

RCW 9.73.230 Intercepting, transmitting, or recording conversations concerning controlled substances or commercial sexual abuse of a minor—Conditions—Written reports required—Judicial review—Notice—Admissibility—Penalties.

(1) As part of a bona fide criminal investigation, the chief law enforcement officer of a law enforcement agency or his or her designee above the rank of first line supervisor may authorize the interception, transmission, or recording of a conversation or communication by officers under the following circumstances:

(a) At least one party to the conversation or communication has consented to the interception, transmission, or recording;

(b) Probable cause exists to believe that the conversation or communication involves:

(i) The unlawful manufacture, delivery, sale, or possession with intent to manufacture, deliver, or sell, controlled substances as defined in chapter 69.50 RCW, or legend drugs as defined in chapter 69.41 RCW, or imitation controlled substances as defined in chapter 69.52 RCW; or

(ii) A party engaging in the commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.100, or promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.101, or promoting travel for commercial sexual abuse of a minor under RCW 9.68A.102; and

(c) A written report has been completed as required by subsection (2) of this section.

(2) The agency's chief officer or designee authorizing an interception, transmission, or recording under subsection (1) of this section, shall prepare and sign a written report at the time of authorization indicating:

(a) The circumstances that meet the requirements of subsection (1) of this section;

(b) The names of the authorizing and consenting parties, except that in those cases where the consenting party is a confidential informant, the name of the confidential informant need not be divulged;

(c) The names of the officers authorized to intercept, transmit, and record the conversation or communication;

(d) The identity of the particular person or persons, if known, who may have committed or may commit the offense;

(e) The details of the particular offense or offenses that may have been or may be committed and the expected date, location, and approximate time of the conversation or communication; and

(f) Whether there was an attempt to obtain authorization pursuant to RCW 9.73.090(2) and, if there was such an attempt, the outcome of the attempt.

(3) An authorization under this section is valid in all jurisdictions within Washington state and for the interception of communications from additional persons if the persons are brought into the conversation or transaction by the nonconsenting party or if the nonconsenting party or such additional persons cause or invite the consenting party to enter another jurisdiction.

(4) The recording of any conversation or communication under this section shall be done in such a manner that protects the recording from editing or other alterations.

(5) An authorization made under this section is valid for no more than twenty-four hours from the time it is signed by the authorizing officer, and each authorization shall independently meet all of the

requirements of this section. The authorizing officer shall sign the written report required under subsection (2) of this section, certifying the exact date and time of his or her signature. An authorization under this section may be extended not more than twice for an additional consecutive twenty-four hour period based upon the same probable cause regarding the same suspected transaction. Each such extension shall be signed by the authorizing officer.

(6) Within fifteen days after the signing of an authorization that results in any interception, transmission, or recording of a conversation or communication pursuant to this section, the law enforcement agency which made the interception, transmission, or recording shall submit a report including the original authorization under subsection (2) of this section to a judge of a court having jurisdiction which report shall identify (a) the persons, including the consenting party, who participated in the conversation, and (b) the date, location, and approximate time of the conversation.

In those cases where the consenting party is a confidential informant, the name of the confidential informant need not be divulged.

A monthly report shall be filed by the law enforcement agency with the administrator for the courts indicating the number of authorizations granted, the date and time of each authorization, interceptions made, arrests resulting from an interception, and subsequent invalidations.

(7) (a) Within two judicial days of receipt of a report under subsection (6) of this section, the court shall make an ex parte review of the authorization and shall make a determination whether the requirements of subsection (1) of this section were met. Evidence obtained as a result of the interception, transmission, or recording need not be submitted to the court. If the court determines that any of the requirements of subsection (1) of this section were not met, the court shall order that any recording and any copies or transcriptions of the conversation or communication be destroyed. Destruction of recordings, copies, or transcriptions shall be stayed pending any appeal of a finding that the requirements of subsection (1) of this section were not met.

(b) Absent a continuation under (c) of this subsection, six months following a determination under (a) of this subsection that probable cause did not exist, the court shall cause a notice to be mailed to the last known address of any nonconsenting party to the conversation or communication that was the subject of the authorization. The notice shall indicate the date, time, and place of any interception, transmission, or recording made pursuant to the authorization. The notice shall also identify the agency that sought the authorization and shall indicate that a review under (a) of this subsection resulted in a determination that the authorization was made in violation of this section provided that, if the confidential informant was a minor at the time of the recording or an alleged victim of commercial child sexual abuse under RCW 9.68A.100 through 9.68A.102 or 9[A].40.100, no such notice shall be given.

(c) An authorizing agency may obtain six-month extensions to the notice requirement of (b) of this subsection in cases of active, ongoing criminal investigations that might be jeopardized by sending the notice.

(8) In any subsequent judicial proceeding, evidence obtained through the interception or recording of a conversation or communication pursuant to this section shall be admissible only if:

(a) The court finds that the requirements of subsection (1) of this section were met and the evidence is used in prosecuting an offense listed in subsection (1)(b) of this section; or

(b) The evidence is admitted with the permission of the person whose communication or conversation was intercepted, transmitted, or recorded; or

(c) The evidence is admitted in a prosecution for a "serious violent offense" as defined in RCW 9.94A.030 in which a party who consented to the interception, transmission, or recording was a victim of the offense; or

(d) The evidence is admitted in a civil suit for personal injury or wrongful death arising out of the same incident, in which a party who consented to the interception, transmission, or recording was a victim of a serious violent offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030.

Nothing in this subsection bars the admission of testimony of a party or eyewitness to the intercepted, transmitted, or recorded conversation or communication when that testimony is unaided by information obtained solely by violation of RCW 9.73.030.

(9) Any determination of invalidity of an authorization under this section shall be reported by the court to the administrative office of the courts.

(10) Any person who intentionally intercepts, transmits, or records or who intentionally authorizes the interception, transmission, or recording of a conversation or communication in violation of this section, is guilty of a class C felony punishable according to chapter 9A.20 RCW.

(11) An authorizing agency is liable for twenty-five thousand dollars in exemplary damages, in addition to any other damages authorized by this chapter or by other law, to a person whose conversation or communication was intercepted, transmitted, or recorded pursuant to an authorization under this section if:

(a) In a review under subsection (7) of this section, or in a suppression of evidence proceeding, it has been determined that the authorization was made without the probable cause required by subsection (1)(b) of this section; and

(b) The authorization was also made without a reasonable suspicion that the conversation or communication would involve the unlawful acts identified in subsection (1)(b) of this section. [2011 c 241 § 2; 2005 c 282 § 17; 1989 c 271 § 204.]

Findings—2011 c 241: "The legislature finds increasing incidents of commercial sexual exploitation of children in our state, and further protection of victims require giving law enforcement agencies the tool to have a unified victim-centered police investigation approach to further protect victims by ensuring their safety by prosecuting traffickers. The one-party consent provision permitted for drug trafficking investigation passed in the comprehensive bill to facilitate police investigation and prosecution of drug trafficking crimes is a helpful tool to this end. The legislature also finds that exceptions should be allowed for minors employed for investigation when the minor is a victim and involves only electronic communication with the defendant." [2011 c 241 § 1.]

Effective date—2011 c 241: "This act takes effect August 1, 2011." [2011 c 241 § 5.]

Severability—1989 c 271: See note following RCW 9.94A.510.