

GOVERNMENT CODE
TITLE 2. JUDICIAL BRANCH
SUBTITLE D. JUDICIAL PERSONNEL AND OFFICIALS
CHAPTER 51. CLERKS

SUBCHAPTER A. CLERK OF SUPREME COURT

Sec. 51.001. APPOINTMENT; RESIDENCE; BOND; SEAL. (a) The order appointing the clerk of the supreme court must be recorded in the minutes of the court.

(b) The clerk must reside at Austin.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(6).

(d) The clerk shall provide a seal for the use of the supreme court. The seal must have a five-pointed star and must be engraved with the words "Supreme Court of the State of Texas."

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985; Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(6), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 51.002. CLERK PRO TEMPORE; DEPUTY CLERK. (a) The supreme court, when necessary, may appoint a clerk pro tempore.

(b) The supreme court, by an order recorded in the minutes of the court, may authorize the clerk to appoint three deputy clerks who may discharge the duties required by law of the clerk. Each deputy clerk must give a bond that is approved by the supreme court and is in the same amount and subject to the same conditions as required for the bond of the clerk of the court. A deputy clerk serves at the will of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.003. REMOVAL OF CLERK. (a) The supreme court by motion may remove the clerk for neglect of duty or misconduct in office. The motion must specify the particular charges.

(b) Before the court may act on the motion, it must give the clerk at least 10 days' notice of the motion, including the particular charges.

(c) In acting on the motion, the court determines the law and facts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.004. DUTIES. The clerk of the supreme court shall:

(1) file and carefully preserve the transcripts of records certified to the supreme court and papers relative to the record;

(2) docket causes in the order in which the supreme court directs;

(3) faithfully record the proceedings and decisions of the supreme court; and

(4) certify the judgments of the supreme court to the courts from which the cases were brought.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.0045. ELECTRONIC OR MICROFILM STORAGE. (a) In the performance of the duties imposed by Section [51.004](#), the clerk of the supreme court may maintain records and documents in an electronic storage format or on microfilm. A record or document stored electronically or on microfilm in accordance with this section is considered an original record or document. If the clerk stores records or documents electronically or on microfilm, the clerk may destroy the originals or copies of the records or documents according to the retention policy described by Subsection (b).

(b) The clerk of the supreme court shall establish a records retention policy. The retention policy shall provide a plan for the storage and retention of records and documents and shall include a retention period to preserve the records and documents in accordance with applicable state law and rules of the supreme court.

(c) For purposes of this section, "electronic storage" has the meaning assigned by Section [51.105\(c\)](#).

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 795 (S.B. [1259](#)), Sec. 2(a), eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 51.0046. PRIVACY OF CERTAIN RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS; LIABILITY. (a) The supreme court shall adopt rules establishing

procedures for protecting personal information contained in records and documents stored by the clerk of an appellate court in an electronic storage format and for accessing those records and documents. The supreme court by rule shall define "personal information" for purposes of this section.

(b) A person who complies with the rules adopted by the supreme court under this section is not liable for damages arising from the disclosure of personal information that is included in records or documents stored in an electronic storage format.

(c) For purposes of this section, "electronic storage" has the meaning assigned by Section 51.105(c).

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 795 (S.B. 1259), Sec. 2(a), eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 51.005. FEES AND COSTS. (a) The clerk shall collect the fees described in Subsection (b) in a civil case before the court for the following services:

- (1) filing records, applications, motions, briefs, and other necessary and proper papers;
- (2) docketing and making docket and minute book entries;
- (3) issuing notices, citations, processes, and mandates; and
- (4) performing other necessary clerical duties.

(b) The fees are:

- (1) application for petition for review. \$ 50
- (2) additional fee if application for petition for review is granted. \$ 75
- (3) motion for leave to file petition for writ of mandamus, prohibition, injunction, and other similar proceedings originating in the supreme court \$ 50
- (4) additional fee if a motion under Subdivision (3) is granted. \$ 75
- (5) certified question from a federal court of appeals to the supreme court \$ 75
- (6) case appealed to the supreme court from the district court by direct appeal. \$100

(7) any other proceeding filed in the supreme court \$75.

(c) In addition, the clerk of the supreme court shall collect:

(1) a fee of \$5 for administering an oath and giving a sealed certificate of the oath;

(2) a minimum fee of \$5, or 50 cents per page if more than 10 pages, for making copies of any papers of record in offices, including certificate and seal; and

(3) a reasonable fee fixed by the order or rule of the supreme court for any official service performed by the clerk for which a fee is not otherwise provided by this section.

(d) The clerk shall collect and pay into the state treasury the fees and costs received under this section by the clerk under rules prescribed by the comptroller of public accounts, approved by the justices of the supreme court, and recorded in the minutes of the court. The comptroller shall deposit the fees and costs in the judicial fund.

(e) The supreme court shall provide by order or rule for the making of deposits to cover the costs provided by this section in cases before the court. A deposit may not be required in a case in which the petitioner, relator, or appellant in the supreme court is exempt from the bond requirement.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1986, 69th Leg., 2nd C.S., ch. 11, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 22, 1986.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 3 (H.B. 79), Sec. 14.01, eff. January 1, 2012.

Sec. 51.0051. ADDITIONAL FEES. (a) In addition to other fees authorized or required by law, the clerk of the supreme court shall collect an additional fee on the filing of any application or proceeding otherwise requiring a filing fee, including an appeal. The additional fee is set by order or rule of the supreme court in an amount necessary to defray costs and expenses incurred in the operation of the court, not to exceed \$50.

