

RCW 10.77.084 Stay of proceedings—Treatment—Restoration of competency—Commitment—Other procedures. (1) (a) If at any time during the pendency of an action and prior to judgment the court finds, following a report as provided in RCW 10.77.060, a defendant is incompetent, the court shall order the proceedings against the defendant be stayed except as provided in subsection (4) of this section. Beginning October 1, 2023, if the defendant is charged with a serious traffic offense under RCW 9.94A.030, or a felony version of a serious traffic offense, the court may order the clerk to transmit an order to the department of licensing for revocation of the defendant's driver's license for a period of one year.

(b) The court may order a defendant who has been found to be incompetent to undergo competency restoration treatment at a facility designated by the department if the defendant is eligible under RCW 10.77.086 or 10.77.088. At the end of each competency restoration period or at any time a professional person determines competency has been, or is unlikely to be, restored, the defendant shall be returned to court for a hearing, except that if the opinion of the professional person is that the defendant remains incompetent and the hearing is held before the expiration of the current competency restoration period, the parties may agree to waive the defendant's presence, to remote participation by the defendant at a hearing, or to presentation of an agreed order in lieu of a hearing. The facility shall promptly notify the court and all parties of the date on which the competency restoration period commences and expires so that a timely hearing date may be scheduled.

(c) If, following notice and hearing or entry of an agreed order under (b) of this subsection, the court finds that competency has been restored, the court shall lift the stay entered under (a) of this subsection. If the court finds that competency has not been restored, the court shall dismiss the proceedings without prejudice, except that the court may order a further period of competency restoration treatment if it finds that further treatment within the time limits established by RCW 10.77.086 or 10.77.088 is likely to restore competency, and a further period of treatment is allowed under RCW 10.77.086 or 10.77.088.

(d) If at any time during the proceeding the court finds, following notice and hearing, a defendant is not likely to regain competency, the court shall dismiss the proceedings without prejudice and refer the defendant for civil commitment evaluation or proceedings if appropriate under RCW 10.77.065, 10.77.086, or 10.77.088.

(e) Beginning October 1, 2023, if the court issues an order directing revocation of the defendant's driver's license under (a) of this subsection, and the court subsequently finds that the defendant's competency has been restored, the court shall order the clerk to transmit an order to the department of licensing for reinstatement of the defendant's driver's license. The court may direct the clerk to transmit an order reinstating the defendant's driver's license before the end of one year for good cause upon the petition of the defendant.

(2) If the defendant is referred for evaluation by a designated crisis responder under this chapter, the designated crisis responder shall provide prompt written notification of the results of the evaluation and whether the person was detained. The notification shall be provided to the court in which the criminal action was pending, the prosecutor, the defense attorney in the criminal action, and the facility that evaluated the defendant for competency.

(3) The fact that the defendant is unfit to proceed does not preclude any pretrial proceedings which do not require the personal participation of the defendant.

(4) A defendant receiving medication for either physical or mental problems shall not be prohibited from standing trial, if the medication either enables the defendant to understand the proceedings against him or her and to assist in his or her own defense, or does not disable him or her from so understanding and assisting in his or her own defense.

(5) At or before the conclusion of any commitment period provided for by this section, the facility providing evaluation and treatment shall provide to the court a written report of evaluation which meets the requirements of RCW 10.77.060(3). For defendants charged with a felony, the report following the second competency restoration period or first competency restoration period if the defendant's incompetence is determined to be solely due to a developmental disability or the evaluator concludes that the defendant is not likely to regain competency must include an assessment of the defendant's future dangerousness which is evidence-based regarding predictive validity. [2023 c 453 s 6; 2016 sp.s. c 29 s 410; 2015 1st sp.s. c 7 s 4; 2012 c 256 s 5; 2007 c 375 s 3.]

Findings—2023 c 453: See note following RCW 10.77.060.

Effective dates—2016 sp.s. c 29: See note following RCW 71.05.760.

Short title—Right of action—2016 sp.s. c 29: See notes following RCW 71.05.010.

Finding—2015 1st sp.s. c 7: See note following RCW 10.77.075.

Effective dates—2015 1st sp.s. c 7: See note following RCW 10.77.075.

Purpose—Effective date—2012 c 256: See notes following RCW 10.77.068.

Findings—Purpose—Construction—Severability—2007 c 375: See notes following RCW 10.31.110.

Captions not law—2007 c 375: "Captions used in this act are not any part of the law." [2007 c 375 s 19.]