

RCW 18.04.390 Papers, records, schedules, etc., property of the licensee or licensed firm—Prohibited practices—Rights of client. (1)

In the absence of an express agreement between the licensee or licensed firm and the client to the contrary, all statements, records, schedules, working papers, and memoranda made by a licensee or licensed firm incident to or in the course of professional service to clients, except reports submitted by a licensee or licensed firm, are the property of the licensee or licensed firm.

(2) No statement, record, schedule, working paper, or memorandum may be sold, transferred, or bequeathed without the consent of the client or the client's personal representative or assignee, to anyone other than one or more surviving partners, members, managers, shareholders, or new partners, members, managers, or shareholders of the licensee, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation, or any combined or merged partnership, limited liability company, or corporation, or successor in interest.

(3) A licensee shall furnish to the board or to the licensee's client or former client, upon request and reasonable notice:

(a) A copy of the licensee's working papers or electronic documents, to the extent that such working papers or electronic documents include records that would ordinarily constitute part of the client's records and are not otherwise available to the client; and

(b) Any accounting or other records belonging to, or obtained from or on behalf of, the client that the licensee removed from the client's premises or received for the client's account; the licensee may make and retain copies of such documents of the client when they form the basis for work done by the licensee.

(4) (a) For a period of seven years after the end of the fiscal period in which a licensed firm concludes an audit or review of a client's financial statements, the licensed firm must retain records relevant to the audit or review, as determined by board rule.

(b) The board must adopt rules to implement this subsection, including rules relating to working papers and document retention.

(5) Nothing in this section should be construed as prohibiting any temporary transfer of workpapers or other material necessary in the course of carrying out peer reviews or as otherwise interfering with the disclosure of information pursuant to RCW 18.04.405. [2024 c 13 s 13; 2003 c 290 s 4; 2001 c 294 s 21; 1992 c 103 s 16; 1986 c 295 s 18; 1983 c 234 s 21; 1949 c 226 s 38; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 8269-45.]

Effective date—2001 c 294: See note following RCW 18.04.015.