

## Sunshine Laws

The General Assembly first enacted a state law governing citizen access to records of public entities ("public bodies") and to their meetings in 1968. The law was significantly revised in 1999. The act begins with the general principles that all meetings of public bodies should be open to the public and that all public records should be open to citizen inspection. The act puts the burden on the public body in every instance to demonstrate why a meeting should be closed or a record withheld from disclosure. Any gathering of two or more members of a public body is a meeting. The statute is entitled Virginia Freedom of Information Act and is referred to by the acronym FOIA pronounced 'foy-a.'

Source: *Local Government Officials Guide to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act* by Roger C. Wiley.

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