



# Consumer Guide

## Cable Companies' Record Retention And Cable Subscriber Privacy

### What records are cable companies required to maintain?

FCC rules require cable operators serving 1,000 or more subscribers to maintain certain records:

- political files
- sponsorship identifications
- 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

### Are these records publicly accessible?

Cable companies are required to keep these files available for public inspection at an accessible location. Other requirements include:

- Public inspection files must be made available at any time during regular business hours.
- Cable operators must honor requests made in person to reproduce documents contained in public inspection files. Cable operators may charge a reasonable fee for copies.
- Requests for copies of documents must be fulfilled within a reasonable time, not to exceed seven days.

Cable operators may choose, but are not required, to honor requests for copies made by mail. Requests made in person must be honored.

### What are privacy requirements for cable subscriber records?

Cable operators are required to notify subscribers at the time service is initiated and at least once each year about any personally identifiable information (PII) to be collected, and how it will be used, including:

- the scope, frequency and purpose of PII collected
- the period during which PII will be maintained
- the times and places at which the subscriber may access their PII
- any limitations placed on the cable operator regarding collection and disclosure of PII, as well as subscribers' rights to enforce the limitations

### Can I find out what information my cable operator has collected about me?

Cable operators must provide subscribers access to PII at reasonable times and at a convenient place, as well as reasonable opportunities to correct any errors.



## What action can I take against my cable operator for violating subscriber privacy rules?

You may file a suit in U.S. district court, which may award actual damages, punitive damages, reasonable attorneys' fees and other reasonable litigation costs.

### Filing a complaint

You have multiple options for filing a complaint with the FCC:

- File a complaint online at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>
- By phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322); TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)
- By mail (please include your name, address, contact information and as much detail about your complaint as possible):

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

### Accessible formats

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number above, or send an email to [fcc504@fcc.gov](mailto:fcc504@fcc.gov).

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