

Public Record Update

October 2015

Courts Information

Alaska Court Record Fees - Dramatic Increase

Search, copy and certification fees are established by court rules. Per Alaska Supreme Court Order No. 1861, effective August 1, 2015, a number of record searching and filing court fees were dramatically increased for the Superior and District courts. A court record search requested in writing is \$30.00 an hour, up from \$15.00 an hour. The cost for a photo copy, including if from microfilm, changed from \$.25 per page to \$5.00 for a single document or portion thereof. Certification increased from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per document.

Both old and new fees may be viewed at <http://courts.alaska.gov/sco/sco1861leg.pdf>.

South Carolina Probate - 10 Counties Online

Ten counties now provide a name search of probate data online at <https://www.southcarolinaprobate.net/search/default.aspx>. The counties are Barnwell, Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Jasper, Marlboro, Newberry, Saluda, and York.

Washington

Court

Documents

According to our friend, Investigator Jim Cronin, 26 of 39 Washington's County Superior Courts now have sources for retrieving electronic copies of their court records. Mr. Cronin has put together a 7-page handout showing 4 different types of courts for each WA county and the document provider associated with that court and county. There are 9 document providers listed in total covering the 26 participating counties. Mr. Cronin is offering free access to this handout from his web page at www.seattle-investigations.com. To view the handout, there are two easy steps: First, click on the big button towards the bottom of the page that says "Click Here." Then on the next page, simply click the tab that says "Handouts - Searching Washington Court Records" and you are there. We sincerely thank Mr. Cronin for sharing his material.

Recorders Information

Washington Recorders

Effective October 9, 2015, a 2015 amendment to RCS 36.18.010 increased the recording fee for all documents by \$1.00. This also means the recording fees for a Substitution of Trustee and Full Reconveyance increased by \$2.00 since it incorporates two documents in one. The law has not been codified yet. Click on [House Bill 2195](#) to view a copy of the enrolled bill.

An interesting fact: The fee for searching records remains at \$8.00 per hour while the minimum wage in Washington is set at \$9.47 an hour.

Motor Vehicle Information

South Dakota Accident Reports

Records may be purchased online for \$10.00 per record. Use of a credit card is required. See <http://safesd.gov/>. Records prior to 2004 are not available for purchase online.

Changes at Wisconsin DMV

1) New Driver's License and ID cards

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) recently began issuing new driver licenses (DL) and identification (ID) cards. Probably the best overall explanation of the new cards and formats is found at <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/newsroom/logo-photo-gal/newdlidmaterial.aspx>.

2) | | | | | |--|------------|------------|-------------| | | New | Web | Page | |--|------------|------------|-------------|

The Wisconsin DOT recently changed its URL. The new home page is <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

The new web page affected many links commonly used by people interested in the state's motor vehicle records. Below is a selected list of several key page changes.

- DL documentation requirements and what documents are acceptable as proof of identity, residency, and citizenship: <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drivers/how-to-apply/documentation.aspx>
- Record Request Form MV2896: <http://wisconsin.gov/Documents/formdocs/mv2896.pdf>
- Source of Online Services including Driver's License Status, Vehicle Lienholder Search, Copy of Current Registration, and Purchase driving record (if requester is license holder): <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/online-srvcs/online.aspx>.

Record Searching Tips

Business Investigations: Discovering Silent Partners

By Cynthia Hetherington - From *The Guide to Online Due Diligence Investigations*

Silent partners can be difficult to pin down. Below are five investigative tracks that help identify these investors.

1. **Secure and read annual reports.** Depending on which state a company has its headquarters, the annual reports and available data will vary. Some states offer extensive details about the company, the partners, and the owners. Florida is a great state for gathering information on company shareholders. Whereas other states like Delaware and New Jersey, the information can be weak, often times excluding the officers.
2. **Investors can be identified through a few online services.** Check business reports from D&B and Experian. The best source for this type of search is Capital IQ from Standard & Poor's.
3. **Check legal histories.** If the company, whether large or small, has been sued in the past, all the investors, major shareholders, and partners should be listed as defendants. Also, conduct legal searches on any identified chief officers. Perhaps the company you are searching for has not been sued directly; but if one of its officers has, it may be because of his connection with a prior company. That prior company may share the same investors and shareholders as the current

company. Look for connections in the UCC filings, as discussed in Chapter 7.

4. **Thoroughly examine the company's Web site.** Look for links to Partners, Management, and Investors. Some companies list their business partners as board members or advisers. Also, if the company maintains press releases, read them for leads.
5. **Check media resources.** Look for press announcements of partnerships or similar types of events. Even finding past corporate affiliations will open up leads.

The necessary diligence in reporting information should lead the investigator to writing a history for each person found. As the biographies are written, cross connections can be established.

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