

Rock County Land Records Internet Privacy Policy

The public right of access to electronically stored information has been a topic of debate due in part to the Wisconsin Open Records Law and in part to an individual's civil right to privacy. In accordance with the definition of a public record in Wisconsin Statute 16.61(2)(b) and the public's right to access those records as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes 19.31 through 19.37, Rock County has adopted the following as a general rule with regard to Internet access:

Any record regarded to be a public record as defined by statute will be available on the County's website to the general public if it is economically and technologically feasible for the County to do so. While all such records will be available, the ability to search for the records in a manner that could be construed as personal in nature will not be offered as an option. In other words, free searches offered to the general public on the County's website will be limited to gathering data on particular pieces of property as opposed to obtaining addresses of properties owned by a particular person or entity.

Definition of Public Record ss. 16.61 (2)(b)

"Public records" means all books, papers, maps, photographs, films, recordings, optical disks, electronically formatted documents or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, or received by any state agency or its officers or employees in connection with the transaction of public business, and documents of any insurer that is liquidated or in the process of liquidation under [ch. 645](#).

Declaration of Policy ss. 19.31

In recognition of the fact that a representative government is dependent upon an informed electorate, it is declared to be the public policy of this state that all persons are entitled to the greatest possible information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those officers and employees who represent them. Further, providing persons with such information is declared to be an essential function of a representative government and an integral part of the routine duties of officers and employees whose responsibility it is to provide such information. To that end, [ss. 19.32](#) to [19.37](#) shall be construed in every instance with a presumption of complete public access, consistent with the conduct of governmental business. The denial of public access generally is contrary to the public interest, and only in an exceptional case may access be denied.