

Administrative Office of the Courts
Format and Style Rules for Mandatory Forms
Developed Pursuant to RCW 26.18.220
(September 2022)

➤ **Form and Pleading Standards**

The following standards apply to written forms, to printed forms, and to the electronic reproduction of forms and pleadings required by RCW 26.09.006, RCW 26.10.015 and RCW 26.26.065.

1. Required Format Standards

The format standards in this section are required for all forms, pleadings, motions, and other papers filed with the court pursuant to GR 14. The rule applies to all proceedings in all courts of the state of Washington unless otherwise specifically indicated by court rule.

❖ ***Paper Size***

Paper size is 8-1/2" x 11".

❖ ***Writing or Printing***

Forms and pleadings must be legibly written or printed on one side of each page only.

❖ ***Font***

- *Font:* Forms and pleadings must be printed in standard text fonts. Use a Sans Serif font, such as Arial.
- *Font size:* Use the following fonts sizes for the:
 - caption: 11 or 12 point font, as explained in **3**, below;
 - form title repeated immediately below the caption: 14 point font, as explained in **4**, below;
 - section headings: bold, 11 point font;
 - section text: 11 or 12 point font;
 - footers: 9 point font. Other point sizes may be used for footers so long as the footers are legible when faxed, photocopied or scanned.
- *Text enhancement:* Bold, underlined, and italicized type are acceptable where appropriate.

❖ **Margins**

- First page:
 - Top Margin: Three inches.
 - Left Side Margin: One inch.
 - Right Side Margin: One inch.
 - Bottom Margin: One inch.
- Subsequent pages:
 - Top Margin: One inch.
 - Left Side Margin: One inch.
 - Right Side Margin: One inch.
 - Bottom Margin: One inch.

❖ **No Color**

Filed forms and pleadings must not include any colored pages, highlighting, or other colored markings.

❖ **Exhibits**

The required format standards are not mandatory for exhibits, but encouraged if they do not impair legibility.

2. Recommended Format Standards

Check local court rules for any formatting requirements. The format recommendations in CR 10(e) must be followed in the absence of local rules concerning use of numbered paper, spacing, and related formatting standards.

- ❖ **Footers** must be placed at the left side and middle of the bottom of each page, *in* the one inch bottom margin.
- ❖ **Attorney or firm name**, mailing address, telephone number, and URL may be present in the right side of the one inch bottom margin.
- ❖ **Line numbers** may be present in the one inch left side margin.
- ❖ **Vertical lines** may be present in the one inch side margins.

The margin requirements in Section 1 are required for scanning purposes. Anything present in the margins might not be scanned and might not become a part of the court's or county clerk's electronic archive.

3. Captions

Captions must include the following:

- ❖ ***Name of Court.*** The court's name must be in bold, 12 point font and centered at the top of the first page of the pleading or form.
- ❖ ***Designation of Parties and Action.*** The parties and title of the action must be in 11 point font and designated as required in RCW 26.09.010 and RCW 26.10.020 in the left-hand field of the caption.
- ❖ ***Form Title.*** The title of the form is designated by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The title must be printed in 11 point font, in the caption in the right hand field. The form title may not be changed or deleted, except to delete inapplicable portions of the title (e.g., the title of the parenting plan may be altered to indicate whether the parenting plan is a proposed, temporary or final parenting plan).
- ❖ ***Docket Code.*** The docket code is assigned to the form by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Print the docket code underneath the form title. The docket code may not be changed or altered from the assigned code.

4. Form Title below the Caption

The form title from the caption should be repeated immediately below the caption, centered and in 14 point font.

5. Footers

Footers for the forms are mandatory. The footers must consist of the following components:

- ❖ ***In the left cell of the footer, left justify and include:***
 - *Top line.* The Revised Code of Washington or Court Rule citation.
 - *Middle line:* "Mandatory Form" or "Optional Form" followed by the form's revised date "(MM/YYYY)."
 - *Bottom line:* the form number in bold font. Example form number: **"FL Divorce 241."**
- ❖ ***In the middle cell of the footer, center and include:***
 - *Top line:* the form title. If the form title is long, continue the title on the second line.
 - *Bottom line:* the page number and number of pages in the form.
- ❖ ***Example Left and Middle Sections of the Footer:***

6. Sections

- ❖ **Section Number and Header.** Each section of a form includes a section number and, in most instances, a header. The section number and header must not be changed or deleted.
- ❖ **Section Text.** The text of a section must not be altered, deleted or revised from the text provided in the form or pleading, except where there are check boxes provided in the form or pleading. If there are check boxes in the section, the text above or before the first check box may **not** be altered, deleted or revised. Text following check boxes may be deleted as provided in **7** below. Text may be added to a section only as provided in **8** below.
- ❖ **Example.** The portions of Section 4 of the Petition for Divorce (Dissolution) which are shaded below may not be altered, deleted or revised in any fashion. The text and check boxes following the shaded area may be deleted as provided in **7** below:

4. Jurisdiction over the spouses

The court has jurisdiction over the marriage because at least one of the spouses lives in Washington State, or is stationed in this state as a member of the armed forces.

