy](#).

8. Legislative Records

8.1 Pre 1973

The only Legislative records prior to 1973 are limited to engrossed bills (bill backs), enrolled bills (final version of the bill), bound versions of Session Laws, and House and Senate Journals.

8.2 1973 - 2011

After passage of the Colorado Sunshine Law in 1973, Legislative Committee Hearings and Floor Sessions were to be recorded and made available to the public. These audio recordings, in addition to the engrossed bills, enrolled bills, bound Session Laws, and House and Senate Journals, are available to the general public. In order to preserve the original tapes, public access to audio recordings is limited to digital copies of the original formats.

8.3 2012 - Present (Legislative Audio and Video)

All Legislative Committee Hearings and Floor Sessions are available from the Colorado General Assembly website: <http://leg.colorado.gov/watch-listen>.

9. Military Records

CSA holds certain military personnel records pertaining to retired and discharged members of the Colorado Army National Guard and the Colorado Air National Guard.

Access to military records held by CSA is restricted in accordance with the requirements of the [National Archives and Records Administration](#). Military records become open to the general public 62 years after the service member's separation from the military. Military records that are less than 62 years old are only available to the service member or his/her next-of-kin (the un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister of a deceased veteran). However, to the extent available, the general public can access certain limited information from these records without the veteran's authorization or that of the next-of-kin, as follows:

- Name
- Service Number
- Dates of Service
- Branch of Service
- Final Duty Status
- Final Rank
- Salary
- Assignments and Geographical Locations
- Source of Commission
- Military Education Level
- Promotion Sequence Number
- Awards and decorations (eligibility only, not actual medals)
- Photograph
- Transcript of Courts-Martial Trials
- Place of entrance and separation
- If the veteran is deceased:
 - Place of birth
 - Date and geographical location of death
 - Place of burial

Please note that all of the items listed above are not necessarily available in the records held by CSA.

10. Security Copies

10.1 Interpretation

“Security copies” are back-up copies of original records. Security copies can be of permanent or temporary retention; and exist as microfilm, microfiche, or digital back-ups.

10.2 Access to Security Copies

CSA will only provide access to security copies to the creating office. In the event the security copy is on microfilm or microfiche, the record can only be accessed by making a full copy of the original microfilm or microfiche in order to preserve the original. More details are found in CSA's Security Copy Policy.

Responsible Party	State Archivist
Reviewed By	First Assistant Attorney General Contracts and Procurement Unit - Office of the Attorney General, Executive Director of DPA
Review	Every 2 years after the effective date
Associated Documents	None
Version	2.0
Approval Dates	3/8/2019, 9/14/2023
Effective Date	3/11/2019
Updated Date	9/18/2023



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Department of Personnel & Administration

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