(b) The clerk shall collect fees imposed under this section in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs are collected in the proceeding and shall send the fees imposed under this section to the comptroller not later than the last day of the month following each calendar quarter. The comptroller shall deposit the fees received to the credit of the judicial fund.

(c) The comptroller shall establish a supreme court support account in the judicial fund. Fees received under this section may be appropriated only to the supreme court support account, and the comptroller shall allocate to the account amounts as designated in the General Appropriations Act from the judicial fund that were deposited under this section.

(d) The supreme court shall administer the funds deposited under this section and appropriated to the supreme court support account. The chief justice may make disbursements from the account for court-related purposes to defray costs and expenses incurred in the operation of the supreme court.

(e) The supreme court shall file an accounting with the Legislative Budget Board not later than November 1 following each state fiscal year showing disbursements made from the supreme court support account during the previous state fiscal year and the purpose of each disbursement. The expenditures are subject to audit by the comptroller and the state auditor.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1408 (S.B. [1182](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 51.006. FEE FOR ATTORNEY'S LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE. The clerk shall collect a fee of \$25 for the issuance of an attorney's license or certificate affixed with a seal. The fee shall be held by the clerk and expended by the supreme court or under the direction of the court for the preparation and issuance, including mailing, of the license or certificate.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Amended by:

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 912 (S.B. [1329](#)), Sec. 5.01, eff. September 1, 2017.

Sec. 51.007. VACANCY DURING VACATION. If the office of clerk becomes vacant during vacation, the chief justice and one justice shall appoint an individual to serve as clerk until a regular appointment is made. The individual appointed must give the bond and oath prescribed for the regular clerk. The bond must be approved by a justice of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER B. CLERK OF COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

Sec. 51.101. OATH; BOND. The clerk of the court of criminal appeals must sign the oath prescribed for officers of this state and must give a bond in the amount of \$5,000. The bond must be approved by the court of criminal appeals and is subject to the same conditions as the bond required of the clerk of the supreme court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.102. DEPUTY CLERK. (a) The court of criminal appeals, or the clerk of the court of criminal appeals with the court's approval, may appoint a stenographer employed by the court to act as a deputy clerk to perform the clerk's duties during the absence, illness, or other disability of the clerk.

(b) The stenographer appointed deputy clerk shall perform the duties of the clerk in the name of the clerk and shall sign his own name as deputy clerk after signing the clerk's name.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.103. REMOVAL OF CLERK. The court of criminal appeals may remove the clerk for good cause, entered in the minutes of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.104. DUTIES AND LIABILITIES. (a) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals shall perform the like duties for the court of criminal appeals that the clerk of the supreme court performs for the supreme court.

(b) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals is subject to

the liabilities prescribed for the clerk of the supreme court.
Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.1045. ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND DIGITAL MULTIMEDIA EVIDENCE.

Text of subsection effective until January 01, 2025

(a) In this section, "digital multimedia evidence" has the meaning assigned by Article 2.21, Code of Criminal Procedure.

Text of subsection effective on January 01, 2025

(a) In this section, "digital multimedia evidence" has the meaning assigned by Article 2A.153, Code of Criminal Procedure.

(b) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals may accept electronic documents and digital multimedia evidence received from a defendant, an applicant for a writ of habeas corpus, the clerk of the convicting court, a court reporter, or an attorney representing the state.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 795 (S.B. 1259), Sec. 3, eff. June 19, 2009.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 765 (H.B. 4504), Sec. 2.063, eff. January 1, 2025.

Sec. 51.105. ELECTRONIC STORAGE. (a) In the performance of the duties imposed by Section 51.104, the clerk of the court of criminal appeals may maintain writs and other records and documents in an electronic storage format or on microfilm. A record or document stored electronically or on microfilm in accordance with this section is considered an original record or document. If the clerk stores writs, records, or documents electronically or on microfilm, the clerk may destroy the originals or copies of the writs, records, or documents according to the retention policy described by Subsection (b).

(b) The clerk of the court of criminal appeals shall establish a records retention policy. The retention policy shall provide a plan for the storage and retention of writs and other documents and shall include a retention period to preserve the

writs and other records in accordance with state law and applicable rules of the court of criminal appeals.

(c) For purposes of this section, "electronic storage" means the maintenance of data in the form of digital electronic signals on a computer hard disk, magnetic tape, optical disk, or similar machine-readable medium.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 718, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 795 (S.B. [1259](#)), Sec. 4, eff. June 19, 2009.

SUBCHAPTER C. CLERKS OF COURTS OF APPEALS

Sec. 51.201. APPOINTMENT; RESIDENCE; BOND; SEAL. (a) An order appointing a clerk of a court of appeals must be recorded in the minutes of the court.

(b) The clerk must reside within a county that is part of the court of appeals district of the court of appeals making the appointment.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(7).

(d) Each clerk shall provide a seal for the use of the court. The seal must have a five-pointed star and must be engraved with the words "Court of Appeals of the State of Texas."

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 1.61, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 285, Sec. 31(7), eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 921 (H.B. [3167](#)), Sec. 7.001, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 51.202. CLERK PRO TEMPORE; DEPUTY CLERK. (a) A court of appeals, when necessary, may appoint a clerk pro tempore.

(b) With the approval of the court, the clerk may appoint deputy clerks as provided by legislative appropriation. A deputy clerk must give a bond to the clerk, conditioned on the faithful performance of the duties of office.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.203. REMOVAL OF CLERK. (a) After motion and a hearing, a court of appeals may remove its clerk for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office. The motion must specify the particular charges.

