

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

Washington State Law Library
Research Guides

REVISED CODE OF WASHINGTON (RCW)

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is a compilation of all permanent laws now in force. It is a collection of Session Laws arranged by topic, with amendments added and repealed laws removed. It does not include temporary laws such as appropriations acts. The official version of the RCW is published by the [Statute Law Committee](#) and the [Code Reviser](#).

The current RCW consists of ten volumes. Volume 1 includes the U.S. Constitution, the Organic Act, the Enabling Act and the Washington State Constitution as well Codification Tables, a Table of Initiatives and Referenda and the Table of Disposition of Former RCW Sections. Volume 10 is a General Index. A new edition of the entire set is re-issued in even-numbered years with supplements issued in odd-numbered years.

SOURCES OF THE RCW

Official: the print version of the RCW that contains the certificate of the Statute Law Committee is considered the official code (see [RCW 1.08.040](#)).

Revised Code of Washington, 1974-.
Main Reading Room

Revised Code of Washington, 1951-1973.
Main Reading Room

Digital copies of the RCW, while not official, are also available from the following:

- [Internet](#) (current edition)
- [Internet](#) (RCW Archive, 2002-)
- HeinOnline (1951-1961 and 1974-1980)

Commercial:

West's Revised Code of Washington Annotated (commonly called **RCWA**).
Main Reading Room (current edition). Superseded volumes at Lower Level East.

- Westlaw: WA-STANN (current edition)
- Westlaw: WA-STANNxx (1989-)

The RCWA is a convenient set of Washington laws with annotations following each section. In addition to case annotations, references are provided to law review articles, pertinent Key Numbers in the American Digest System, Corpus Juris Secundum (CJS), a legal encyclopedia, and other Thomson/West publications such as the Washington Practice series.

RCW CITATIONS

Each section of the RCW is made up of three parts: number of title; number of chapter within the title; and number of section within the chapter. For example, RCW 1.04.020 refers to Title 1, chapter 4, section 20.

Citations to the Revised Code of Washington:

code	RCW
title	Title 1 RCW
chapter	chapter 1.04 RCW
section	RCW 1.04.020

HISTORY OF THE RCW (taken from Volume 1, p.iv, of the 2012 ed.)

The Revised Code of Washington was adopted by the legislature in 1950 (see [chapter 1.04 RCW](#)). The original publication (1951) contained material variances from the language and organization of the session laws from which it was derived, including a variety of divisions and combinations of the session law sections. During 1953 through 1959, the Statute Law Committee, in exercise of the powers in [chapter 1.08 RCW](#), completed a comprehensive study of these variances and, by means of a series of administrative orders or reenactment bills, restored each title of the code to reflect its session law source, but retaining the general codification scheme originally adopted. An audit trail of this activity has been preserved in the concluding segments of the source note of each section of the code so affected. The legislative source of each section is enclosed in brackets [] at the end of the section. Reference to session laws is abbreviated; thus “1891 c 23 § 1; 1854 p 99 § 135” refers to section 1, chapter 23, Laws of 1891 and section 135, page 99, Laws of 1854. “Prior” indicates a break in the statutory chain, usually a repeal and reenactment. “RRS or Rem. Supp. — “ indicates the parallel citation in Remington’s Revised Code, last published in 1949.

SESSION LAWS

Session laws are an accumulation of all laws adopted in the current legislative session. They are presented chronologically in the form in which they were enacted by the legislature. In amended sections, new matter is underlined while deleted matter is lined out and bracketed between double parentheses. Completely new sections are prefaced by the words NEW SECTION.

Session Laws of the Territory of Washington (1854-1888) and *Session Laws of the State of Washington* (1889-current) (commonly called **Laws of Washington**).

Main Level Historical Collection, Main Level Staff Area and Main Reading Room

- [Internet](#) (Office of the Code Reviser, 1854-current)
- HeinOnline: Session Laws Library (1854-current)

Index to the laws, memorials and resolutions passed by the Washington Territorial Legislature, 1853 [i.e. 1854]-1887.

Main Level Historical Collection

- [Internet](#) (Washington State Library)

Laws of Washington: A Publication of the Session Laws of Washington Territory, 1854-88, under the direction of Frank Pierce, 1896. 5 vols.

Main Level Staff Area

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

HISTORICAL CODES

Several codes have been published since Washington was a territory including those listed below. See the article, [Statutory Compilations in Washington](#) by Kelly Kunsch, 12 U. Puget Sound L. Rev. 285 (1989), for a survey of the codes over the years.

Statutes of the Territory of Washington, 1855 (commonly called the **Code of 1854**).

Main Level Historical Collection

- HeinOnline: Session Laws Library

Code of Washington Containing All Acts of a General Nature, Revised and Amended by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Washington, 1881 (commonly called the **Code of 1881**). Also published as vol. 5 of the *Laws of Washington: A Publication of the Session Laws of Washington Territory, 1854-88*. 5 vols.

Main Level Staff Area and Main Level Historical Collection

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Complete Index to the Code of Washington and to the Session Laws Enacted by the Territorial Legislature: Sessions of 1881, 1883, 1885, and 1887.

Main Level Staff Area

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

General Statutes and Codes of the State of Washington, compiled and annotated by William Lair Hill, 1891. 2 vols. (commonly called **Hill's Code**).

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Real Property Statutes of Washington Territory, from 1843 to 1889, by T.O. Abbott, 1892.

Lower Level call number KF566 1892

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

The Code of Procedure and Penal Code of the State of Washington, compiled and annotated by Herbert B. Huntley, 1893 (commonly called **Huntley's Code**).

Special Collections Room call number KF9207 1893

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

The Revised Statutes and Codes of the State of Washington, compiled, annotated and published by E.D. McLaughlin et al., 1896 (commonly called **McLaughlin's Code**). Supplement published in 1897.

Main Level Staff Area

Ballinger's Annotated Codes and Statutes of Washington, by Hon. Richard A. Ballinger, 1897. 2 vols. (commonly called **Ballinger's Code**). Mahan's Supplement published in 1903 (vol.3).

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Pierce's Code: A Compilation of All the Laws in Force in the State of Washington, compiled by Frank Pierce, 1902 (commonly called **Pierce's Code**). Subsequently published in 1905 and 1912 (with a supplement published in 1913).

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive (1905 and 1912 editions)

Remington & Ballinger's Annotated Codes and Statutes of Washington, by Hon. Arthur Remington and Hon. Richard A. Ballinger, 1910. 2 vols. (commonly called **Remington & Ballinger's Annotated Codes**). Supplement published in 1914 (vol. 3).

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Remington's Codes and Statutes of Washington, by Hon. Arthur Remington, 1916. 2 vols. (commonly called **Remington's 1915 Code**).

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Pierce's Code, State of Washington. Cyclopedic Arrangement, Annotated by Frank Pierce, 1919. 2 vols. (commonly called **Pierce's Code**). Republished in 1921, 1923, 1926, 1929, 1933, 1935, 1937, 1939, and 1943 with various supplements and cumulative supplements over the years through 1945.

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive (1919 edition only)

Remington's Compiled Statutes of Washington, Annotated, by Arthur Remington, 1922. 3 vols. (commonly called **Remington's Compiled Statutes**). Supplements published in 1923 and 1927.

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Remington's Revised Statutes of Washington, Annotated, by Arthur Remington, 1932. 12 vols. (commonly called **Remington's Revised Statutes**). Supplements published in 1941, 1943, 1945, 1947 & 1949.

Main Reading Room

- HeinOnline: State Statutes: A Historical Archive

Note: Access to the HeinOnline and Westlaw databases is restricted to in-library use only.