Chapter 308-10 WAC
PUBLIC RECORDS DISCLOSURE

WAC 308-10-005 Authority and purpose. (1) RCW 42.56.070(1) requires each agency to make available for inspection and copying nonexempt "public records" in accordance with published rules. The act defines "public record" to include any "writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained" by the agency.

(2) The purpose of these rules is to establish the procedures the department of licensing will follow in order to provide full access to public records. These rules provide information to persons wishing to request access to public records of the department of licensing and establish processes for both requestors and the department of licensing staff that are designed to best assist members of the public in obtaining such access.

(3) The purpose of the act is to provide the public full access to information concerning the conduct of government, mindful of individuals’ privacy rights and the desirability of the efficient administration of government. The act and these rules will be interpreted in favor of disclosure. In carrying out its responsibilities under the act, the department of licensing will be guided by the provisions of the act describing its purposes and interpretation.

WAC 308-10-010 Definitions. (1) The definitions set forth in RCW 42.56.010 shall apply to this chapter.

(2) "Designee" is a department employee authorized by the public records officer to receive and respond to a public records request.

(3) The "department of licensing" is the agency created pursuant to chapter 46.01 RCW. The department of licensing shall hereinafter be referred to as the department. Where appropriate, the term department also refers to the staff and employees of the department of licensing.

(4) "Director" means the director of the department of licensing as appointed by the governor.

(5) "Listing (list)" means an item-by-item series of names, figures, words or numbers written or printed one after the other.

(6) "Individual" means a natural person.

(7) "Commercial purpose" means using or intending to use information for the purpose of facilitating a profit-earning business activity.

(8) "Profession" when applied to department records, or the release of department record information, means any state regulated business, profession or occupation administered by the assistant director, business and professions division.

WAC 308-10-015 Location of administrative office. The administrative office of the department and its director and staff is located in the Highways-Licenses Building, 1125 Washington Street Southeast, Olympia 98504. The administrative office of the public records officer is located at 8005-A River Drive Southeast, Olympia 98501.

WAC 308-10-020 Operations and procedures. (1) The department is organized under a director, deputy director, chief financial officer, chief information officer and three assistant directors. Each assistant director and officer is delegated authority to act in a specific functional area. The five major functional components are: Driver and vehicle services, driver policy and programs, finance and administration division, information services, and business and professions division.

(2) The director of the department is appointed by the governor, with consent of the senate, and holds office at the pleasure of the governor.

(a) Subject to statutory limitations the director has complete charge of the department. The director may delegate
any power or duty vested in the office to any assistant or subordinate, but remains responsible for the official acts of the officers and employees.

(b) By the specific powers of legislation and delegation the director is charged with the responsibility and authority to act and direct in the following areas:

   (i) Efficiently administer the laws pertaining to licensing of vehicles, vehicle operators, professions, occupations, real estate, vessels, and businesses.

   (ii) Adopt and enforce rules consistent with, and necessary to carry out, the provisions of existing laws.

(c) Each assistant director and officer reports directly to the deputy director, unless otherwise prescribed.

(d) Unless specifically delegated the director shall establish and maintain relationships with the state's executive offices, legislature, and other state agencies, other states and other states' agencies, agencies of the federal government, state and national associations, local and municipal governments, boards and commissions, and the press.

(e) The director shall have direct authority over matters pertaining to public information, research, and legal issues.

(3) The assistant director, driver and vehicle services, has authority to act in the following areas:

   (a) Administer laws pertaining to:

      (i) Vehicle and vessel licensing and excise tax programs;

      (ii) Fuel tax programs;

      (iii) Proration and reciprocity programs;

      (iv) Vehicle and vessel dealer, manufacturer licensing and inspection programs;

      (v) Miscellaneous vehicle licensing programs including: Transporters, wreckers, hulk haulers, abandoned vehicles, tow truck operators, scrap processors, snowmobile and ORV vehicle dealers; and

      (vi) Driver licensing and nondriver identification card programs.

   (b) Adopt and enforce rules and standards to carry out the provisions of existing law.

   (c) Administer the licensing functions of county auditors, and licensing agents who have been appointed by county auditors to act on behalf of the department.

(4) The assistant director, driver policy and programs, has authority to act in the following areas:

   (a) Administer the laws pertaining to driver licensing, financial responsibility, and driver improvement;

   (b) Adopt and enforce rules and standards to carry out the provisions of existing law.

