

WAC 173-153-070 What does an applicant need to know about filing an application for transfer of a water right?

How are applications accepted for processing by a board?

(1) Ecology will provide water right transfer application forms and applicant instructions to boards, which will make them available to the public upon request. All applications to a board must be made using the water right application for change/transfer form supplied by ecology, form number 040-1-97.

(2) Boards and ecology shall inform all applicants that the decision to file a transfer application with a board rather than directly with ecology is solely at the discretion of the applicant, provided a board is active in the area addressed by the transfer application.

(3) A water right transfer application is considered filed when it is received by a board commissioner, or a designated administrative support person for a board at the location designated by the board.

(4) A separate application must be filed for each water right that is proposed to be transferred.

(5) A majority vote of a quorum of a board is required to accept a complete application for processing.

What must a complete application include?

(6) Boards shall require that applications submitted directly to them are complete and legible. A complete application shall:

(a) Contain the information requested on the application form as applicable.

(b) Include all required signatures.

(c) Be accompanied by such maps and drawings, in duplicate, and such other data or fees, as may be required by the board. Such accompanying data shall be considered as part of the application as described in RCW 90.03.260.

(7) A board may request that an applicant provide additional information as part of the application by requiring, for example, that the applicant complete additional forms supplemental to the standard application or that applicant prepare and/or provide specific reports regarding aspects of the application.

How is an application number assigned to a water right transfer application filed with a board?

(8) The board shall assign a unique number to a water right transfer application upon acceptance of the application by the board.

(9) The number assigned by the board to the water right transfer application shall be written in ink within the "office use only" space provided on the application for the application number.

(10) The water right transfer application, public notice, record of decision, and report of examination produced by the board in processing the application shall reference the board-assigned number.

(11) The unique application number is assigned in accordance with the following three-part format:

(a) The first part of the board-assigned application number will identify the board that has accepted the application as follows:

(i) Boards having jurisdiction within a geographic area that is based upon a county boundary or the boundary of multiple counties will begin all application numbers with the first four letters of the name of the county or of the lead county. For example, a board with jurisdiction within Kittitas County will begin each application number with the letters "KITT."

(ii) Boards that have jurisdiction within a geographic area that is based upon a water resource inventory area (WRIA) or multiple WRIAs will use the number of the WRIA of jurisdiction or, in the case of

multi-WRIA boards, the WRIA of jurisdiction associated with the water right.

(b) The second part of the board-assigned application number will be the last two digits of the year in which the application was accepted. For example, applications that are accepted during the year 2003 will use the digits "03."

(c) The third part of the board-assigned application number will be a sequential two-digit number beginning with the number "01" for the first application accepted after the effective date of this rule and beginning with number "01" for the first application accepted by the board during each subsequent calendar year.

(d) A dash (-) will be used to separate the three parts of the application number as provided within (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection. For instance, the first application accepted by the Kittitas County water conservancy board during the year 2003 will be assigned number KITT-03-01.

Can applications before a board also be considered filed with ecology?

(12) The board must forward the complete original application form upon which the board has legibly written the board-assigned application number in the "office use only" space to the ecology designated regional representative within five business days of the date the board accepts the application for processing.

(13) Within thirty business days from the date ecology receives the application from the board, ecology will assign a state water right change application number to the application and inform the board of the assigned number. The number assigned by ecology will be used for ecology's internal administrative purposes, including the recording of the application within the state water right record. The ecology-assigned number need not be used by the board in processing the application, including within the public notice.

(14) Ecology will open and maintain a file regarding the application for permanent recordkeeping. The application will not be considered as part of ecology's active application processing workload while the application is being processed by the board, but upon receipt of the application by ecology, the application is considered to be dual-filed with both the board and ecology. The application will retain a place in line with ecology based upon the date of acceptance by the board without payment of state examination fees as long as the board is processing the application.

(15) Ecology shall not act on the application unless it is notified by the board that the board has declined to process the application and upon receiving a written request from the applicant that ecology process the application. Upon written request from the applicant that ecology process the application, the required state examination fee will be due. Ecology shall notify the applicant that examination fees are due to ecology. The applicant must submit the required state examination fee within sixty days after the written request to ecology to process the application. Ecology will not process an application until all fees are paid.

(16) The applicant may voluntarily withdraw the application from the board by making such request to the board in written form. The board shall forward a copy of the applicant's request to withdraw the application to the ecology designated regional representative. The application is considered withdrawn from ecology upon the withdrawal of the application from the board. Ecology will remove the application from its line and reject the application.

How can responsibility for processing an application previously filed with ecology be transferred to a board?

(17) If an application has previously been filed with ecology, the applicant may make a request that ecology convey the application to the board with geographic jurisdiction. Such a request must be in written form. A copy of the written request to ecology must be sent to the board at the same time. Ecology will comply with the request by providing all related file documents to the appropriate board. The original application will continue to be on file and maintained at ecology but will not be considered as part of ecology's active workload while the application is being processed by the board.

(18) The board shall notify ecology if it accepts the application for processing. Upon acceptance for processing by the board, the application will retain its place in line at ecology and be considered dual-filed with both the board and ecology. Ecology will remove the application from its active workload. The board will assign an application number in accordance with subsection (11) of this section and inform the ecology designated regional representative in writing of the board's application number within five business days of accepting the application.

(19) If an application previously filed directly with ecology is accepted for processing by a board, the board shall ensure that a public notice of the application consistent with WAC 173-153-080 is made, regardless of whether the application was previously subject to public notice by ecology.

Can a board decide not to accept an application for processing, or decide to discontinue processing an application?

(20) By a majority vote of a quorum of a board, a board may decline to process or may discontinue processing an application at any time. The board must inform the applicant of its decision in writing within fourteen business days of making the decision. The board must, at the same time, send the ecology regional office a copy of the board's written notice to the applicant. If the basis of the board's decision to decline processing the application is not sufficiently clear from the written notice, and the applicant filed a written request that ecology process the application, ecology may request a further written explanation regarding the board's decision not to process or finish processing the application. The board must provide this additional written explanation within thirty days of ecology's request.

(21) If a board declines to process or discontinues processing an application, it must return the application to the applicant and must inform the applicant that the application may be filed with ecology and advise the applicant of the appropriate ecology office where the application should be filed.

Who must receive copies of applications being processed by a board?

(22) Boards must ensure that copies of applications accepted by them for processing are provided to interested parties in compliance with existing laws. To assist the boards in this, ecology will provide a list of parties which have identified themselves to ecology as interested in the geographic area of the board. Additional interested parties, including Indian tribes, may request copies of applications from boards.

(23) A notice of each application accepted by a board shall be provided to any Indian tribe that has reservation lands or trust lands contiguous with or encompassed within the geographic area of the board's jurisdiction.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 90.80.040. WSR 06-18-102 (Order 05-18), § 173-153-070, filed 9/6/06, effective 10/7/06; WSR 03-01-039 (Order 01-13), § 173-153-070, filed 12/9/02, effective 1/9/03. Statutory Authority: Chapter 90.80 RCW. WSR 99-23-101 (Order 98-11), § 173-153-070, filed 11/17/99, effective 12/18/99.]