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RCW [43.70.130](#)

Powers and duties of secretary—General.

The secretary of health shall:

- (1) Exercise all the powers and perform all the duties prescribed by law with respect to public health and vital statistics;
- (2) Investigate and study factors relating to the preservation, promotion, and improvement of the health of the people, the causes of morbidity and mortality, and the effects of the environment and other conditions upon the public health, and report the findings to the state board of health for such action as the board determines is necessary;
- (3) Strictly enforce all laws for the protection of the public health and the improvement of sanitary conditions in the state, and all rules, regulations, and orders of the state board of health;
- (4) Enforce the public health laws of the state and the rules and regulations promulgated by the department or the board of health in local matters, when in its opinion an emergency exists and the local board of health has failed to act with sufficient promptness or efficiency, or is unable for reasons beyond its control to act, or when no local board has been established, and all expenses so incurred shall be paid upon demand of the secretary of the department of health by the local health department for which such services are rendered, out of moneys accruing to the credit of the municipality or the local health department in the current expense fund of the county;
- (5) Investigate outbreaks and epidemics of disease that may occur and advise local health officers as to measures to be taken to prevent and control the same;
- (6) Exercise general supervision over the work of all local health departments and establish uniform reporting systems by local health officers to the state department of health;
- (7) Have the same authority as local health officers, except that the secretary shall not exercise such authority unless the local health officer fails or is unable to do so, or when in an emergency the safety of the public health demands it, or by agreement with the local health officer or local board of health;
- (8) Cause to be made from time to time, personal health and sanitation inspections at state owned or contracted institutions and facilities to determine compliance with sanitary and health care standards as adopted by the department, and require the governing authorities thereof to take such action as will conserve the health of all persons connected therewith, and report the findings to the governor;
- (9) Review and approve plans for public water system design, engineering, operation, maintenance, financing, and emergency response, as required under state board of health rules;
- (10) Take such measures as the secretary deems necessary in order to promote the public health, to establish or participate in the establishment of health educational or training activities, and to provide funds for and to authorize the attendance and participation in such activities of employees of the state or local health departments and other individuals engaged in programs related to or part of the public health programs of the local health departments or the state department of health. The secretary is also authorized to accept any funds from the federal government or any public or private agency made available for health education training purposes and to conform with such requirements as are necessary in order to receive such funds; and
- (11) Establish and maintain laboratory facilities and services as are necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the department.

[[1990 c 132 § 2](#); [1989 1st ex.s. c 9 § 251](#); [1985 c 213 § 2](#); [1979 c 141 § 46](#); [1967 ex.s. c 102 § 1](#); [1965 c 8 § 43.20.010](#). Prior: (i) [1909 c 208 § 2](#); RRS § 6004. (ii) [1921 c 7 § 59](#); RRS § 10817. Formerly RCW [43.20A.600](#) and [43.20.010](#).]

NOTES:

Legislative findings—Severability—1990 c 132: See note following RCW [43.20.240](#).

Savings—Effective date—1985 c 213: See notes following RCW [43.20.050](#).

Severability—1967 ex.s. c 102: "If any provision of this act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [[1967 ex.s. c 102 § 13](#).]

Public water systems—Complaint process: RCW [43.20.240](#).