



File: 292-30/HTH-2022-20118

August 2nd, 2022

Sent via email:

**Re: Request for Access to Records**  
***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)***

I am writing further to your request received by the Ministry of Health. Your request is for:

*Emails, meeting minutes and briefing notes that involved the Minister or any other senior Ministry of Health staff (ADM level and above, including Dr. Henry) related to the decision to implement a mandatory mask mandate for people in British Columbia, including the decision to implement a mask mandate for school-aged children. (Date Range for Record Search: From 3/1/2020 To 1/9/2022)*

Some information has been withheld pursuant to sections 13 (Policy advice or recommendations), 14 (Legal advice), 15 (Disclosure harmful to law enforcement), 17 (Disclosure harmful to the financial or economic interests of a public body), 19 (Disclosure harmful to individual or public safety), and 22 (Disclosure harmful to personal privacy) of FOIPPA. A complete copy of FOIPPA is available online at:

[http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96165\\_00](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96165_00)

Several online articles/reports are linked from documents contained in the records. Here is a list of those links should you wish to review the articles/reports:

COVID-19 Summary of Face Mask Use to Prevent COVID-19 in Community Settings July 30, 2020 - PHAC Emerging Sciences - Summaries

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse/summaries-recent-evidence.html>

Advice on the use of masks for children in the community in the context of COVID-19 - UNICEF

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[https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC\\_Masks-Children-2020.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC_Masks-Children-2020.1)

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirusinfection/prevention-risks.html>

Effective public health measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19: a systematic review

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-11111-1>

SARS-CoV-2 Positivity and Mask Utilization Among Health Care Workers

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2781219>

Effectiveness of Mask Wearing to Control Community Spread of SARS-CoV-2

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2776536>

Fewer COVID-19 Cases in Schools With Masks and Improved Ventilation

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2781847>

Association of Mask Mandates and COVID-19 Case Rates, Hospitalizations, and Deaths in Kansas

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2781283>

Mask Use and Ventilation Improvements to Reduce COVID-19 Incidence in Elementary Schools — Georgia, November 16–December 11, 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7021e1.htm>

Social Distancing, Mask Use, and Transmission of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2, Brazil, April–June 2020

[https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/108787/cdc\\_108787\\_DS1.pdf](https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/108787/cdc_108787_DS1.pdf)

Your file is now closed.

The records located in response to your request will be delivered through the BC Secure File Transfer Service. Separate emails will follow from the BC SFT Notification Service directing you how to set up an account and where to obtain your records. A guide for using the SFTS is enclosed for your convenience.

These records will be published on the BC Government's Open Information website a minimum of ten business days after release. To find out more about Open Information, please access the Open Information website at: [www.gov.bc.ca/openinformation](http://www.gov.bc.ca/openinformation)

If you have any questions regarding your request, please contact Simon Wilson, the analyst assigned to your request, at 778 698-3836. This number can also be reached toll-free at 1 833 283-8200. Please provide the FOI request number, found at the top right of the first page of this letter, in any communications.

You have the right to ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review this decision. I have enclosed information on the review and complaint process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Wilson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Wilson, FOI Analyst  
On behalf of Darlene Kotchonoski, Manager  
Justice / Health Team, Information Access Operations

Enclosures

# BC Government Secure File Transfer Service

## Information Access Operations Ad-Hoc User Guide

### Returning Users

If you are a returning user, please use your existing username and password. Passwords expire after 90 days. You can update your password at anytime.

### New Users

Your records are provided to you via the Secure File Transfer Service (SFTS). You will need to setup a User Account to access to the STFS site.

You must log in to your temporary SFTS account within 7 days. After 7 days, your temporary SFTS account will expire and will no longer be accessible. If you are no longer able to access your account or records, please contact the FOI Analyst identified in your Response Letter for assistance.

### Email Communication

1. The first email has your Response Letter attached.
  - This email is from the FOI Analyst at Information Access Operations who processed your file.
  - If your records are password protected, the response letter will contain your **password to open your records**.
2. The second email is the *New Package is Waiting* notification email.
  - This email will be received at the same time as the third email.
  - A hyperlink to the SFTS is contained in this email.
3. The third email is the *New User Account for the BC Secure File Transfer Service*
  - This email is sent only to users who are required to setup a STFS User Account.
  - If you are an existing user and your account is still active, you will not receive this email.
  - This email contains the following:
    - a **Hyperlink** to the SFTS site
    - a **Username** to access the SFTS site
    - a **temporary Password** to access the SFTS site
  - If you are unable to locate this email, please check your junk/spam folder. It is from BC Secure File Transfer Notification Service <DONOTREPLY>@gov.bc.ca.

### Accessing Your Records

1. Setup your SFTS account.

- Click on the URL hyperlink provided in your third email.
  - You will be redirected to the SFTS site.
  - If you are not redirected to SFTS site, it is accessible at: [filetransfer.gov.bc.ca](http://filetransfer.gov.bc.ca).
2. Enter your *Username* and *Password*.
    - These are provided in your third email.
  3. Change your SFTS account password.
    - You will be required to do this as soon as you login.
    - Follow the instructions provided to you after you login to SFTS for the first time.
    - After you change your password, select "Finish." This will redirect you to your SFTS Inbox.
  4. Your records are now accessible.
    - Records will be available in SFTS for 35 days.
    - You can download your records up to 5 times.
    - To download your records:
      - Click on the records package
      - Click on the *Download* button beside the file(s)
    - If your records are password protected, you will require a password to open the pdf document.
      - *The password to open the pdf is located in your first email's Response Letter.*
    - It is recommended that you download and save your records so you do not have to return to the SFTS each time to view.
  5. If your records are password protected, please consult your .pdf software's user manual on how to remove the password/encryption.
  6. If your records are contained within a zipped file, you may need to download a zip program onto your computer in order to open and extract the records. There are free zip programs available to download, such as 7-Zip for Windows, or BetterZip for Mac.

### **Troubleshooting**

- If the hyperlink to the SFTS site does not open, try to access the site on a different web browser such as Chrome, or Firefox or Safari.
- Your temporary SFTS account expires after 7 days unless the account is logged into again or receives a new package. Your account will be deleted 7 days after it has been marked as expired. Once it is deleted, you will need to have a new ad-hoc account created - contact the FOI Analyst identified in the response letter.
- If you have forgotten your password but your account is still active:
  - You can use the "Request a password change" link on the Login page.

- An email will be sent to you providing you the URL to confirm the password change.
  - Passwords expire after 90 days.
- If you encounter technical issues, please call the technical support line at 250-387-7000 and select option 3. You will need to advise the representative that you are requesting assistance as an ad-hoc user of the BC Secure File Transfer Service.

<p>How to Request a Review with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner</p>
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If you have any questions regarding your request please contact the analyst assigned to your file. The analyst's name and telephone number are listed in the attached letter.

Pursuant to section 52 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA), you may ask the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review any decision, act, or failure to act with regard to your request under FOIPPA.

**Please note that you have 30 business days to file your review with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. In order to request a review please write to:**

Information and Privacy Commissioner  
PO Box 9038 Stn Prov Govt  
4th Floor, 947 Fort Street  
Victoria BC V8W 9A4  
Telephone 250 387-5629      Fax 250 387-1696

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's Office with:

1. A copy of your original request;
2. A copy of our response; and
3. The reasons or grounds upon which you are requesting the review.