(b) The court must give the clerk at least 10 days' notice of the hearing.

(c) At the hearing, the court determines the law and facts. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.204. RECORDS OF COURT. (a) The clerk of a court of appeals shall:

(1) file and carefully preserve records certified to the court and papers relative to the record;

(2) docket causes in the order in which they are filed;

(3) record the proceedings of the court except opinions and orders on motions; and

(4) certify the judgments of the court to the proper courts.

(b) On the issuance of the mandate in each case, the clerk shall notify the attorneys of record in the case that:

(1) exhibits submitted to the court by a party may be withdrawn by that party or the party's attorney of record; and

(2) exhibits on file with the court will be destroyed three years after final disposition of the case or at an earlier date if ordered by the court.

(c) Not sooner than the 60th day and not later than the 90th day after the date of final disposition of a criminal case, the clerk shall remove and destroy all duplicate papers in the file on record of that case.

(d) Six years after the final disposition of a civil case in the court, the clerk shall, not sooner than the 90th day after the date the clerk provides notice to the district or county clerk, destroy all records filed in the court related to the case except:

(1) records that the clerk of the trial court requests be returned to the trial court for preservation in accordance with records retention schedules for records of district and county

clerks issued under Section 441.158 and applicable rules of the supreme court;

(2) records that, in the opinion of the clerk or other person designated by the court, contain highly concentrated, unique, and valuable information unlikely to be found in any other source available to researchers;

(3) indexes, original opinions, minutes, and general court dockets unless the documents are microfilmed in accordance with this section for permanent retention, in which case the original document shall be destroyed; and

(4) other records of the court determined to be archival state records under Section 441.186.

(e) Twenty-five years after the final disposition of a criminal case to which this subsection applies, the clerk shall destroy all records relating to the case, other than a record described by Subsection (d)(2), (3), or (4). This subsection applies to a criminal case in which the sentence, suspended sentence, term of community supervision, combined sentence and term of community supervision, cumulative sentences or terms of community supervision, or the longest sentence or term of community supervision of two or more sentences or terms of community supervision to be served concurrently is 20 years or less.

(f) The clerk shall retain other records of the court, such as financial records, administrative correspondence, and other materials not related to particular cases in accordance with Section 441.185.

(g) Before microfilming records, the clerk must submit a plan in writing to the justices of a court of appeals for that purpose. If a majority of the justices of a court of appeals determines that the plan meets the requirements of Section 441.188, rules adopted under that section, and any additional standards and procedures the justices may require, the justices shall inform the clerk in writing and the clerk may adopt the plan. The decision of the justices must be entered in the minutes of the court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 873, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 408, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 51.205. ELECTRONIC OR MICROFILM STORAGE. (a) In the performance of the duties imposed by Section 51.204, the clerk of a court of appeals may maintain records and documents in an electronic storage format or on microfilm. A record or document stored electronically or on microfilm in accordance with this section is considered an original record or document. If a clerk stores records or documents electronically or on microfilm, the clerk may destroy the originals or copies of the records or documents according to the retention policy described by Subsection (b).

(b) The clerk of a court of appeals shall establish a records retention policy. The retention policy shall provide a plan for the storage and retention of records and documents and shall include a retention period to preserve the records and documents in accordance with Section 51.204 and other applicable state law and rules of the court of appeals, the supreme court, or the court of criminal appeals.

(c) For purposes of this section, "electronic storage" has the meaning assigned by Section 51.105(c).

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 795 (S.B. 1259), Sec. 5, eff. June 19, 2009.

Sec. 51.206. LAW LIBRARY. (a) Each clerk of a court of appeals is the librarian of the court and shall keep the books in the court's library in good order and catalogue them.

(b) The clerk may purchase additional law books for the use of the court from the fees collected by the court. Those expenditures may not exceed annually the specific amounts additionally authorized for the purchase of law books in the General Appropriations Act.

(c) All fees collected for the purchase of law books shall be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the appropriate court. Book expenditures shall be made on a warrant drawn on the state treasury by the state comptroller as provided by the judiciary section of the General Appropriations Act.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.207. FEES AND COSTS. (a) The clerk of a court of appeals shall collect the fees described in Subsection (b) in a civil case before the court for the following services:

- (1) filing records, applications, motions, briefs, and other necessary and proper papers;
- (2) docketing and making docket and minute book entries;
- (3) issuing notices, citations, processes, and mandates;
- (4) preparing transcripts on application for petition for review to the supreme court; and
- (5) performing other necessary clerical duties.

(b) The fees are:

- (1) for cases appealed to and filed in the court of appeals from the district and county courts within its court of appeals district \$100
- (2) motion for leave to file petition for writ of mandamus, prohibition, injunction, and other similar proceedings originating in the court of appeals \$ 50
- (3) additional fee if the motion under Subdivision (2) is granted \$ 75
- (4) motion to file or to extend time to file record on appeal from district or county court \$ 10

(c) In addition, the clerk of a court of appeals shall collect:

- (1) a fee of \$5 for administering an oath and giving a sealed certificate of the oath;
- (2) a fee of \$5, or \$1 per page if more than five pages, for a certified copy of any papers of record in the court offices, including certificate and seal;
- (3) a fee of \$5, or \$1 per page if more than five pages, for comparing any document with the original filed in the offices of the court for purposes of certification; and
- (4) a reasonable fee fixed by the order or rule of the supreme court for any official service performed by the clerk for which a fee is not otherwise provided by this section.

