

## Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

The public are entitled to request access to information on the environment that is held by the Local Authority. This right comes from the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007-2018.

### Request Environmental Information

To make a request, please email your request to [aie@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:aie@galwaycoco.ie) detailing the information you require. Alternatively you may write to the Rúnaí Contae, Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway, outlining the information you require.

**Note:** When writing your email/letter make sure to state that you are seeking access to information under 'Access to Information on the Environment Regulations 2007 to 2018'.

We will reply to your request as soon as possible but at the latest, within 1 month from the date of receipt of your request.

If you require assistance with your request or need further information, contact us by email at [aie@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:aie@galwaycoco.ie) or alternatively, at the postal address below.

### Categories of Information you can Access

The Directive covers information held in written, visual, aural, electronic or any other material form. There are 6 categories of information within this Directive:

1. The state of the elements of the environment, e.g. air, water, soil, land, landscape, biological diversity
2. Factors affecting, or likely to affect, the elements of the environment, e.g. energy, noise, radiation, waste, other releases into the environment
3. Measures designed to protect the elements of the environment, e.g. policies, legislation, plans, programmes, environmental agreements
4. Reports on the implementation of environmental legislation
5. Analyses and assumptions used within the framework of measures designed to protect the environment
6. The state of human health and safety, the food chain, cultural sites and built structures in as much as they may be affected by the elements of the environment

### Charges

There is no initial fee for making an application under the AIE Regulations. The regulations allow a local authority to charge a reasonable fee for the cost of supplying environmental information if required. This charge may include not only postal and photocopying costs, but also to costs attributable to the time spent by staff on answering an individual request for information, which includes the time spent on searching for the information and putting it in the form required. It does not however include costs attributable to the establishment and maintenance of any registers of environmental information as provided for in Article 15(1)(b) of the AIE regulations.

Such charges would be on the same basis as those currently applied under the Freedom of Information Acts.

1. If an applicant requires hard copies, there may be a fee of €0.04 per sheet for photocopies depending on the volume of information contained in the request.
2. An hourly rate of €20.00 per staff member engaged in dealing with the AIE request – for Search, retrieval and copying of records

This is however subject to the overriding provision contained in Article 5 of the Directive that any such charge shall not exceed a reasonable amount.

Details of any charges, if applicable, will be advised in the final decision letter once the request has been examined and considered.

It should be noted that fees in respect of supplying information, may be waived where the cost is estimated at less than €10.00.

Where requesters are in a position to view the required documents on site at the offices of Galway County Council, there will be no charge for accessing these records however this is separate to the charges noted above.

### **Right of Appeal**

Under Article 11 of the AIE Regulations, you have a right to request an internal review of a decision. An internal review involves a complete reconsideration of the matter by a member of the staff of this Local Authority, unconnected with the original decision, of the same or higher rank than the original decision-maker, who may affirm, vary or annul the original decision.

If you do not receive a decision by the specified date, you can request an internal review, you can do so by writing to Rúnaí Contae, AIE Officer. This request must be made within one month of the date the decision was due to be received. The decision of an internal review will be communicated to you within one month of receipt of your request for an internal review.

There is no charge for applying for an internal review.

If you are not satisfied with the response in relation to your internal review, you can then contact the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information to submit an appeal.

It costs €50.00 to take an appeal to the Commissioner for Environmental Information, or €15.00 if you are the holder, or dependent of a holder of a medical card, or a third party appealing the decision to release certain information.

### **For further information in relation to AIE requests, contact:**

Rúnaí Contae,

Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway.

**Phone:** (091) 509000;

**Email:** [aie@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:aie@galwaycoco.ie)