

RCW 5.70.010 Preservation of DNA work product—Failure to preserve DNA work product. (1) In any felony case initially charged as a violent or sex offense, as defined in RCW 9.94A.030, a governmental entity shall preserve any DNA work product that has been secured in connection with the criminal case, including related investigatory reports and records, according to the following guidelines:

(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, where a defendant has been charged and convicted in connection with the case, the DNA work product and investigatory reports and records must be maintained throughout the length of the sentence, including any period of community custody extending through final discharge;

(b) Where a defendant has been convicted and sentenced under RCW 9.94A.507 in connection with the case, the DNA work product and investigatory reports and records must be maintained for ninety-nine years or until the death of the defendant, whichever is sooner; and

(c) Where no conviction has been made in connection with the case, the DNA work product and investigatory reports and records must be maintained for ninety-nine years or throughout the period of the statute of limitations pursuant to RCW 9A.04.080, whichever is sooner.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, in any felony case regardless of whether the identity of the offender is known and law enforcement has probable cause sufficient to believe the elements of a violent or sex offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030 have been committed, a governmental entity shall preserve any DNA work product secured in connection with the criminal case and investigatory reports and records for ninety-nine years or throughout the period of the statute of limitations pursuant to RCW 9A.04.080, whichever is sooner.

(3) The failure of a law enforcement agency to preserve DNA work product does not constitute grounds in any criminal proceeding for challenging the admissibility of other DNA work product that was preserved in a case, and any evidence offered may not be excluded by a court on those grounds. The court may not set aside the conviction or sentence or order the reversal of a conviction under this section on the grounds that the DNA work product is no longer available. Unless the court finds that DNA work product was destroyed with malicious intent to violate this section, a person accused of committing a crime against a person has no cause of action against a law enforcement agency for failure to comply with the requirements of this section. If the court finds that DNA work product was destroyed with malicious intent to violate this section, the court may impose appropriate sanctions. Nothing in this section may be construed to create a private right of action on the part of any individual or entity against any law enforcement agency or any contractor of a law enforcement agency. [2020 c 26 § 1; 2015 c 221 § 1.]

Intent—2020 c 26: See note following RCW 63.21.090.