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WASHINGTON MINING CLAIM STATUTES

Chapter 78.08 RCW

LOCATION OF MINING CLAIMS

[Chapter Listing](#) | [RCW Dispositions](#)

Sections

1887 ACT

- [78.08.005](#) Prior claims, how governed.
- [78.08.020](#) Extent of lode claims.
- [78.08.030](#) Rights of locators.
- [78.08.040](#) Recording instruments affecting claim.

1899 AND LATER ACTS

- [78.08.050](#) Location notices—Contents—Recording.
- [78.08.060](#) Staking of claim—Requisites—Right of person diligently engaged in search.
- [78.08.070](#) Cut, excavation, tunnel or test hole in lieu of discovery shaft.
- [78.08.072](#) Holding claim by geological, etc., survey—Report of survey.
- [78.08.075](#) "Lode" defined.
- [78.08.080](#) Amended certificate of location.
- [78.08.081](#) Assessment work, affidavit of work performed or affidavit of fees paid.
- [78.08.082](#) Affidavit is prima facie evidence.
- [78.08.090](#) Relocating abandoned claim.
- [78.08.100](#) Location of placer claims.
- [78.08.110](#) Affidavit as proof.
- [78.08.115](#) Application of RCW [78.08.050](#) through [78.08.115](#).

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78.08.005

Prior claims, how governed.

All mining claims upon veins or lodes of quartz or other rock in place, bearing gold, silver or other valuable mineral deposits heretofore located, shall be governed as to length along the vein or lode by the customs, regulations and laws in force at the date of such location.

[[1887 c 87 § 1](#); RRS § 8615.]

NOTES:

For earlier acts on this subject, see: 1867 pp 146-147, 1869 pp 386-388, 1873 pp 444-446, 1875 pp 126-127, 1877 pp 335-336. See also, act of congress, May 10, 1872.

78.08.020

Extent of lode claims.

A mining claim located upon any vein or lode of quartz or other rock in place, bearing gold, silver or other valuable mineral deposits, after the approval of *this act by the governor, whether located by one or more persons, may equal, but shall not exceed, one thousand five hundred feet in length along the vein or lode; but no location of a mining claim shall be made until the discovery of the vein or lode within the limits of the claims located. No claims shall extend more than three hundred feet on each side of the middle of the vein at the surface, nor shall any claims be limited by any mining regulation to less than fifty feet of surface on each side of the middle of such vein or lode at the surface, excepting where adverse rights, existing at the date of the approval of this act, shall make such limitation necessary. The end lines of each claim shall be parallel to each other.

[[1887 c 87 § 2](#); RRS § 8616.]

NOTES:

*Reviser's note: "this act" [1887 c 87], is codified in RCW [78.08.005](#) through [78.08.040](#); "date of the approval of this act" was February 2, 1888.

78.08.030

Rights of locators.

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The locators of all mining locations heretofore made or hereafter made under the provisions of RCW [78.08.005](#) through [78.08.040](#), on any mineral vein, lode or ledge on the public domain, and their heirs and assigns so long as they comply with the laws of the United States and the state and local laws relating thereto, shall have the exclusive right to the possession and enjoyment of all surface included within the lines of their location, and of all veins, lodes and ledges throughout their entire depth, and the top or apex of which lies within the surface lines of such location, extending downward vertically, although such veins, lodes or ledges may so far depart from the perpendicular in their course downward as to extend outside of the vertical side line of said surface location.

[[1887 c 87 § 3](#); RRS § 8617.]

78.08.040

Recording instruments affecting claim.

All location notices, bonds, assignments and transfers of mining claims shall be recorded in the office of the county auditor of the county where the same is situated within thirty days after the execution thereof.

[[1979 ex.s. c 30 § 15](#); [1887 c 87 § 7](#); RRS § 8621.]

78.08.050

Location notices—Contents—Recording.

The discoverer of a lode shall within ninety days from the date of discovery, record in the office of the auditor of the county in which such lode is found, a notice containing the name or names of the locators, the date of the location, the number of feet in length claimed on each side of the discovery, the general course of the lode and such a description of the claim or claims located by reference to some natural object or permanent monument as will identify the claim.

[[1899 c 45 § 1](#); RRS § 8622.]

NOTES:

For earlier acts on this subject, see: 1867 pp 146-147, 1869 pp 386-388, 1873 pp 444-446, 1875 pp 126-127, 1877 pp 335-336, 1887 c 87; see also, act of congress, May 10, 1872.