   (5) The assistant director, business and professions division, has authority to act in the following areas:

   (a) Administer the laws in conjunction with appointed boards pertaining to the following professions, occupations, and businesses:

      Appraisers
      Architects
      Auctioneers
      Bail bonds
      Boxing
      Camping resorts
      Cemeteries
      Collection agencies
      Cosmetologists
      Court reporters
      Driver training schools
      Employment agencies
      Engineers
      Firearms
      Funeral directors
      Geologists
      Home inspectors
      Land surveyors
      Landscape architects
      Limousines
      Martial arts
      Notaries public
      On-site wastewater treatment
      Real estate
      Private investigators
      Security guards
      Sellers of travel
      Timeshares
      Tattoo and body piercing
      Vehicle for hire (includes taxis)
      Wrestling
      Uniform commercial code (UCC)

   (i) The assistant director of the business and professions division helps administer the laws in conjunction with appointed boards, who exercise administrative and regulatory functions. Those boards are as follows:

      Real Estate Appraiser Commission
      Board of registration for architects
      Board of funeral directors and embalmers
      Cemetery licensing board
      Collection agency board
      Cosmetology, barbering, esthetics, and manicuring advisory board
      Professional engineers and land surveyors board
      Landscape architect board
      Real estate commission
      On-site wastewater design advisory committee
      Geologist licensing board

   (ii) Correspondence to these boards should be directed to the program units for the boards.

   (b) Adopt and enforce the rules, regulations and standards in conjunction with appointed boards to carry out the provisions of existing laws.

   (c) Establish and maintain relationships with commissions, boards, societies, associations, and agencies both external and internal to this state in order to enhance the department's capability for recommending improvements in legislation, rules, or regulations relative to professions, occupations, or businesses.

   (d) Administer the laws pertaining to Uniform Commercial Code, business licensing and registration.

(6) The chief financial officer, finance and administration division, has authority to act in the following areas:

   (a) Develop, promote, and direct department activities and programs which relate to:

      (i) Budget and management systems;

      (ii) Supply and equipment procurement;

      (iii) Records management;
Public Records Disclosure

WAC 308-10-025 Public records available. All public records of the department are deemed to be available for public inspection and copying during normal business hours pursuant to these rules, except as otherwise provided by chapters 42.56 and 46.12 RCW, WAC 308-10-050 and 308-93-087. For the purposes of this chapter, the normal business hours shall be from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

WAC 308-10-030 Public records officer. The department's public records officer shall be designated by the director and is the point of contact for public records requests. The person so designated shall be located in the administrative office mentioned in WAC 308-10-015. The public records officer shall be responsible for the following: The implementation of the department's rules regarding release of public records, coordinating the staff of the department in this regard, maintaining, keeping current, and publishing an index of all agency records and ensuring compliance with the public records disclosure act requirements.

(4/27/10)
WAC 308-10-041 Processing of public records requests—General. (1) Providing "fullest assistance." The department is charged by statute with adopting rules which provide for how it will "provide full access to public records," "protect records from damage or disorganization," "prevent excessive interference with other essential functions of the agency," provide "fullest assistance" to requestors, and provide the "most timely possible action" on public records requests. The public records officer or designee will process requests in the order allowing the most requests to be processed in the most efficient manner.

(2) Acknowledging receipt of request. Within five business days of receipt of the request, the public records officer or designee will do one or more of the following:

(a) Make the records available for inspection or copying;
(b) If copies are requested and payment for the copies, if any, is made or terms of payment are agreed upon, send the copies to the requestor;
(c) Provide a reasonable estimate of when records will be available; or
(d) If the request is unclear or does not sufficiently identify the requested records, request clarification from the requestor. Such clarification may be requested and provided in a letter, by telephone or e-mail. The public records officer or designee may revise the estimate of when records will be available; or
(e) Deny the request.

(3) Consequences of failure to respond. If the department does not respond in writing within five business days of receipt of the request for disclosure, the requestor should consider contacting the public records officer or designee to determine the reason for the failure to respond.

(4) Protecting rights of others. In the event that the requested records contain information that may affect rights of others and may be exempt from disclosure, the public records officer may, prior to providing the records, give notice to such others whose rights may be affected by the disclosure. Such notice should be given so as to make it possible for those other persons to contact the requestor and ask him or her to revise the request, or, if necessary, seek an order from a court to prevent or limit the disclosure. The notice to the affected persons will include a copy of the request.

(5) Inspection of records.

(a) Consistent with other demands, the department shall promptly provide space to inspect public records. No member of the public may remove a document from the viewing area or disassemble or alter any document. The requestor shall indicate which documents he or she wishes the agency to copy.

(b) The requestor must claim or review the assembled records within thirty days of the department's notification to him or her that the records are available for inspection or copying. The department will notify the requestor in writing of this requirement and inform the requestor that he or she should contact the department to make arrangements to claim or review the records. If the requestor or a representative of the requestor fails to claim or review the records within the thirty-day period or make other arrangements, the department may close the request and refile the assembled records. Other public records requests can be processed ahead of a subsequent request by the same person for the same or almost identical records, which can be processed as a new request.

(6) Providing copies of records. After inspection is complete, the public records officer or designee shall make the requested copies or arrange for copying.

(7) Providing records in installments. When the request is for a large number of records, the public records officer or designee will provide access for inspection and copying in installments, if he or she reasonably determines that it would be practical to provide the records in that way. If, within thirty days, the requestor fails to inspect the entire set of records or one or more of the installments, the public records officer or designee may stop searching for the remaining records and close the request.

