

RCW 9.73.095 Intercepting, recording, or divulging offender conversations—Conditions—Notice. (1) RCW 9.73.030 through 9.73.080 and 9.73.260 shall not apply to employees of the department of corrections in the following instances: Intercepting, recording, or divulging any telephone calls from an offender or resident of a state correctional facility; or intercepting, recording, or divulging any monitored nontelephonic conversations in offender living units, cells, rooms, dormitories, and common spaces where offenders may be present. For the purposes of this section, "state correctional facility" means a facility that is under the control and authority of the department of corrections, and used for the incarceration, treatment, or rehabilitation of convicted felons.

(2) (a) All personal calls made by offenders shall be made using a calling system approved by the secretary of corrections which is at least as secure as the system it replaces. In approving one or more calling systems, the secretary of corrections shall consider the safety of the public, the ability to reduce telephone fraud, and the ability of offender families to select a low-cost option.

(b) The calls shall be "operator announcement" type calls. The operator shall notify the receiver of the call that the call is coming from a prison offender, and that it will be recorded and may be monitored.

(3) The department of corrections shall adhere to the following procedures and restrictions when intercepting, recording, or divulging any telephone calls from an offender or resident of a state correctional facility as provided for by this section. The department shall also adhere to the following procedures and restrictions when intercepting, recording, or divulging any monitored nontelephonic conversations in offender living units, cells, rooms, dormitories, and common spaces where offenders may be present:

(a) Unless otherwise provided for in this section, after intercepting or recording any conversation, only the superintendent and his or her designee shall have access to that recording.

(b) The contents of any intercepted and recorded conversation shall be divulged only as is necessary to safeguard the orderly operation of the correctional facility, in response to a court order, or in the prosecution or investigation of any crime.

(c) All conversations that are recorded under this section, unless being used in the ongoing investigation or prosecution of a crime, or as is necessary to assure the orderly operation of the correctional facility, shall be destroyed one year after the intercepting and recording.

(4) So as to safeguard the sanctity of the attorney-client privilege, the department of corrections shall not intercept, record, or divulge any conversation between an offender or resident and an attorney. The department shall develop policies and procedures to implement this section. The department's policies and procedures implemented under this section shall also recognize the privileged nature of confessions made by an offender to a member of the clergy or a priest in his or her professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which he or she belongs as provided in RCW 5.60.060(3).

(5) The department shall notify in writing all offenders, residents, and personnel of state correctional facilities that their nontelephonic conversations may be intercepted, recorded, or divulged in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(6) The department shall notify all visitors to state correctional facilities who may enter offender living units, cells, rooms, dormitories, or common spaces where offenders may be present, that their conversations may intercepted, recorded, or divulged in accordance with the provisions of this section. The notice required under this subsection shall be accomplished through a means no less conspicuous than a general posting in a location likely to be seen by visitors entering the facility. [2004 c 13 § 2; 1998 c 217 § 2; 1996 c 197 § 1; 1989 c 271 § 210.]

Findings—Intent—2004 c 13: "The legislature finds that the current telephone service for offender calls from department of corrections facilities is based on outdated technology that provides neither the most secure nor the most accountable system available and is provided at a high cost to the offenders' families. The legislature, in budget provisions, has required the secretary of corrections to investigate other systems as offender telephone service contracts came due for renewal. The legislature now finds that the current statute prevents the secretary of corrections from using systems that provide greater security, more offender accountability, and lower costs. Therefore, the legislature intends to remove this barrier while retaining the intent of the statute to provide safe, accountable, and affordable telephone services." [2004 c 13 § 1.]

Effective dates—1996 c 197: "(1) Sections 1 and 3 of this act shall take effect August 1, 1996.

(2) Section 2 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [March 28, 1996]." [1996 c 197 § 4.]

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

Local government reimbursement claims: RCW 4.92.280.