What Happens After a Law is Passed

1 **SESSION LAWS**

After a legislative session, all the bills that made their way through the State legislature and were signed by the Governor are added to a chronological arrangement of laws called “session laws” or “Laws of Washington.” When you need to read the text of a law as it was originally enacted, consult the session laws.


2 **REVISED CODE OF WASHINGTON (RCW)**

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is the compilation of all permanent laws now in force. It is a collection of Session Laws (enacted by the Legislature, and signed by the Governor), arranged by topic (91 titles).

3 **ANNOTATED RCW/CASE ANNOTATIONS**

Commercial services include annotated versions of the Revised Code of Washington. Annotations after each section refer to appellate court opinions, law review articles, and other secondary sources.

Revised Code of Washington Annotated (Westlaw)
Annotated Revised Code of Washington (Lexis)

All of the major databases contain some form of case annotations. On Lexis Advance they are called case notes, on Westlaw they are called Notes of Decisions, on Casemaker they are under the Annotator tab and on Bloomberg they are under the Smart Code tab.

**UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SECTIONS, CHAPTERS, TITLES**

- You must always move out to the chapter level and title level to ensure you find any related statutes that may effect your code provision.
- Most chapters will have a definitions section that will have mandatory application to all language within the chapter.
- Look at: Purpose, Intent, Statutes of Limitations, Effective Dates, Exceptions, Penalties.
- Follow all cross references.