

COWLITZ COUNTY DISTRICT COURT
and the Longview, Kelso, Woodland, Castle Rock, and Kalama Municipal Courts

Administrative Records Requests – Policy and Procedures

Cowlitz County District Court Policy on Administrative Records

The court is committed to carrying out the mandate of the Washington Constitution that “justice in all cases shall be administered openly.” In that spirit, the court will fully implement GR 31.1 regarding access to administrative records.

Cowlitz County District Court Procedure for Access to Administrative Records

1. The court administrator is the public records officer, reporting to the presiding judge, and is responsible for processing all administrative records requests. The administrative assistant is the primary backup public records officer. When both the court administrator and administrative assistant will be out, the court administrator will designate a temporary public records officer.
2. The public records officer will train all court staff on responding to requests for administrative records. She may grant staff the authority to provide records in response to requests.
3. Requests for administrative records must be submitted in writing to the public records officer, except for records that court staff are permitted to provide. The public records officer will carry out all requirements of GR 31.1 for processing requests for administrative records.
4. The public records officer will determine which employees may have records responsive to a request and ensure that such records are provided to her.
5. The public records officer will work with the requestor to determine the appropriate format for providing responsive records. If records are requested with metadata intact, the public records officer will work with the Information Technology Department to provide records in native format to the extent possible. If the request is for records that can best be provided through customized access to electronic records, the public records officer shall work with the necessary staff that have responsive documents to determine the appropriate means of response.
6. Within 5 business days after receiving a request for administrative records, the public records officer will respond to the requestor by: (a) providing responsive records along with a statement of why any records are exempt from disclosure; (b) providing a date by which responsive records will be provided; (c) requesting clarification of the request; or (d) stating either that the court does not have the requested records or why any records are exempt from disclosure. The public records officer will make every effort to work with the requestor to clarify the request and to provide responsive documents. If any request is denied in whole or in part, the response will include information on requesting review of the denial.

7. Court staff may not create or keep administrative records on their own computers or other devices, with two exceptions. First, court staff may use their own computers or other devices to access Cowlitz County online services. Second, court staff may use their own computers or other devices for communicating regarding such matters as being ill, responding to an urgent family matter, etc.

8. The court does not charge a fee to view administrative records. The court charges the following fees for copies of administrative records:

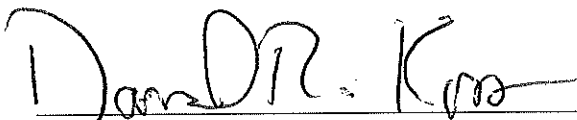
Paper copy from electronic image	25 cents per page
Paper copy from hard copy	50 cents per page
CD	\$20
Research	\$30 per hour, starting with beginning of 2 nd hour
Certified copies	\$5 for 1 st page of a document \$1 for each additional page of a document
Postage	Actual cost
Miscellaneous	Actual cost

These fees are subject to change without notice.

9. If a person requests internal review of an administrative records decision, the review will be conducted by the presiding judge. In the absence of the presiding judge, the review will be conducted by the next most senior judge available.

10. Public Records Officer Contact Information:

Dee Wirkkala, Court Administrator
Telephone: (360) 577-3073
Email: WirkkalaD@co.cowlitz.wa.us
Fax: (360) 577-3132
Address: Cowlitz County District Court
312 SW 1st Avenue
Kelso WA 98626



David R. Koss
Presiding Judge

4-21-17

Date