

**Chapter 36.23 RCW
COUNTY CLERK**

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Civil actions, generally, clerk's duties: Title 4 RCW.

County clerk

*as clerk of superior court: State Constitution Art. 4 s 26.
not to practice law: RCW 2.32.090.
powers and duties: RCW 2.32.050.*

Dissolution of inactive port districts: Chapter 53.47 RCW.

Electronic copies as evidence, clerk to certify: RCW 5.52.050.

Execution docket, clerk to keep: RCW 4.64.060.

Judgment journal, clerk to keep: RCW 4.64.030.

Lien foreclosure, clerk's duties: Chapter 84.64 RCW.

Oaths, clerk may administer: RCW 5.28.010.

Official bonds filed with: RCW 42.08.100.

Support of dependent children, clerk to charge no fees in connection with: RCW 74.20.300.

Tax warrants, clerk's duties: Chapter 82.32 RCW.

Veterans, clerk to furnish documents for free: RCW 73.04.120.

Witness fees and expenses, civil proceedings, clerk's duties: Chapter 2.40 RCW, RCW 5.56.010.

RCW 36.23.020 New bond may be required. When the judge or judges of any court, or a majority of them, believe that the clerk of the court does not have a good and sufficient bond on file, or that the bond is not large enough in amount, such judge or judges shall enter an order requiring him or her, within such time as may be

specified in the order, to execute and present to them a good and sufficient bond, in such sum as may be fixed by the order. In case of his or her failure to file the bond within ten days from the expiration of the date fixed the judge or judges shall declare the office vacant. [2009 c 549 s 4028; 1963 c 4 s 36.23.020. Prior: 1895 c 53 s 3; RRS s 72.]

RCW 36.23.030 Records to be kept. The clerk of the superior court at the expense of the county shall keep the following records:

(1) A record in which he or she shall enter all appearances and the time of filing all pleadings in any cause;

(2) A docket in which before every session, he or she shall enter the titles of all causes pending before the court at that session in the order in which they were commenced, beginning with criminal cases, noting in separate columns the names of the attorneys, the character of the action, the pleadings on which it stands at the commencement of the session. One copy of this docket shall be furnished for the use of the court and another for the use of the members of the bar;

(3) A record for each session in which he or she shall enter the names of witnesses and jurors, with time of attendance, distance of travel, and whatever else is necessary to enable him or her to make out a complete cost bill;

(4) A record in which he or she shall record the daily proceedings of the court, and enter all verdicts, orders, judgments, and decisions thereof, which may, as provided by local court rule, be signed by the judge; but the court shall have full control of all entries in the record at any time during the session in which they were made;

(5) An execution docket and also one for a final record in which he or she shall make a full and perfect record of all criminal cases in which a final judgment is rendered, and all civil cases in which by any order or final judgment the title to real estate, or any interest therein, is in any way affected, and such other final judgments, orders, or decisions as the court may require;

(6) A record in which shall be entered all orders, decrees, and judgments made by the court and the minutes of the court in probate proceedings;

(7) A record of wills and bonds shall be maintained. Originals shall be placed in the original file and shall be preserved or duplicated pursuant to RCW 36.23.065;

(8) A record of letters testamentary, administration, and guardianship in which all letters testamentary, administration, and guardianship shall be recorded;

(9) A record of claims shall be entered in the appearance docket under the title of each estate or case, stating the name of each claimant, the amount of his or her claim and the date of filing of such;

(10) A memorandum of the files, in which at least one page shall be given to each estate or case, wherein shall be noted each paper filed in the case, and the date of filing each paper;

(11) A record of the number of petitions filed for restoration of the right to possess a firearm under chapter 9.41 RCW and the outcome of the petitions;

(12) Such other records as are prescribed by law and required in the discharge of the duties of his or her office. [2011 c 193 s 3; 2002 c 30 s 1; 1987 c 363 s 3; 1967 ex.s. c 34 s 2; 1963 c 4 s

36.23.030. Prior: (i) 1923 c 130 s 1; Code 1881 s 2179; 1863 p 417 s 6; 1854 p 366 s 6; RRS s 75. (ii) 1917 c 156 s 2; RRS s 1372. (iii) 1917 c 156 s 57; Code 1881 s 1384; 1863 p 219 s 118; 1860 p 181 s 85; RRS s 1427. (iv) 1917 c 156 s 72; Code 1881 s 1411; 1863 p 221 s 130; 1860 p 183 s 97; RRS s 1442.]

RCW 36.23.040 Custody and delivery of records. The clerk shall be responsible for the safe custody and delivery to his or her successor of all books and papers belonging to his or her office. [2009 c 549 s 4029; 1963 c 4 s 36.23.040. Prior: Code 1881 s 2181; 1863 p 418 s 8; 1854 p 367 s 8; RRS s 76.]

RCW 36.23.065 Destruction and reproduction of court records—Destruction of receipts for expenses under probate proceedings. Notwithstanding any other law relating to the destruction of court records, the county clerk may cause to be destroyed all documents, records, instruments, books, papers, depositions, and transcripts, in any action or proceeding in the superior court, or otherwise filed in his or her office pursuant to law, if all of the following conditions exist:

(1) The county clerk maintains for the use of the public a photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic, electronic, or similar reproduction of each document, record, instrument, book, paper, deposition, or transcript so destroyed: PROVIDED, That all receipts and canceled checks filed by a personal representative pursuant to RCW 11.76.100 may be removed from the file by order of the court and destroyed the same as an exhibit pursuant to RCW 36.23.070.