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78.08.060

Staking of claim—Requisites—Right of person diligently engaged in search.

(1) Before filing such notice for record, the discoverer shall locate his or her claim by posting at the discovery at the time of discovery a notice containing the name of the lode, the name of the locator or locators, and the date of discovery, and marking the surface boundaries of the claim by placing substantial posts or stone monuments bearing the name of the lode and date of location; one post or monument must appear at each corner of such claim; such posts or monuments must be not less than three feet high; if posts are used they shall be not less than four inches in diameter and shall be set in the ground in a substantial manner. If any such claim be located on ground that is covered wholly or in part with brush or trees, such brush shall be cut and trees be marked or blazed along the lines of such claim to indicate the location of such lines.

(2) Prior to valid discovery the actual possession and right of possession of one diligently engaged in the search for minerals shall be exclusive as regards prospecting during continuance of such possession and diligent search. As used in this section, "diligently engaged" shall mean performing not less than one hundred dollars worth of annual assessment work on or for the benefit of the claim or paying any fee or fees in lieu of assessment work in such year or years it is required under federal law, or any larger amount that may be designated now or later by the federal government for annual assessment work.

[[1995 c 114 § 1](#); [1965 c 151 § 1](#); [1963 c 64 § 1](#); [1949 c 12 § 1](#); [1899 c 45 § 2](#); RRS § 8623.]

78.08.070

Cut, excavation, tunnel or test hole in lieu of discovery shaft.

Any open cut, excavation or tunnel which cuts or exposes a lode and from which a total of two hundred cubic feet of material has been removed or in lieu thereof a test hole drilled on the lode to a minimum depth of twenty feet from the collar, shall hold the lode the same as if a discovery shaft were sunk thereon, and shall be equivalent thereto.

[[1955 c 357 § 1](#); [1899 c 45 § 3](#); RRS § 8624.]

78.08.072

Holding claim by geological, etc., survey—Report of survey.

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Any geological, geochemical, or geophysical survey which reasonably involves a direct expenditure on or for the benefit of each claim of not less than the one hundred dollars worth of annual assessment work required under federal statute or regulations shall hold such claim for not more than two consecutive years or more than a total of five years: PROVIDED, That a written report of such survey shall be filed with the county auditor at the time annual assessment work is recorded as required under federal statute, and said written report shall set forth fully:

- (1) The location of the survey performed in relation to the point of discovery or location notice and boundaries of the claim.
- (2) The nature, extent, and cost of the survey.
- (3) The date the survey was commenced and the date completed.
- (4) The basic findings therefrom.
- (5) The name, address, and professional background of the person or persons performing or conducting the survey.

[[1965 c 151 § 2](#); [1963 c 64 § 2](#); [1959 c 114 § 1](#).]

NOTES:

Reports of geological, etc., surveys: Chapter [78.06](#) RCW.

78.08.075

"Lode" defined.

The term "lode" as used in RCW [78.08.050](#) through [78.08.115](#) shall be construed to mean ledge, vein or deposit.

[[1983 c 3 § 197](#); [1899 c 45 § 4](#); RRS § 8625. Formerly RCW [78.08.010](#).]

78.08.080

Amended certificate of location.

If at any time the locator of any quartz or lode mining claim heretofore or hereafter located, or his or her assigns, shall learn that his or her original certificate was defective or that the requirements of the law had not been complied with before filing, or shall be desirous of changing his or her surface

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boundaries or of taking in any additional ground which is subject to location, or in any case the original certificate was made prior to the *passage of this law, and he or she shall be desirous of securing the benefits of RCW [78.08.050](#) through [78.08.115](#), such locator or his or her assigns may file an amended certificate of location, subject to the provisions of RCW [78.08.050](#) through [78.08.115](#), regarding the making of new locations.

[[2013 c 23 § 248](#); [1983 c 3 § 198](#); [1899 c 45 § 5](#); RRS § 8626.]

NOTES:

***Reviser's note:** "passage of this law": 1899 c 45 (H.B. 272) passed the house, February 27, 1899; passed the senate, March 7, 1899, and was approved by the governor March 8, 1899.

78.08.081

Assessment work, affidavit of work performed or affidavit of fees paid.

