

“Sunshine Advisory” Detailed Index

This index lists topics covered by the Attorney General’s “Sunshine Advisories,” which were first issued in November of 2001.

Sunshine Advisories discuss basic requirements and application of Iowa’s Open Meetings Law and Public Records Laws ([Chapter 21](#) and [Chapter 22](#) of the Iowa Code), or Iowa’s “sunshine laws.”

Open Meetings - An Overview of Key Laws

Agendas and Advance Notice

- [Advance Agendas for Public Meetings \(3/02\)](#)
- [Closed-Session Agendas: Is an agenda required for a closed session? \(7/04\)](#)
- [Agendas for Meetings – Stamp it, Mail it: Are public officials required to mail agendas in advance of meetings? Who pays for copies and postage? \(2/05\)](#)
- [Handling New Ideas at Public Meetings: Only emergencies trump notice and agenda requirements \(10/06\)](#)
- [Notice for Meetings of Governmental Bodies: What if more than one law requires notice? \(2/07\)](#)

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- [Closed Sessions: Who’s Left Inside When the Doors Close? \(10/03\)](#)
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- [Are Closed Sessions Confidential? Yes, but tapes and minutes may be released \(11/04\)](#)
- [Handling Government Personnel Matters: Can governmental bodies close a session to discuss hiring, performance evaluations, or discipline? \(11/05\)](#)

- [Can Public Bodies Negotiate in Private for the Purchase of Real Estate? How does Iowa's Open Meetings law operate when public bodies are purchasing real estate? \(4/06\)](#)
- [Closed Sessions for Governmental Bodies -- Motions to close a meeting, and any final action, must be open. \(9/06\)](#)

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- ["All in Favor, Say Aye . . ." Governmental bodies should conduct votes in a manner that ensures the public is informed and officials are accountable. \(9/03\)](#)

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- [Rules of Conduct for Open Meetings: Tips to Strengthen Citizen Participation \(1/03\)](#)

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- [When is a Gathering an Open Meeting? \(2/02\)](#)

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- [Are Advisory Bodies Subject to Iowa's Open Meetings Law? \(3/03\)](#)
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- [Public Access to Electronic Meetings \(9/02\)](#)
- [Can One Member of a Governmental Body Participate in a Meeting Electronically? Iowa's Open Meetings Law allows for individual electronic participation. \(7/06\)](#)

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- [Emergency Meetings: Can Good Cause Justify Less Notice? \(3/04\)](#)
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- [Can governmental bodies hold hearings in closed session? "Yes, sometimes – but only if expressly authorized by statute." \(12/06\)](#)

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- [Is There a Meeting After the Meeting? Are there notice requirements for subcommittees of public bodies? \(5/04\)](#)

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- [The Open Meetings Law Applies to Nonprofits Licensed to Conduct Pari-Mutuel Wagering or Gambling Games. \(1/06\)](#)

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- [Handling Government Personnel Matters: Can governmental bodies close a session to discuss hiring, performance evaluations, or discipline? \(11/05\)](#)

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- [Can Public Bodies Negotiate in Private for the Purchase of Real Estate? How does Iowa's Open Meetings law operate when public bodies are purchasing real estate? \(4/06\)](#)

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- [Retreats and "Working Sessions" are Open Meetings \(11/02\)](#)

Public Records - An Overview of Key Laws

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- [Personally Examining Records -- Giving a "Free Peek" \(11/01\)](#)
- [Charges Under the Public Records Law: Impose Only Actual Cost \(4/05\) \[Note: The suggested practices in this Bulletin were enacted into law 7/1/05.\]](#)
- [Estimating Costs for Public Records Requests: "Just how much is this going to cost?" \(11/06\)](#)

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- [Which Records are Confidential? \(1/04\)](#)
- [Should a record be withheld from the public if it contains confidential information? No, officials usually can black out confidential information and release the rest. \(8/06\)](#)

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- [Paper Files? Electronic Files? Tapes? Public records are stored in many formats! \(12/04\)](#)
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- [Golden Rules for Public Records Requests \(8/02\)](#)

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- [Public Records Contact Persons -- Helping Iowans with Access to Public Records \(1/02\)](#)
- [Who's in charge of deciding access to public records? The "lawful custodian" holds the key to examination and copying. \(1/07\)](#)

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- [Safeguarding Public Records -- Public officials need to facilitate access AND protect records. \(4/02\)](#)
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[Time for Spring Cleaning? How long must officials keep public records? \(4/04\)](#)

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- [Requests for Public Records \(Must Citizens Show Up in Person?\) \(11/03\) \[Note: The suggested practices in this Bulletin were enacted into law 7/1/05.\]](#)
- [Iowans Can Request Public Records by Telephone, Letter, Fax, or E-mail \(5/05\)](#)

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- [The Copier Broke Down! Now What? Public officials must furnish copies - even when the copier breaks down! \(9/05\)](#)

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- [Can the Public Obtain Copies of "9-1-1" Audio Tapes? Yes -- audio tapes are just a different form of public record \(2/06\)](#)

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- [Emergency Response Plans: What Information is Open to the Public? \(4/07\)](#)

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- [Are Your Library Records Confidential? A criminal or juvenile justice agency can obtain access to library records if investigating a person suspected of committing a crime. \(6/06\)](#)

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- [Are E-Mails and Telephone Billing Records of Peace Officers in Law Enforcement Agencies Confidential? \(5/07\)](#)

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- [Who Has Access to Personal Information Citizens Provide to State Agencies? \(6/03\)](#)

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- [Access to Personnel Records of Public Employees: What's Open? What's Not? \(2/03\)](#)

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- [No Secret Settlements: The public is entitled to know when a government body settles litigation. In government, settlements are not secret. \(6/04\)](#)

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- [Two Strikes and You're Out! Courts can remove public officials from office on the second violation of sunshine laws. \(6/05\)](#)
- [Can Members of the Public Sue to Enforce Iowa's Sunshine Laws? Yes -- the law arms the public with remedies. \(5/06\)](#)