



What is Right To Know Day?

Right to Know Day celebrates, once a year, the right of individual access to information held by public bodies and marks the benefits of transparent, accessible government.

When is Right to Know Day Celebrated?

Right to Know Day is celebrated every September 28th. It had its start on September 28, 2002, in Sofia, Bulgaria, at an international meeting of access advocates. They proposed that the date be dedicated to the promotion of access to information worldwide. In Canada, information and privacy commissioner offices also coordinate efforts to mark "Right to Know Week."

Where is Right to Know Day Celebrated?

Right to Know Day is celebrated around the world. Over 60 countries have access to information legislation and more countries are in the process of developing such laws. Countries where Right to Know Day has been commemorated include Argentina, Czech Republic, El Salvador, India, Jamaica, Latvia, Mexico, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Peru, Spain, Turkey and the USA.

Who Celebrates Right to Know Day?

Everyone has reason to celebrate Right to Know Day. Active participants since 2002 have included citizen groups dedicated to democratic principles, students, media, academics, policy makers and governments.

Why Celebrate Right to Know Day?

- Access to information provides individuals with knowledge to address public issues, scrutinize government and become active participants in the democratic process.
- Access to information has revealed and clarified the basis for government decisions, disclosed environmental and health dangers and shed light on error, mismanagement and illegal activities.
- Access to information has required improved records management, prompted routine disclosure to information, promoted the duty to assist the public and resulted in better government service and efficiencies.
- Access to information requires vigilance. Beyond simply having access to information legislation there must be a commitment to a culture and spirit of openness. This includes staff and public awareness of access to information principles and appropriate resources for implementation.

How to Celebrate Right to Know Day?

- Read or write an article on access to information.
- Host or attend a public forum to hear speakers on the subject.
- Participate in a poster contest.
- Have an open house at a government office, library, hospital or other location where access to information is practised every day.
- For more details, see www.righttoknow.ca.

"The overarching purpose of access to information legislation is to facilitate democracy. It does so in two related ways. It helps to ensure first, that citizens have the information required to participate meaningfully in the democratic process, and secondly, that politicians and bureaucrats remain accountable to the citizenry."

Justice Gérard La Forest, Supreme Court of Canada