(8) Completion of inspection. When the inspection of the requested records is complete and all requested copies are provided, the public records officer or designee will indicate that the department has completed a diligent search for the requested records and made any located nonexempt records available for inspection.

(9) Closing withdrawn or abandoned request. When the requestor either withdraws the request or fails to fulfill his or her obligations to inspect the records or pay the deposit or final payment for the requested copies, the public records officer or designee will close the request and indicate to the requestor that the department has closed the request.

(10) Later discovered documents. If, after the department has informed the requestor that it has provided all available records, the department becomes aware of additional responsive documents existing at the time of the request, it will promptly inform the requestor of the additional documents and provide them on an expedited basis.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 42.56.040, [42.56.]070, and 46.01.110. 10-10-040, § 308-10-041, filed 4/27/10, effective 5/28/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 42.17.260, 42.17.250, and 46.01.110. 06-16-039, § 308-10-041, filed 7/26/06, effective 8/26/06.]

WAC 308-10-042 Processing of public records requests—Electronic records. (1) Requesting electronic records. The process for requesting electronic public records is the same as for requesting paper public records.

(2) Providing electronic records. The public records officer or designee will provide the nonexempt records that are reasonably locatable in an electronic format that is used by the agency and is generally commercially available, or in a format that is reasonably translatable from the format in which the agency keeps its records.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 42.56.040, [42.56.]070, and 46.01.110. 10-10-040, § 308-10-042, filed 4/27/10, effective 5/28/10.]

WAC 308-10-045 Costs of providing copies of public records. (1) No fee shall be charged for the inspection of public records. The department shall charge a fee in the amount necessary to reimburse the department for its actual costs incident to providing copies of public records. The schedule of charges is:
Public Records Disclosure 308-10-060

ITEM
Copies produced on copying and duplicating equipment including scanning
Computer generated listing, magnetic tapes or labels
Microfilm copies
Postal charges
Compact discs

FEE
15 cents per page
Cost of services and media
75 cents per page
May be added to any copy of a public record if applicable
Cost

exemption authorizing the withholding of the record and a brief explanation of how the exemption applies to the record withheld.

(5) The department is prohibited by statute from disclosing lists of individuals for commercial purposes.

WAC 308-10-050 Review of denials of public records. (1) Petition for internal administrative review of denial of access. Any person who objects to the initial denial or partial denial of a records request may petition in writing (including e-mail) to the public records officer for a review of that decision. The petition shall include a copy of or reasonably identify the written statement by the public records officer or designee denying the request.

(2) Consideration of petition for review. The public records officer shall promptly provide the petition and any other relevant information to the manager of administration, finance and administration division. That person will immediately consider the petition and either affirm or reverse the denial within ten business days following the department’s receipt of the petition, or within such other time as the department and the requestor mutually agree to.

(3) Review by the attorney general’s office. Pursuant to RCW 42.56.530, if the department denies a requester access to public records because it claims the record is exempt in whole or in part from disclosure, the requester may request the attorney general’s office to review the matter. The attorney general has adopted rules on such requests in WAC 44-06-160.

(4) Judicial review. Any person may obtain court review of denials of public records requests pursuant to RCW 42.56.550.

WAC 308-10-060 Protection of public records. The department is primarily a licensing agency. The records consist mainly of operational files that are subject to high usage. In order to ensure that essential functions of the agency are continually carried out, and the public records are not damaged, altered, disorganized, or lost, access to the record storage areas is restricted. Public records will be inspected in the offices in which they are filed and maintained. Inspection shall be in the presence of an authorized department staff employee. Inspection shall be denied and the records will be withdrawn if the individual inspecting the records is doing so in a manner to damage, alter, or substantially disorder them. Inspection shall be denied and records withdrawn if the individual inspecting the records attempts to remove them from the prescribed location or is excessively interfering or

(4/27/10)
WAC 308-10-065 Records index. (1) Index. The department has available to all persons a current index which provides identifying information as to the following records issued, adopted, or promulgated since its inception:

(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 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, and 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 opin upon, the rights of the state, the public, a subdivision of state government, or of any private party.

(2) Availability. The current index promulgated by the department shall be available to all persons under the same rules and on the same conditions as are applied to public records available for inspection.

WAC 308-10-067 Public records indexing system. (1) The department has implemented a system of indexing for identification and location of the following records:

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

(b) Final orders from adjudicative proceedings as defined in RCW 34.05.010(1) entered after June 30, 1990, that contain an analysis or decision of substantial importance to the department in carrying out its duties.

(c) Declaratory orders entered after June 30, 1990, that contain an analysis or decision of substantial importance to the department in carrying out its duties.

(d) Interpretive statements entered after June 30, 1990.

(e) Policy statements entered after June 30, 1990.

(2) The department shall maintain a general index of all its records available to the public for inspection and copying, including those records mentioned above.

(3) The general index of public records will be maintained and updated by the department. The public records officer is responsible for updating the general index. The index of records is available during regular business hours for public inspection at the department's administrative office located at 8005-A River Drive Southeast, Olympia 98501 and is available online at www.dol.wa.gov.