

# PREFACE

This publication provides a comprehensive reference tool for the application of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the *FOIP Act*). It is designed to assist all public bodies that are subject to the Act.

*FOIP Guidelines and Practices* explains the principles of the FOIP legislation and suggests how the Act and Regulation should be understood, taking into consideration the most significant decisions of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The manual also explains roles and responsibilities with respect to the administration of the Act, and offers guidance on procedural matters.

The manual is intended to offer guidelines and to suggest best practices, not binding rules. Some statements are shown in indented bold text with the FOIP logo beside them. This format is used when the statement is either a policy that Government of Alberta departments and their affiliated agencies, boards and commissions must follow or it is a definitive interpretation of the Act based on Commissioner's Orders. Other statements are shown in indented plain text with the FOIP logo beside them. This format is used when the statement is an important procedural matter that should be considered by all public bodies subject to the Act.

All examples used are provided as illustrations only and should not be used as authority for any decisions made under the Act. This publication is not to be used as a substitute for legal advice. In case of any doubt as to the proper application of the Act, please refer to the FOIP Coordinator of your public body.

The 2009 edition of *FOIP Guidelines and Practices* incorporates amendments to the FOIP legislation up to June 1, 2009, including the *FOIP Amendment Act, 2006* and the new FOIP Regulation (2008). This edition references Commissioner's Orders and Investigation Reports released up to December 31, 2008.

The manual also provides coverage of new subjects, including records relating to audits by the Chief Internal Auditor of Alberta, ministerial briefing books, and disclosure of personal information to a foreign court or tribunal. Also included are new treatments of a number of topics, such as the criteria for excusing fees in the public interest and the exercise of right by guardians. Other changes reflect the government reorganization in March 2008.