

## **Document Standardization** (RCW 65.04.045, 65.04.047)

The **first page** of all documents must have:

- Three-inch (3) margin at the top and a one-inch (1) margin on the sides and bottom.
- Return address (this is the only thing that can be within the 3-inch margin)
- Document title or titles
- Reference numbers of documents assigned or released (if applicable)
- Names of the grantors and grantees with reference to pages where additional names can be found
- Abbreviated legal description (section/township/range ¼ ¼ or lot/block/plat)
- Assessor's property tax parcel number or account number

**A coversheet may be used to fulfill the three-inch (3) top margin and indexing information requirements listed above, however, the requirements listed below must still be met or the document will be returned for compliance.**

**Also, when a coversheet is used, one dollar will be added to the recording fee for the additional page on the document.**

**If using a coversheet when recording a multiple transaction document, please provide all indexing information for each title.**

The second page and all succeeding pages must have a one-inch margin on all sides.

No attachments are allowed on the pages. (nothing taped or stapled)

The font size must be at least an 8 point.

The page size can be no larger than 8 ½ X 14.

The paper must be of a weight and color capable of producing legible images.

The ink must be a color that is capable of being imaged.

All seals must be legible and capable of being imaged (pressure seals must be smudged).

## Document Standardization Guide

**Format...**The first page of the document must have a three-inch margin at the top, and a one-inch margin on the sides and bottom. The first page must also include the following key information:

- return address on left side (may be within the three-inch top margin)
- document title or titles
- reference numbers of documents assigned or released (if applicable)
- names of the grantors and grantees with reference to pages where additional names can be found
- entire or abbreviated legal description
- assessor's property tax parcel number or account number

All documents will not have all pieces of the above information. Please read the descriptions of each item found later in this guide to see if it applies to the document you are preparing.

Although the requirement is that the information appear on the first page, we appreciate all of the businesses who, when reformatting their documents moved it up and have it immediately following the three-inch top margin. It is our preference for the information to be included in the same order as listed above.

Each additional page of same document must have one-inch margins on all sides.

**Coversheet...**A cover sheet is only required if the first page of the document does not include the required information listed above and a three-inch top margin. When a coversheet is used to fulfill the three-inch top margin and indexing information requirements, all other requirements must still be met or the document will be returned for compliance. Also, when a coversheet is used, \$1.00 will be added to the recording fee for the additional page of the document.

It is our preference that documents be re-formatted to meet the requirements and, therefore, eliminating the need for an extra page. Cover sheets will be provided in the Auditor's office. Although the cover sheet must be completed by the customer, our staff will assist customers in identifying indexing type information (for example, explaining to a customer which name is the grantor and grantee). It is not acceptable to put "See Attached" or "see page \_\_\_" in place of including information on the form.

**Margins...**Aside from the return address in the top three-inch margin all margins must be clear. No additional addresses, bar codes, company logos, line numbers, order numbers, page numbers, tracking numbers, headers, footers, notary or other seals, signatures, initials, etc., may be placed in any margin. You may place this information on the document, just keep it out of the required margins.

There is no "penalty fee" included in the statutes for documents which do not comply with margin requirements. Documents which do not comply will be returned for reformatting.

**Attachments...**No attachments may be affixed to documents presented for recording. Attachments, for purposes of this statute, refers to notary seals, sticky notes, or other items stapled, taped, etc., on to the face of a document. Attachment does not refer to additional pages added to the end of a document such as addenda, schedules, or expanded legals which may be referred to in the body of the document as "Attachment A or Appendix A, etc."

## Document Standardization Guide (continued)

**Font...**The font size must be 8 point type or larger. Smaller than that is very difficult to read, and does not image or reproduce easily.

**Page Size...**The maximum page size is 8½x14. If the document is oversize, the customer will need to reduce the original to fit on 8½x14 or use multiple 8½x14 pages. Some counties may accept the map on an 18x24 mylar.

**Legibility...**The paper must be of a weight and color capable of producing legible images. Watermarks in the body of documents produce unreadable images and should be returned for reformatting. Highlighters can cause problems. When documents have been highlighted in certain colors those words are obliterated when scanned, copied or filmed.

**Title...**Title or titles of the document. If using a cover sheet, the title(s) on the coversheet must be the same as the title(s) on the document.

**Return Address...**The return address should be placed within the three-inch top margin.

**Reference Number...**A reference number is the Auditor's file number and volume and page (if used) of the document being assigned or released.

**Grantor...**To find the appropriate party/parties to place in this field please see the list titled "SUMMARY OF RECORDED DOCUMENTS".

**Grantee...**See "Grantor"

**Legal Description...**If a document has not historically included a legal description this statute does not require customers to begin adding a legal. If a legal does appear on the document, or cover sheet, the assessor's tax parcel identification number must also appear on the first page.

If the entire legal is on the first page, there is no need or requirement to also abbreviate it on the first page. In cases where the entire legal does not appear on the first page it must be abbreviated and placed on the first page of the document, or cover sheet, with a reference as to where the entire legal is located. Appropriate abbreviations are:

Lot Block Subdivision  
or  
Section-Township-Range quarter-quarter section (i.e., 32-17N-3W NE NE)

It is not acceptable to put "See attached" or "refer to Appendix A" in place of abbreviating the legal.

**Assessor's Tax Parcel Id Number...**A tax parcel ID number **must** appear on the first page of the document/cover sheet if a legal is included in the document. If there are too many numbers to fit on the first page, you must put what will fit and a reference to the page of the document where the remainder is located. If you need help locating the number you can contact the local

## Document Standardization Guide (continued)

*(Assessor's tax parcel ID number continued)* County Assessor's office. If the parcel number has not yet been assigned put "Not Yet Assigned" in the space for parcel number. If a parcel number is on the document the legal must also be included.

**Documents which will be recorded with a properly completed cover sheet...** Anything signed or created prior to January 1, 1997, birth certificates, death certificates, out of **country** documents, certified copies of documents recorded or filed (court documents), judgments or other court documents formatted to meet court requirements, marriage certificates from out of local county, DD214's.

**Documents which are exempt from the requirements and do not require cover sheets...**IRS documents, marriage certificates from local county

**UCCs...** Washington State UCC forms (UCC-3s) are designed by the Washington State Department of Licensing for use by their office for UCCs filed with them. These forms are for their internal use, and will not comply with the document standardization requirements. UCCs for Auditor's office use (UCC-2s & 5s) that comply with the new requirements have been redesigned and are available from forms companies.

**Common Problems for Document Refusal...**Seals in margin, signature or initials in margin, missing parcel number, something other than the return address in top three-inch margin, one-inch margins are not one-inch.