

RCW 42.56.070 Documents and indexes to be made public—Statement of costs. (1) Each agency, in accordance with published rules, shall make available for public inspection and copying all public records, unless the record falls within the specific exemptions of subsection (8) of this section, this chapter, or other statute which exempts or prohibits disclosure of specific information or records. To the extent required to prevent an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy interests protected by this chapter, an agency shall delete identifying details in a manner consistent with this chapter when it makes available or publishes any public record; however, in each case, the justification for the deletion shall be explained fully in writing.

(2) For informational purposes, each agency shall publish and maintain a current list containing every law, other than those listed in this chapter, that the agency believes exempts or prohibits disclosure of specific information or records of the agency. An agency's failure to list an exemption shall not affect the efficacy of any exemption.

(3) Each local agency shall maintain and make available for public inspection and copying a current index providing identifying information as to the following records issued, adopted, or promulgated after January 1, 1973:

(a) Final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of cases;

(b) Those statements of policy and interpretations of policy, statute, and the Constitution which have been adopted by the agency;

(c) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public;

(d) Planning policies and goals, and interim and final planning decisions;

(e) Factual staff reports and studies, factual consultant's reports and studies, scientific reports and studies, and any other factual information derived from tests, studies, reports, or surveys, whether conducted by public employees or others; and

(f) Correspondence, and materials referred to therein, by and with the agency relating to any regulatory, supervisory, or enforcement responsibilities of the agency, whereby the agency determines, or opines upon, or is asked to determine or opine upon, the rights of the state, the public, a subdivision of state government, or of any private party.

(4) A local agency need not maintain such an index, if to do so would be unduly burdensome, but it shall in that event:

(a) Issue and publish a formal order specifying the reasons why and the extent to which compliance would unduly burden or interfere with agency operations; and

(b) Make available for public inspection and copying all indexes maintained for agency use.

(5) Each state agency shall, by rule, establish and implement a system of indexing for the identification and location of the following records:

(a) All records issued before July 1, 1990, for which the agency has maintained an index;

(b) Final orders entered after June 30, 1990, that are issued in adjudicative proceedings as defined in RCW 34.05.010 and that contain an analysis or decision of substantial importance to the agency in carrying out its duties;

(c) Declaratory orders entered after June 30, 1990, that are issued pursuant to RCW 34.05.240 and that contain an analysis or decision of substantial importance to the agency in carrying out its duties;

(d) Interpretive statements as defined in RCW 34.05.010 that were entered after June 30, 1990; and

(e) Policy statements as defined in RCW 34.05.010 that were entered after June 30, 1990.

Rules establishing systems of indexing shall include, but not be limited to, requirements for the form and content of the index, its location and availability to the public, and the schedule for revising or updating the index. State agencies that have maintained indexes for records issued before July 1, 1990, shall continue to make such indexes available for public inspection and copying. Information in such indexes may be incorporated into indexes prepared pursuant to this subsection. State agencies may satisfy the requirements of this subsection by making available to the public indexes prepared by other parties but actually used by the agency in its operations. State agencies shall make indexes available for public inspection and copying. State agencies may charge a fee to cover the actual costs of providing individual mailed copies of indexes.

(6) A public record may be relied on, used, or cited as precedent by an agency against a party other than an agency and it may be invoked by the agency for any other purpose only if:

(a) It has been indexed in an index available to the public; or

(b) Parties affected have timely notice (actual or constructive) of the terms thereof.

(7) Each agency may establish, maintain, and make available for public inspection and copying a statement of the actual costs that it charges for providing photocopies or electronically produced copies, of public records and a statement of the factors and manner used to determine the actual costs. Any statement of costs may be adopted by an agency only after providing notice and public hearing.

(a)(i) In determining the actual cost for providing copies of public records, an agency may include all costs directly incident to copying such public records including:

(A) The actual cost of the paper and the per page cost for use of agency copying equipment; and

(B) The actual cost of the electronic production or file transfer of the record and the use of any cloud-based data storage and processing service.

(ii) In determining other actual costs for providing copies of public records, an agency may include all costs directly incident to:

(A) Shipping such public records, including the cost of postage or delivery charges and the cost of any container or envelope used; and

(B) Transmitting such records in an electronic format, including the cost of any transmission charge and use of any physical media device provided by the agency.

(b) In determining the actual costs for providing copies of public records, an agency may not include staff salaries, benefits, or other general administrative or overhead charges, unless those costs are directly related to the actual cost of copying the public records. Staff time to copy and send the requested public records may be included in an agency's costs.

(8) This chapter shall not be construed as giving authority to any agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office

of the chief clerk of the house of representatives to give, sell or provide access to lists of individuals requested for commercial purposes, and agencies, the office of the secretary of the senate, and the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives shall not do so unless specifically authorized or directed by law: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That lists of applicants for professional licenses and of professional licensees shall be made available to those professional associations or educational organizations recognized by their professional licensing or examination board, upon payment of a reasonable charge therefor: PROVIDED FURTHER, That such recognition may be refused only for a good cause pursuant to a hearing under the provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW, the administrative procedure act. [2017 c 304 s 1; 2005 c 274 s 284; 1997 c 409 s 601. Prior: 1995 c 397 s 11; 1995 c 341 s 1; 1992 c 139 s 3; 1989 c 175 s 36; 1987 c 403 s 3; 1975 1st ex.s. c 294 s 14; 1973 c 1 s 26 (Initiative Measure No. 276, approved November 7, 1972). Formerly RCW 42.17.260.]

Part headings—Severability—1997 c 409: See notes following RCW 43.22.051.

Effective date—1989 c 175: See note following RCW 34.05.010.

Intent—Severability—1987 c 403: See notes following RCW 42.56.050.

Exemption for registered trade names: RCW 19.80.065.

Paid family and medical leave information: RCW 50A.05.020(4).