(2) At the time of the taking of the photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic, electronic, or similar reproduction, the county clerk or other person under whose direction and control the same was taken, attached thereto, or to the sealed container in which the same was placed and has been kept, or incorporated in the photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic, electronic, or similar reproduction, a certification that the copy is a correct copy of the original, or of a specified part thereof, as the case may be, the date on which taken, and the fact it was taken under the clerk's direction and control. The certificate must be under the official seal of the certifying officer, if there be any, or if the certifying officer is the clerk of a court having a seal, under the seal of such court.

(3) The county clerk promptly seals and stores at least one original or negative of each such photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic, electronic, or similar reproduction in such manner and place as reasonably to assure its preservation indefinitely against loss, theft, defacement, or destruction. Electronic reproductions are acceptable media for this purpose if one of the following conditions exists:

(a) The electronic reproductions are continuously updated and, if necessary, transferred to another medium to ensure that they are accessible through contemporary and supported electronic or computerized systems; or

(b) The electronic reproductions are scheduled to be reproduced on photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic, or similar media for indefinite preservation.

(4) When copies of public records of the county clerk are transferred to the state archives for security storage, the state archives may only provide certified copies of those records with the written permission of the county clerk who is custodian of those records. When so transferred and authorized, the copies of the public records concerned shall be made by the state archives, which certification shall have the same force and effect as though made by the county clerk who is custodian of the record. If there is a statutory fee for the reproduction of the document, contracts can be made between the county clerk and the state archives for reproduction and certification of the copies, however no certification authority may be transferred except as provided in this subsection and for records of abolished or discontinued offices or agencies under chapter 40.14 RCW. [1998 c 226 s 1; 1981 c 277 s 10; 1973 c 14 s 1; 1971 c 29 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.23.065. Prior: 1957 c 201 s 1.]

RCW 36.23.067 Reproduced court records have same force and effect as original. Any print, whether enlarged or not, from any photographic film, including any photographic plate, microphotographic film, or photostatic negative or similar reproduction, or from any electronic record, of any original record, document, instrument, book, paper, deposition, or transcript which has been processed in accordance with the provisions of RCW 36.23.065, and has been certified by the county clerk under his or her official seal as a true copy, may be used in all instances, including introduction in evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding, that the original record, document, instrument, book, paper, deposition, or transcript might have been used, and shall have the full force and effect of the original for all purposes. [1998 c 226 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.23.067. Prior: 1957 c 201 s 2.]

RCW 36.23.070 Destruction of court exhibits—Preservation for historical purposes. A county clerk may at any time more than five years after the entry of final judgment in any action apply to the superior court for an authorizing order and, upon such order being signed and entered, turn such exhibits of possible value over to the sheriff for disposal in accordance with the provisions of chapter 63.40 RCW, and destroy any other exhibits, unopened depositions, and reporters' notes which have theretofore been filed in such cause: PROVIDED, That reporters' notes in criminal cases must be preserved for at least 15 years: PROVIDED FURTHER, That any exhibits which are deemed to possess historical value may be directed to be delivered by the clerk to libraries or historical societies. [2025 c 107 s 1; 1981 c 154 s 1; 1973 c 14 s 2; 1967 ex.s. c 34 s 3; 1963 c 4 s 36.23.070. Prior: 1957 c 201 s 3; 1947 c 277 s 1; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 81-1.]

RCW 36.23.080 Office at county seat. The clerk of the superior court shall keep an office at the county seat of the county of which he or she is clerk. [2009 c 105 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.23.080. Prior: 1891 c 57 s 1; RRS s 73, part. Cf. Code 1881 s 2125.]

RCW 36.23.090 Search for birth parents—County clerk's duty.

The county clerk shall provide the name and telephone number of at least one resource to assist adopted persons who are searching for birth parents, or birth parents who are searching for children they have relinquished, if these resources have contacted the clerk's office and requested that their name be made available to persons making inquiry. [1990 c 146 s 10.]

RCW 36.23.100 Electronic payment of court fees and other financial obligations—Authorized. County clerks are authorized to accept credit cards, charge cards, debit cards, smart cards, stored value cards, federal wire, and automatic clearinghouse system transactions, or other electronic communication, for payment of all fees and moneys due the court under RCW 36.18.012 through 36.18.020, and for the payment of court-ordered legal financial obligations of criminal defendants which include, but are not limited to, fines, fees, assessments, restitution, and crime victims' compensation, consistent with RCW 36.48.010, 36.48.080, and 36.48.090. A payer desiring to pay by credit card, charge card, debit card, smart card, stored value card, federal wire, and automatic clearinghouse system transactions, or other electronic communication shall bear the cost of processing the transaction. [2000 c 202 s 1.]

RCW 36.23.110 Legal financial obligations—Report on collections. The Washington association of county officials, in consultation with county clerks, shall determine a funding formula for allocation of moneys to counties for purposes of collecting legal financial obligations, and report this formula to the legislature and the administrative office of the courts by September 1, 2003. The Washington association of county officials shall report on the amounts of legal financial obligations collected by the county clerks to the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than December 1, 2004, and annually thereafter. [2003 c 379 s 20.]

Severability—Effective dates—2003 c 379: See notes following RCW 9.94A.728.

Intent—Purpose—2003 c 379 ss 13-27: See note following RCW 9.94A.760.