

**CIRCULAR**  
**TOP PRIORITY**



**No. PIC/Cir-5/2015**  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB**  
**PUNJAB INFORMATION COMMISSION**

Lahore, April 15, 2015

1. The Additional Chief Secretary, Punjab, Lahore.
2. The Registrar, Lahore High Court, Lahore.
3. All Administrative Secretaries in the Punjab, Lahore.
4. The Provincial Police Officer, Punjab, Lahore.
5. The Chairman, Planning & Development Board, Lahore.
6. The Senior Member, Board of Revenue, Lahore.
7. All Heads of Attached Departments in the Punjab.
8. All Heads of Autonomous Bodies in the Punjab.
9. The Secretary, Provincial Assembly, Punjab, Lahore.
10. The Secretary, Punjab Public Service Commission, Lahore.
11. The Registrar, Punjab Service Tribunal, Lahore.
12. The Secretary, Chief Minister's Inspection Team, Lahore.
13. All Commissioners in the Punjab.
14. All Regional Police Officers (RPOs) in the Punjab.
15. Director General, Anti Corruption, Lahore.
16. All District Coordination Officers (DCOs), in the Punjab.
17. All District Police Officers (DPOs) in the Punjab.

**Subject:- COMPLAINTS ABOUT DELAYS OR NON-RESPONSE IN RELATION TO INFORMATION REQUESTS UNDER THE PUNJAB TRANSPARENCY AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2013.**

The Punjab Information Commission is receiving increasing number of complaints that many public bodies don't efficiently respond to information requests submitted by citizens under the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. It has also been observed that, in many cases, public bodies deny access to information without taking into consideration the letter and spirit of the Act, which provides for maximum disclosure and access to information within the mandatory time-limits prescribed in its section 10. In view of this, the Commission calls upon you to take immediate steps to ensure the following:

1. Time-lines provided in section 10 of the Act for provision of access to information to applicants are mandatory and must be respected in all circumstances. The Commission has so far taken a lenient view in this regard and, generally, has not chosen to impose penalties, despite extended delays in many instances, but it may not tolerate delays in future.
2. One of the reasons of delays is that designated public information officers (PIOs) seek approvals from their senior for providing access to information, which is against the law. The heads of the public bodies must make it clear to all concerned that, under section 7 of the Act, the designated PIOs are competent to decide applications for access to information on their own, and that they don't need approval from their seniors.
3. Public bodies must setup websites (i.e. if not done already) or improve existing websites in the light of the requirements of section 4 of the Act, which requires proactive disclosure of significant amount of information. This would help public bodies, as less number of citizens may then need to submit information requests or complaints.
4. Each public body must take immediate steps to designate PIOs, if not done so already, in the light of section 7 of the Act and Guidelines issued by the Commission Vide Circular No. PIC/Cir-4/ 2015 dated 24/03/2015. If a public fails to designate PIOs for one or more of its administrative units, the head of the public body shall be deemed to be a public information officer. It is also emphasized that contact details of designated PIOs must be posted on notice boards in relevant offices and on websites of the public bodies.
5. The heads of public bodies are also requested to facilitate PIOs in way that they have the required facilities (e.g. computer, printer, photocopier & adequate funds for postage, etc.) in order to efficiently perform their duties under the Act.
6. The heads of public bodies must also establish a mechanism for internal review in the light of section 12 of the Act. In this regard, it is important that, among others, public bodies post the procedure of internal review on their websites and

ensure that requests for internal review are efficiently decided within 14 days, as required by the Act.

7. This circular may also be shared with all the PIOs already designated for various administrative units or attached institutions relating to your respective public body. The Commission may be intimated about the steps taken in the light of this circular.

**(Mazhar Hussain Minhas)**  
Chief Information Commissioner

**PC:**

1. PS to Secretary to Governor, Punjab
2. PS to Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Punjab
3. PS to the Chief Secretary, Punjab