(d) The supreme court shall provide by order or rule for the making of deposits to cover the costs provided by this section in cases before a court of appeals. A deposit may not be required in a case in which the petitioner, relator, appellant, or movant in the court of appeals is exempt from the bond requirement.

(e) The clerk of a court of appeals shall pay into the state treasury the fees and costs under rules prescribed by the comptroller of public accounts and approved by the justices of the clerk's court. The clerk shall make a sworn report to the court not later than January 10 and July 10 of each year regarding the amount of costs collected in the previous six months, the cases in which the costs were collected, and the disposition of the costs. This report shall be filed with the financial records of the court.

(f) Repealed by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.66, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

(g) One-half of the fees collected under this section shall be deposited to the credit of the judicial fund.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1986, 69th Leg., 2nd C.S., ch. 11, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 22, 1986; Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 1.62, 2.66, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1080, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 3 (H.B. 79), Sec. 14.02, eff. January 1, 2012.

Sec. 51.208. ADDITIONAL FEES. (a) The clerk of a court of appeals shall collect an additional fee on the filing of any case appealed to and filed in the court of appeals that otherwise requires a filing fee. The additional fee is in an amount equal to the amount of the additional fee set by order or rule of the supreme court and imposed under Section 51.0051.

(b) The clerk shall collect fees imposed under this section in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs are collected in the proceeding and shall send the fees imposed under this section to the comptroller not later than the last day of the month following each calendar quarter. The comptroller shall deposit the fees received to the credit of the judicial fund.

(c) Fees received under this section may be appropriated only to the supreme court support account established under Section 51.0051. The comptroller shall allocate to the account amounts as designated in the General Appropriations Act from the judicial fund that were deposited under this section.

(d) The supreme court shall administer the funds deposited under this section and appropriated to the supreme court support account in the manner provided by Section 51.0051.

Added by Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1408 (S.B. 1182), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

SUBCHAPTER D. DISTRICT CLERKS

Sec. 51.301. VACANCY; BOND; SEAL; SIGNATURE OF CLERK. (a) If a vacancy occurs in the office of district clerk, the vacancy shall be filled by the district judge of the county.

(b) If a vacancy in the office of district clerk occurs in a county that has two or more district courts, the vacancy shall be filled by agreement of the judges of the courts. If the judges cannot agree on an appointee, they shall certify that fact to the governor, who shall order a special election to fill the vacancy.

(c) An appointee to fill a vacancy in the office of district clerk must qualify and give a bond.

(d) Each district clerk shall be provided with a seal for the district court. The seal must have a five-pointed star and must be engraved with the words "District Court of _____ County, Texas." The seal shall be impressed on all process issued by the court except subpoenas and shall be kept and used by the clerk to authenticate official acts. The seal may be created using an electronic means, including by using an optical disk or another electronic reproduction technique, if the means by which the seal is impressed on an original document created using the same type of electronic means does not allow for changes, additions, or deletions to be made to the document.

(e) The signature of the district clerk may be affixed on an original document using electronic means, provided that the means by which the signature is affixed meets the requirements of

Subsection (d) with respect to creating a seal by electronic means.

(f) A seal impressed or a signature affixed by electronic means may be delivered or transmitted electronically.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 25 (S.B. [229](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 25 (S.B. [229](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 51.302. BOND; OATH; INSURANCE. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (g), before beginning the duties of office, each district clerk must give a bond with two or more sufficient sureties or with a surety company authorized to do business in this state as a surety. The bond must:

- (1) be payable to the governor;
- (2) be conditioned on the faithful performance of the duties of the office;
- (3) be approved by the commissioners court; and
- (4) be in an amount equal to not less than 20 percent of the maximum amount of fees collected in any year during the term of office immediately preceding the term of office for which the bond is given, except that the bond may not be in an amount less than \$5,000 nor more than \$100,000.

(b) The district clerk must take and sign the oath prescribed for officers of this state, which must be endorsed on the bond, if a bond is required, and the bond and oath, or oath, must be filed and recorded in the office of the county clerk.

(c) Each district clerk shall obtain an insurance policy or similar coverage from a governmental pool operating under Chapter [119](#), Local Government Code, or from a self-insurance fund or risk retention group created by one or more governmental units under Chapter 1084, Acts of the 70th Legislature, Regular Session, 1987 (Article 715c, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), to cover the district clerk and any deputy clerk against liabilities incurred through errors or omissions in the performance of official duties. The amount of the policy or other coverage document must be equal to

the maximum amount of fees collected in any year during the term of office immediately preceding the term for which the insurance is obtained, except that the amount of the policy or other coverage document must be at least \$20,000 but not more than \$700,000. If the policy or other coverage document provides coverage for other county officials, the amount of the policy must be at least \$1 million.

(d) Each district clerk shall obtain an insurance policy or similar coverage from a governmental pool operating under Chapter 119, Local Government Code, or from a self-insurance fund or risk retention group created by one or more governmental units under Chapter 1084, Acts of the 70th Legislature, Regular Session, 1987 (Article 715c, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), to cover losses from burglary, theft, robbery, counterfeit currency, or destruction. The amount of the policy or other coverage document must be at least \$20,000 but not more than \$700,000.

(e) The commissioners court may establish a contingency fund to provide the coverage required by Subsection (c) or (d) if it is determined by the district clerk that insurance coverage is unavailable at a reasonable cost.

(f) The commissioners court shall pay the premiums on the bonds and insurance policies or other similar coverage required under this section from the county general fund.

(g) In lieu of the bond required by Subsection (a), the county may self-insure against losses that would have been covered by the bond.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 71, Sec. 3, 4, eff. May 7, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 561, Sec. 2, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1062, Sec. 1, eff. June 18, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 2.11, eff. January 1, 2022.

