Rhode Island

Overall Ranking: Bottom Tier

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<th>Law</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>Rhode Island Research Facility Protection Law</strong></td>
<td>Rhode Island does not have a specific law designed to protect research facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rhode Island Animal Cruelty Law</strong></td>
<td>The Rhode Island animal cruelty law does not have a specific exemption for scientific research.</td>
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</table>
(a) Except as provided in § 38-2-2(4), all records maintained or kept on file by any public body, whether or not those records are required by any law or by any rule or regulation, shall be public records and every person or entity shall have the right to inspect and/or copy those records at such reasonable time as may be determined by the custodian thereof.


(a) Subject to the provisions of § 38-2-3, a public body must allow copies to be made or provide copies of public records. The cost per copied page of written documents provided to the public shall not exceed fifteen cents ($ .15) per page for documents copyable on common business or legal size paper. A public body may not charge more than the reasonable actual cost for providing electronic records.

(b) A reasonable charge may be made for the search or retrieval of documents. Hourly costs for a search and retrieval shall not exceed fifteen dollars ($15.00) per hour and no costs shall be charged for the first hour of a search or retrieval.

(c) Copies of documents shall be provided and the search and retrieval of documents accomplished within a reasonable time after a request. A public body shall provide an estimate of the costs of a request for documents prior to providing copies.

(d) Upon request, the public body shall provide a detailed itemization of the costs charged for search and retrieval.

(e) A court may reduce or waive the fees for costs charged for search or retrieval if it determines that the information requested is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.


(4)(i) “Public record” or “public records” shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data processing records, computer stored data (including electronic mail messages, except specifically for any electronic mail messages of or to elected officials with or relating to those they represent and correspondence of or to elected officials in their official capacities) or other material regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency. For the purposes of this chapter, the following records shall not be deemed public:

(A)(i) All records which are identifiable to an individual applicant for benefits, client, patient, student, or employee, including, but not limited to, personnel, medical treatment, welfare, employment security, pupil records, all records relating to a client/attorney relationship and to a doctor/patient relationship, and all personal or medical information relating to an individual in any files, including information relating to medical or psychological facts, personal finances, welfare, employment security, student performance, or information in personnel files maintained to hire, evaluate, promote, or discipline any employee of a public body; provided, however, with respect to employees, the name, gross salary, salary range, total cost of paid fringe
benefits, gross amount received in overtime, and other remuneration in addition to salary, job title, job description, dates of employment and positions held with the state or municipality, work location, business telephone number, the city or town of residence, and date of termination shall be public.

... (B) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person, firm, or corporation which is of a privileged or confidential nature.

... (F) Scientific and technological secrets and the security plans of military and law enforcement agencies, the disclosure of which would endanger the public welfare and security.

... (K) Preliminary drafts, notes, impressions, memoranda, working papers, and work products; provided, however, any documents submitted at a public meeting of a public body shall be deemed public.

Rhode Island Harassment Law


For the purpose of this chapter:

(1) “Course of conduct” means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, evidencing a continuity of purpose. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of “course of conduct.”

(2) “Harasses” means a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person with the intent to seriously alarm, annoy, or bother the person, and which serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be such as would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, or be in fear of bodily injury.


(a) Any person who: (1) harasses another person; or (2) willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows another person with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear of bodily injury, is guilty of the crime of stalking.

(b) Stalking shall be deemed a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, by a fine of not
more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000), or both.

**R.I. GEN. LAWS § 11-52-4.2 (2010). Cyberstalking and cyberharassment prohibited.**

(a) Whoever transmits any communication by computer or other electronic device to any person or causes any person to be contacted for the sole purpose of harassing that person or his or her family is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars ($500), by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this section, “harassing” means any knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person which seriously alarms, annoys, or bothers the person, and which serves no legitimate purpose. The course of conduct must be of a kind that would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, or be in fear of bodily injury. “Course of conduct” means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, evidencing a continuity of purpose. Constitutionally protected activity is not included within the meaning of “course of conduct”.

(b) A second or subsequent conviction under subsection (a) of this section shall be deemed a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than two (2) years, by a fine of not more than six thousand dollars ($6,000), or both.

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**Other**

**R.I. GEN. LAWS § 11-45-1 (2010). Disorderly conduct.**

(a) A person commits disorderly conduct if he or she intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly:

1. Engages in fighting or threatening, or in violent or tumultuous behavior;

2. In a public place or near a private residence that he or she has no right to occupy, disturbs another person by making loud and unreasonable noise which under the circumstances would disturb a person of average sensibilities;

3. Directs at another person in a public place offensive words which are likely to provoke a violent reaction on the part of the average person so addressed;

4. Alone or with others, obstructs a highway, street, sidewalk, railway, waterway, building entrance, elevator, aisle, stairway, or hallway to which the public or a substantial group of the public has access or any other place ordinarily used for the passage of persons, vehicles, or conveyances;

5. Engages in conduct which obstructs or interferes physically with a lawful meeting, procession, or gathering;

6. Enters upon the property of another and for a lascivious purpose looks into an occupied dwelling or other building on the property through a window or other opening; or

7. Who without the knowledge or consent of the individual, looks for a lascivious purpose through a window, or any other opening into an area in which another would have a reasonable expectation of privacy, including, but
not limited to, a restroom, locker room, shower, changing room, dressing room, bedroom, or any other such private area, not withstanding any property rights the individual may have in the location in which the private area is located.

(8) [Deleted by P.L. 2008, ch. 183, § 1, eff. July 2, 2008].

(b) Any person, including a police officer, may be a complainant for the purposes of instituting action for any violation of this section.

(c) Any person found guilty of the crime of disorderly conduct shall be imprisoned for a term of not more than six (6) months, or fined not more than five hundred dollars ($500), or both.

(d) In no event shall subdivisions (a)(2)--(5) of this section be construed to prevent lawful picketing or lawful demonstrations including, but not limited to, those relating to a labor dispute.

Notice: These statutes are provided only for reference purposes and are current through the 2010 legislative session. Every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy, however they will not contain information that has been inserted after their preparation. The National Association for Biomedical Research makes no warranty, express or implied, of the accuracy of these statutes. To be certain of the current version of the statutes and regulations, please refer to the official printed version of the statutes and regulations.