- ☐ The court **has** personal jurisdiction over the Respondent because *(check all that apply)*:
 - ☐ The Respondent lives in Washington State.
 - ☐ The Petitioner and Respondent lived in Washington State while they were married, and the Petitioner still lives in this state or is stationed in this state as a member of the armed forces.
 - ☐ The Petitioner and Respondent may have conceived a child together in this state.
 - ☐ Other *(specify)*: _____
- ☐ The court does **not** have personal jurisdiction over the Respondent. *(This may limit the court's ability to divide property and debts, award money, set child support or spousal support, or approve a restraining order or protection order.)*

7. Delete check boxes that do not apply

- ❖ **Options:** Check boxes are used wherever optional statements exist and

a person may select one or more options. The check boxes are before the options to which they apply.

- ❖ **Delete options:** Check boxes and the statements that follow the check boxes may be deleted if they do not apply to a case. Any instructions in parentheses, such as (*Check all that apply*), may be deleted with the check boxes and statements.
- ❖ **Example:** If the respondent is residing in Washington, the lines of Section 4 of the Petition for Divorce (Dissolution) highlighted below apply:

4. Jurisdiction over the spouses

The court has jurisdiction over the marriage because at least one of the spouses lives in Washington State, or is stationed in this state as a member of the armed forces.

☐ The court **has** personal jurisdiction over the Respondent because (*check all that apply*):

☐ The Respondent lives in Washington State.

☐ The Petitioner and Respondent lived in Washington State while they were married, and the Petitioner still lives in this state or is stationed in this state as a member of the armed forces.

☐ The Petitioner and Respondent may have conceived a child together in this state.

☐ Other (*specify*): _____

☐ The court does **not** have personal jurisdiction over the Respondent. (*This may limit the court's ability to divide property and debts, award money, set child support or spousal support, or approve a restraining order or protection order.*)

Delete the check boxes that do not apply so the statements that do apply appear as follows:

4. Jurisdiction over the spouses

The court has jurisdiction over the marriage because at least one of the spouses lives in Washington State, or is stationed in this state as a member of the armed forces.

The court **has** personal jurisdiction over the Respondent because the Respondent lives in Washington State.

8. Add text to a form or pleading

- ❖ **Other:** Text may not be added to a form or pleading except where the

word "other" appears as a section heading or a check box option in the form or pleading. Any text that is added to a form or pleading at a check box option must be preceded by the word "other" to identify the text as added text.

- ❖ **Example:** In section 4 of the Petition for Divorce (Dissolution) add an "other" basis for jurisdiction over the respondent as follows:

4. Jurisdiction over the spouses

The court has jurisdiction over the marriage because at least one of the spouses lives in Washington State, or is stationed in this state as a member of the armed forces.

The court **has** personal jurisdiction over the Respondent because:

Other: The respondent is submitting to the jurisdiction of the court by joining the petition.

9. Miscellaneous

- ❖ **Names of Parties.** The names of the parties may be substituted for petitioner, respondent, husband, wife, mother, father, etc., wherever appropriate in the body of the forms.
 - *Child Support Worksheets:* Names of parties may be substituted for "Column 1" and "Column 2" in the *Worksheets* and *Attachment for Residential Split Adjustment*.
- ❖ **Instructions within boxes.** Instructions and information in boxes are mandatory and must not be altered, deleted, or revised.
- ❖ **Attachments.** Attachments to the forms are permissible.
- ❖ **WSBA Numbers.** Pursuant to APR 13(a) and CR 11, attorneys must include their WSBA number whenever a form or pleading is signed.
- ❖ **Service, Transmittal or Confirmation Stamps on Original Documents.** Do not place stamps in the upper right space of the first page of the document. You may place these stamps in the upper left space of the first page. GR 14 and CR 10.

➤ **Use of Pleadings and Forms not Developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts**

Pleadings and forms, other than those developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts, may be submitted provided:

1. **Authorized by Law.** The pleading or form is authorized under civil rules or statute (e.g., interrogatories and subpoenas, declarations of parties, etc.);
2. **No mandatory form.** A similar pleading or form is not included in the mandatory forms developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts; and
3. **Complies with format and style rules.** The pleading or form complies with these format standards and rules and the caption of the form or pleading contains the notation "No Mandatory Form Developed."