Sec. 51.303. DUTIES AND POWERS. (a) The clerk of a district court has custody of and shall carefully maintain and arrange the records relating to or lawfully deposited in the

clerk's office.

(b) The clerk of a district court shall:

- (1) record the acts and proceedings of the court;
- (2) enter all judgments of the court under the direction of the judge; and
- (3) record all executions issued and the returns on the executions.

(c) The district clerk shall keep an index of the parties to all suits filed in the court. The index must list the parties alphabetically using their full names and must be cross-referenced to the other parties to the suit. In addition, a reference must be made opposite each name to the minutes on which is entered the judgment in the case.

(d) Repealed by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.05, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

(e) The clerk of a district court may:

- (1) take the depositions of witnesses; and
- (2) perform other duties imposed on the clerk by law.

(f) In addition to the other powers and duties of this section, a district clerk shall accept applications for protective orders under Chapter 71, Family Code.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 354, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 31, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1248, Sec. 35, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.05, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 1024, Sec. 20, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 51.3031. ISSUANCE OF UNITED STATES PASSPORTS. (a) A district clerk may perform all duties necessary to process an application for a United States passport, including taking passport photographs and selling money orders to applicants for payment purposes.

(b) To recover the costs of taking passport photographs and selling money orders, a district clerk may collect reasonable fees for the provided services in amounts set by the commissioners court of the county in which the district clerk's office is located.

(c) A district clerk, after collecting a fee under

Subsection (b), shall pay the fee to the county treasurer, or to an official who discharges the duties of the county treasurer, for deposit in the general fund of the county.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 179, Sec. 1, eff. May 21, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 37 (S.B. 1730), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.3032. ELECTRONIC DISPLAY OF OFFICIAL AND LEGAL NOTICES BY DISTRICT CLERK. A district clerk may post an official and legal notice by electronic display, instead of posting a physical document, in the manner provided for a county clerk by Section 82.051, Local Government Code.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 606 (S.B. 891), Sec. 10.11, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 51.304. PRESERVATION OF RECORDS. (a) The district clerk may, pursuant to the clerk's duty to record the acts and proceedings of the court, provide a plan for the storage of records, acts, proceedings, minutes of the court, and registers, records, and instruments for which the clerk is responsible by law, by microfilm, image processing technology, or other process that correctly and legibly reproduces or that forms a medium for copying or reproducing or by optical data storage. The plan must be in writing and provide for the maintenance, retention, security, retrieval, and reproduction of stored records.

(b) The plan must:

(1) require the recording and filing of original instruments, records, and minutes within a specified time after presentation to the district clerk;

(2) permit the use of original paper records in a proceeding before the court;

(3) provide standards for the organizing, identifying, coding, and indexing of records so a record can be retrieved rapidly and the reproduced record can be certified as a true and correct copy;

(4) provide for the use of materials to reproduce

records and, if appropriate to the method by which records are stored, provide for the use of processes relating to the development, fixation, and washing of the photographic duplicates, that are of a quality approved for permanent photographic records by the American National Standards Institute, or another nationally recognized entity that establishes archival standards for mediums used to store data and records; and

(5) provide for the permanent retention of records, including security provisions to guard against physical loss, alteration, and deterioration.

(c) Repealed by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1248, Sec. 85(3), eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

(d) A reproduction of a record stored in accordance with the provisions of a plan adopted under this section is an original record and shall be accepted as an original record by the courts and administrative agencies of this state.

(e) A transcript, exemplification, copy, or reproduction on paper or film of a record stored in accordance with the provisions of a plan adopted under this section is a certified copy of the original record.

(f), (g) Repealed by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1248, Sec. 85(3), eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 978, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 28, 1989.

Sec. 51.306. RECORDING PROCEEDINGS OF MORE THAN ONE COURT.

(a) A district clerk who has duties in more than one district court may combine the minutes of the civil business of the courts into one record. The clerk may also combine the minutes of the criminal business of the courts into a separate record.

(b) The clerk shall enter the minutes into the appropriate record sequentially, regardless of the district court from which the business originates.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.307. TRANSFERRED JUDGMENTS. If a district clerk receives a certified copy of a judgment rendered in a county court

in which jurisdiction has been transferred to the district court, the district clerk shall immediately record the judgment in the minutes of the district court. The district court shall enforce the judgment in the same manner as judgments rendered in the district court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.3071. TRANSFER OF CASES. (a) If a case is transferred from a district court to a constitutional or statutory county court or another district court, the clerk of the transferring court shall send to the clerk of the court to which the case is transferred, using the electronic filing system established under Section [72.031](#):

(1) a transfer certificate and index of transferred documents;

(2) a copy of the original papers filed in the transferring court;

(3) a copy of the order of transfer signed by the transferring court;

(4) a copy of each final order;

(5) a copy of the transfer certificate and index of transferred documents from each previous transfer; and

(6) a bill of any costs that have accrued in the transferring court.

(b) The clerk of the transferring court shall use the standardized transfer certificate and index of transferred documents form created by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System under Section [72.037](#) when transferring a case under this section.

(c) The clerk of the transferee court shall accept documents transferred under Subsection (a) and docket the case.

(d) The clerk of the transferee court shall physically or electronically mark or stamp the transfer certificate and index of transferred documents to evidence the date and time of acceptance under Subsection (c), but may not physically or electronically mark or stamp any other document transferred under Subsection (a).

