PAIA Readiness & Compliance Checklist

A practical checklist for managing access-to-information obligations, manuals, and formal information requests

PAIA · Access to Information · Records Management · Information Requests · Compliance

PAIA compliance depends on an accurate, published information manual and a working process for receiving, tracking, and responding to formal requests. This checklist sets out a practical sequence for keeping access-to-information obligations audit-ready.

A PAIA Manual & Governance

- [ ] Compile and publish a PAIA manual describing the records the organisation holds
- [ ] Assign an Information Officer accountable for PAIA compliance
- [ ] Include contact details and request procedures in the published manual
- [ ] Review and update the manual when the organisation's structure or record types change
- [ ] Make the manual accessible on the organisation's website and on request

B Records Classification & Management

- [ ] Maintain a classification scheme describing categories of records held
- [ ] Identify records available automatically without a formal request
- [ ] Identify records subject to statutory grounds for refusal
- [ ] Maintain records in a state that allows timely retrieval when requested
- [ ] Apply consistent retention and disposal practices across record categories

C Request Intake & Logging

- [ ] Provide a documented channel for submitting formal access requests
- [ ] Log every request received, including requester details and records sought
- [ ] Confirm receipt of each request to the requester
- [ ] Assign each request to an owner responsible for gathering the relevant records
- [ ] Track requests centrally rather than through ad hoc email correspondence

D Request Assessment & Response

- ☐ Assess each request against statutory grounds for granting or refusing access
- ☐ Consult relevant business units to confirm what records exist and their sensitivity
- ☐ Document the reasons for any refusal, partial grant, or deferral
- ☐ Track response timelines from receipt to decision as a defined process step
- ☐ Notify the requester of the decision, applicable fees, and any right of appeal

E Fees & Access Arrangements

- ☐ Apply a consistent, documented approach to request and access fees
- ☐ Confirm fee waivers or reductions are considered where applicable
- ☐ Provide records in the format requested where reasonably possible
- ☐ Record the method and date of access provided to the requester

F Appeals & Escalations

- ☐ Provide requesters with information on internal appeal or Information Regulator escalation routes
- ☐ Track appeals separately from initial requests, with their own status and owner
- ☐ Review refused requests periodically for consistency of decision-making
- ☐ Escalate high-sensitivity or high-profile requests to management or legal review

G Reporting & Audit Trail

- ☐ Maintain a complete audit trail of each request from receipt to closure
- ☐ Report on request volumes, response times, and outcomes to management
- ☐ Retain evidence of decisions and correspondence for the required retention period
- ☐ Review annual reporting obligations relevant to access-to-information requests

H Training & Continuous Improvement

- ☐ Train staff who receive or process requests on PAIA obligations and timelines
- ☐ Refresh training when the PAIA manual or internal process changes
- ☐ Review recurring request themes to identify records that could be proactively published
- ☐ Benchmark request-handling performance and address bottlenecks identified