Within thirty days after the expiration of the period of time fixed for the performance of annual labor or the making of improvements upon any quartz or lode mining claim or premises, the person in whose behalf such work or improvement was made or some person for him or her knowing the facts, shall make and record in the office of the county auditor of the county wherein such claims are situate either an affidavit or oath of labor performed on such claim, or affidavit or oath of fee or fees paid to the federal government in lieu of the annual labor requirement. Such affidavit shall state the exact amount of fee or fees paid, or the kind of labor, including the number of feet of shaft, tunnel or open cut made on such claim, or any other kind of improvements allowed by law made thereon. When both fee and labor requirements have been waived by the federal government, such affidavit will contain a statement to that effect and the state shall not require labor to be performed. Such affidavit shall contain the section, township and range in which such lode is located if the location be in a surveyed area.

[[1995 c 114 § 2](#); [1979 ex.s. c 30 § 16](#); [1955 c 357 § 3](#); [1899 c 45 § 6](#); RRS § 8627.]

78.08.082

Affidavit is prima facie evidence.

Such affidavit when so recorded shall be prima facie evidence of the performance of such labor or the making of such improvements, and such original affidavit after it has been recorded, or a certified copy of record of same, shall be received as evidence accordingly by all the courts of this state.

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[[1899 c 45 § 7](#); RRS § 8628.]

78.08.090

Relocating abandoned claim.

The relocation of a forfeited or abandoned quartz or lode claim shall only be made by sinking a new discovery shaft, or in lieu thereof performing at least an equal amount of development work within the borders of the claim, and fixing new boundaries in the same manner and to the same extent as is required in making a new location, or the relocater may sink the original discovery shaft ten feet deeper than it was at the date of commencement of such relocation, and shall erect new, or make the old monuments the same as originally required; in either case a new location monument shall be erected.

[[1949 c 12 § 2](#); [1899 c 45 § 8](#); RRS § 8629.]

78.08.100

Location of placer claims.

The discoverer of placers or other forms of deposits subject to location and appropriation under mining laws applicable to placers shall locate his or her claim in the following manner:

First. He or she must immediately post in a conspicuous place at the point of discovery thereon, a notice or certificate of location thereof, containing (1) the name of the claim; (2) the name of the locator or locators; (3) the date of discovery and posting of the notice hereinbefore provided for, which shall be considered as the date of the location; (4) a description of the claim by reference to legal subdivisions of sections, if the location is made in conformity with the public surveys, otherwise, a description with reference to some natural object or permanent monuments as will identify the claim; and where such claim is located by legal subdivisions of the public surveys, such location shall, notwithstanding that fact, be marked by the locator upon the ground the same as other locations.

Second. Within thirty days from the date of such discovery, he or she must record such notice or certificate of location in the office of the auditor of the county in which such discovery is made, and so distinctly mark his or her location on the ground that its boundaries may be readily traced.

Third. Within sixty days from the date of discovery, the discoverer shall perform labor upon such location or claim in developing the same to an amount which shall be equivalent in the aggregate to at least ten dollars worth of such labor for each twenty acres, or fractional part thereof, contained in such location or claim: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That nothing in this subdivision shall be held to apply to lands

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located under the laws of the United States as placer claims for the purpose of the development of petroleum and natural gas and other natural oil products.

Fourth. Such locator shall, upon the performance of such labor, file with the auditor of the county an affidavit showing such performance and generally the nature and kind of work so done.

[[2013 c 23 § 249](#); [1901 c 137 § 1](#); [1899 c 45 § 10](#); RRS § 8631.]

78.08.110

Affidavit as proof.

The affidavit provided for in the last section, and the aforesaid placer notice or certificate of location when filed for record, shall be prima facie evidence of the facts therein recited. A copy of such certificate, notice or affidavit certified by the county auditor shall be admitted in evidence in all actions or proceeding with the same effect as the original and the provisions of RCW [78.08.081](#) and [78.08.082](#) shall apply to placer claims as well as lode claims.

[[1899 c 45 § 11](#); RRS § 8632.]

78.08.115

Application of RCW 78.08.050 through 78.08.115.

All locations of quartz or placer formations or deposits hereafter made shall conform to the requirements of RCW [78.08.050](#) through [78.08.115](#) insofar as the same are respectively applicable thereto.

[[1983 c 3 § 199](#); [1899 c 45 § 12](#); RRS § 8633.]