(e) Sections [80.001](#) and [80.002](#) do not apply to the transfer

of documents under this section.

(f) The clerks of both the transferee and transferring courts may each produce, under this chapter, certified or uncertified copies of documents transferred under Subsection (a) and must include a copy of the transfer certificate and index of transferred documents with each document produced.

(g) This section applies regardless of whether the transferee court and the transferring court are in the same or different counties.

Added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 629 (S.B. [1341](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 16, 2015.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 934 (H.B. [3774](#)), Sec. 7.02, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 256 (S.B. [1612](#)), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 861 (H.B. [3474](#)), Sec. 11.008, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.308. CLERK PRO TEMPORE. If a district clerk is a party to an action in a court he serves, the district judge, on the application of any interested person or on the judge's own motion, may appoint a clerk pro tempore for the purposes of the action. The clerk pro tempore must take an oath to faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the appointment and must give a bond, payable to the State of Texas, conditioned on the faithful performance of those duties, in an amount fixed and approved by the judge. The clerk pro tempore shall perform the duties of the district clerk relating to the action during the period of the appointment.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.309. DEPUTY CLERKS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES. (a) The district clerk may appoint deputy clerks. Each appointment must be in writing under the hand and seal of the district court and must be recorded in the office of the county clerk. A deputy clerk must take the oath prescribed for officers of this state. A deputy clerk may perform in the name of the district clerk all official acts of

the office of district clerk.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the district clerk shall obtain one or more surety bonds in accordance with this section to cover each deputy clerk or other employee. The district clerk shall obtain:

(1) an individual bond for each deputy clerk and other employee in an amount for each bond that is equal to the district clerk's bond; or

(2) a schedule surety bond or a blanket surety bond to cover all deputy clerks and all other employees in a total amount that is equal to the district clerk's bond.

(b-1) A deputy clerk and an employee must be covered by a surety bond on the same conditions as the district clerk. A bond covering a deputy clerk or other employee shall be made payable to the governor for the use and benefit of the district clerk.

(c) In lieu of the bond required by Subsection (b), the county may self-insure against losses that would have been covered by the bond.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 71, Sec. 5, 6, eff. May 7, 1987; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 199, Sec. 2, eff. May 19, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 179 (H.B. [1494](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 179 (H.B. [1494](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 51.310. DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERKS OF BEXAR COUNTY. (a) The district clerk of Bexar County shall appoint one or more deputy clerks to serve each district court in Bexar County. Persons appointed deputy clerk must be acceptable to the judges. An appointment of a clerk to serve a particular court must be confirmed in writing by the judge of that court. Before assuming the duties of office, a deputy clerk must take the oath prescribed for officers of this state.

(b) The district clerk may require a deputy clerk to give a bond. The district clerk may prescribe the conditions and amount of

the bond, or those terms may be set as otherwise provided by law.

(c) The deputy clerk shall perform the official duties of the district clerk and shall attend each session of the court to which the deputy is appointed. The deputy clerk shall also perform services requested by a judge.

(d) The deputy clerks may act for each other in any matter pertaining to the clerical business of the courts or when requested to do so by a judge or the district clerk. A deputy clerk acting for another deputy clerk may not receive additional compensation.

(e) A deputy clerk serves at the pleasure of the judge of the court the deputy serves. If the office of a deputy clerk becomes vacant, the district clerk shall appoint another deputy clerk in the manner provided for initial appointments.

(f) The district clerk shall fix the annual salary of the deputy clerk of each court. The salary must be approved by the commissioners court and shall be paid in equal installments twice monthly from the county fund established for the purpose.

(g) This section does not prevent the district clerk from appointing additional deputy clerks to any of the courts if necessary or if requested by the judge of one of the courts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.311. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN LUBBOCK AND NUECES COUNTIES. (a) In Lubbock and Nueces counties, the district clerk shall appoint, at the request of a district judge, a special deputy district clerk to serve that judge's court.

(b) The salary of a special deputy clerk appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.312. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN DALLAS, EL PASO, HARRIS, TARRANT, AND TRAVIS COUNTIES. (a) In Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis counties, the district clerk may appoint, at the request of a district judge, a special deputy district clerk to serve that judge's court.

(b) The salary of a special deputy clerk appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.313. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN COLLIN AND DENTON COUNTIES. (a) In Collin and Denton counties, the district clerk may appoint, at the request of a district judge, a special deputy district clerk to serve that judge's court.

(b) The salary of a special deputy clerk appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund of the county.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.314. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERK IN GALVESTON COUNTY. The Commissioners Court of Galveston County may pay for the services of a special deputy district clerk if the commissioners court considers a deputy clerk necessary. The clerk of the court in which the deputy clerk serves shall appoint the deputy clerk.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.315. SPECIAL DEPUTY DISTRICT CLERKS FOR CERTAIN COURTS IN HARRIS COUNTY. (a) The Commissioners Court of Harris County may pay the salary of the special deputy district clerks that it considers necessary for the 177th, 178th, 179th, and 180th district courts.

(b) The clerk of the court shall appoint a deputy district clerk under this section.

(c) A deputy district clerk serves at the will of the appointing clerk.

(d) A deputy district clerk is entitled to a salary from the county paid monthly from the general funds of the county. The salary may not exceed the compensation allowed by law to other deputy district clerks.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.316. DEPUTY CLERK AND ASSISTANT IN HIDALGO, JEFFERSON, AND NUECES COUNTIES. (a) In Hidalgo, Jefferson, and Nueces counties, the district clerk may apply in writing to the district judges in the county to appoint a deputy district clerk or an assistant. The application must state the number of deputies or

assistants to be appointed and the probable receipts and disbursements of the office. If a majority of the judges approve the appointment, they shall certify the list to the commissioners court. The application and the order approving the application must be recorded in the minutes of the district court.

(b) A deputy clerk or assistant appointed under this section shall perform the duties required by the district clerk and serves at the pleasure of the district clerk. A deputy clerk or assistant may not be employed except as provided by this section.

(c) An assistant appointed under this section must take the oath prescribed for officers of this state.

(d) The salary of an assistant appointed under this section shall be paid out of the general fund or the officers' salary fund of the county. The salary of a court clerk, index clerk, or clerk handling the jury shall be paid out of the general fund or the jury fund.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.318. FEES DUE WHEN SERVICE PERFORMED OR REQUESTED.

(a) The district clerk shall collect at the time the service is performed or at the time the service is requested the fees provided by Subsection (b) for services performed by the clerk.

Text of subsection effective until January 01, 2024

(b) The fees are:

- (1) for issuing a subpoena, including one copy . . . \$8
- (2) for issuing a citation, commission for deposition, writ of execution, order of sale, writ of execution and order of sale, writ of injunction, writ of garnishment, writ of attachment, or writ of sequestration, or any other writ or process not otherwise provided for, including one copy if required by law \$8
- (3) for searching files or records to locate a cause when the docket number is not provided or to ascertain the existence of an instrument or record in the district clerk's office \$5
- (4) for abstracting a judgment \$8
- (5) for preparation of the clerk's record on appeal, for each page or part of a page \$1
- (6) for approving a bond \$5

(7) for a certified copy of a record, judgment, order, pleading, or paper on file or of record in the district clerk's office, printed on paper:

(A) including certificate and seal \$5; and

(B) for each page or part of a page \$1

(8) for a noncertified copy:

(A) printed on paper, for each page or part of a page \$1;

(B) that is a paper document converted to electronic format, for each page or part of a page \$1; or

(C) that is an electronic copy of an electronic document:

(i) for each document up to 10 pages in length \$1; and

(ii) for each page or part of a page over 10 pages \$0.10.

Text of subsection effective on January 01, 2024

(b) The fees are:

(1) for issuing a subpoena, including one copy . . . \$8;

(2) for issuing a citation, commission for deposition, writ of execution, order of sale, writ of execution and order of sale, writ of injunction, writ of garnishment, writ of attachment, or writ of sequestration, or any other writ or process not otherwise provided for, including one copy if required by law \$8;

(3) for searching files or records to locate a cause when the docket number is not provided or to ascertain the existence of an instrument or record in the district clerk's office \$5;

(4) for abstracting a judgment \$8;

(5) for preparation of the clerk's record on appeal, for each page or part of a page \$1;

(6) for approving a bond \$5;

(7) for a certified copy of a record, judgment, order, pleading, or paper on file or of record in the district clerk's office:

(A) including certificate and seal \$5; and

(B) for each page or part of a page:

(i) printed on paper \$1;

(ii) that is a paper document converted to electronic format \$1; or

(iii) that is an electronic copy of an electronic document:

(a) for a document up to 10 pages in length \$1; and

(b) for each page or part of a page over 10 pages \$0.10;

(8) for a noncertified copy:

(A) printed on paper, for each page or part of a page \$1;

(B) that is a paper document converted to electronic format, for each page or part of a page \$1; or

(C) that is an electronic copy of an electronic document:

(i) for each document up to 10 pages in length \$1; and

(ii) for each page or part of a page over 10 pages \$0.10;

(9) for preparation of the clerk's record of transfer under Sections 33.105 and 1023.006, Estates Code, Section 155.207, Family Code, and Sections 51.3071 and 51.403 of this code:

(A) for the clerk's transfer certificate and index \$5;

(B) for each page or part of a page of a case record up to 10 pages in length \$1.00; and

(C) for each page or part of a page of a case record over 10 pages \$0.10.

(c) The fee is the obligation of the party to the suit or action initiating the request.

(d) The district clerk may accept a bond as security for a fee imposed under this section.

(e) The district clerk may not charge a fee for a copy of any document on file or of record in the clerk's office relating to an individual's criminal history, regardless of whether the document is certified, to:

(1) United States Immigration and Customs

Enforcement;

(2) United States Citizenship and Immigration Services; or

(3) a criminal justice agency that requests the document for a criminal justice purpose, including a request to determine an individual's eligibility to purchase a firearm.

(f) In this section, "criminal justice agency" and "criminal justice purpose" have the meanings assigned by Section [411.082](#).

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 186, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 465, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.02, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 237 (H.B. [627](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1341 (S.B. [1233](#)), Sec. 11, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. [41](#)), Sec. 2.12, eff. January 1, 2022.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 256 (S.B. [1612](#)), Sec. 13, eff. January 1, 2024.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 323 (H.B. [1989](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.319. OTHER FEES. The district clerk shall collect the following fees for services performed by the clerk:

(1) for performing services related to the matter of the estate of a deceased person or a minor transacted in the district court, the same fees allowed the county clerk for those services;

(2) for serving process by certified or registered mail, the same fee that sheriffs and constables are authorized to charge for the service under Section [118.131](#), Local Government Code;

(3) for performing any other service prescribed or

authorized by law for which no fee is set by law, a reasonable fee; and

(4) for performing services related to a matter filed in a statutory county court, the same fees allowed the district clerk for those services in the district court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 641, Sec. 1.03, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 654 (H.B. [2182](#)), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 51.3195. COPIES OF COURT RECORDS PRESERVED ONLY ON MICROFILM OR BY ELECTRONIC METHOD. (a) On the written request of a party in an action, the district clerk shall provide the court with a copy of a motion, order, or other pleading in the action that is preserved only on microfilm or by other electronic means. The request must specify the document sought and the approximate date that the document was filed.

(b) The district clerk may not charge a fee for a copy made under this section.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1356, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 51.320. BILL FOR SERVICES. A fee under this subchapter is not payable until the district clerk produces, or is ready to produce, a bill for services that contains the particulars of the fee charged before payment of the fee is required. The bill must be signed by the clerk or the clerk's successor in office or legal representative who charges the fee or to whom the fee is due.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.322. REMOVAL. A court rendering a judgment removing a district clerk under Article V, Section [9](#), of the Texas Constitution shall include in the judgment an order removing the clerk.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, Sec. 8.28(a), eff. Aug. 28, 1989.

SUBCHAPTER E. COUNTY CLERKS

Sec. 51.401. CLERK PRO TEMPORE. If a county clerk is a party to an action in the court he serves, the county judge, on the application of any interested person or on the judge's own motion, shall appoint a clerk pro tempore for the purposes of the action. The clerk pro tempore must take an oath to faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the appointment and must give a bond conditioned on the faithful performance of those duties in an amount fixed and approved by the judge. The bond must be payable to the State of Texas. A clerk pro tempore shall perform the duties of the clerk during the period of the appointment.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.402. DUTIES AND POWERS. (a) The clerk of a county court may:

- (1) issue marriage licenses; and
- (2) take affidavits and depositions.

(b) On the last day of each term of the court, the clerk shall make a written statement of fines and jury fees received since the last statement. The statement must include the name of the party from whom a fine or jury fee was received, the name of each juror who served during the term, the number of days served, and the amount due the juror for the services. The statement shall be recorded in the minutes of the court after it is approved and signed by the presiding judge.

(c) The clerk shall deposit fines and jury fees received by the clerk in the county treasury for the use of the county.

(d) In addition to the other powers and duties of this section, a county clerk that serves as the clerk for a court having jurisdiction of applications for protective orders under Chapter 71, Family Code, shall accept those applications.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 1024, Sec. 21, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 51.403. TRANSFER OF CASES. (a) If a case is transferred from a county court to a district court or a statutory

county court or a county court of another county, the clerk of the transferring court shall send to the clerk of the court to which the case is transferred, using the electronic filing system established under Section [72.031](#):

(1) a transfer certificate and index of transferred documents;

(2) a copy of the original papers filed in the transferring court;

(3) a copy of the order of transfer signed by the transferring court;

(4) a copy of each final order;

(5) a copy of the transfer certificate and index of transferred documents from each previous transfer; and

(6) a bill of any costs that have accrued in the transferring court.

(a-1) The clerk of the transferring court shall use the standardized transfer certificate and index of transferred documents form created by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System under Section [72.037](#) when transferring a case under this section.

(a-2) The clerk of the transferee court shall accept documents transferred under Subsection (a) and docket the case.

(a-3) The clerk of the transferee court shall physically or electronically mark or stamp the transfer certificate and index of transferred documents to evidence the date and time of acceptance under Subsection (a-2), but may not physically or electronically mark or stamp any other document transferred under Subsection (a).

(b) If civil or criminal jurisdiction of a county court is transferred to a district court, the clerk of the county court shall send using the electronic filing system established under Section [72.031](#) a certified copy of the judgments rendered in the county court that remain unsatisfied to the district clerks of the appropriate counties.

(c) Sections [80.001](#) and [80.002](#) do not apply to the transfer of documents under this section.

(d) The clerks of both the transferee and transferring courts may each produce, under this chapter, certified or

uncertified copies of documents transferred under Subsection (a) and must include a copy of the transfer certificate and index of transferred documents with each document produced.

(e) This section applies regardless of whether the transferee court and the transferring court are in the same or different counties.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 629 (S.B. 1341), Sec. 2, eff. June 16, 2015.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 934 (H.B. 3774), Sec. 7.03, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 256 (S.B. 1612), Sec. 14, eff. September 1, 2023.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 861 (H.B. 3474), Sec. 11.009, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.404. SPECIAL DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK IN GALVESTON COUNTY. The Commissioners Court of Galveston County may pay for the services of a special deputy district county clerk if the commissioners court considers a deputy clerk necessary. The clerk of the court in which the deputy clerk serves shall appoint the deputy clerk.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER F. JOINT CLERKS

Sec. 51.501. JOINT CLERKS. (a) Except as otherwise provided by this section, a county with a population of less than 8,000 shall elect a single clerk to perform the duties of the district clerk and the county clerk.

(b) The offices of county clerk and district clerk may remain separate if a majority of the qualified voters in the county vote to keep the offices separate at an election held for that purpose. The commissioners court of the county may hold a special election for that purpose on a uniform election date authorized by law that occurs not later than the 30th day before the date of the

regular primary election that precedes the expiration of the constitutional term of office for the clerk. Notice of the special election shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county not later than the 20th day before the date scheduled for the election. The question may be presented to the voters again immediately before the expiration of each subsequent constitutional term of office of the separate clerk. The special election may not prevent a county clerk, district clerk, or joint clerk from serving the full term of office to which the clerk was elected.

(c) The commissioners court of a county that has a population of 5,415 to 5,515 shall determine whether the county shall have a joint clerk but may not take action to prevent a district clerk, county clerk, or joint clerk from serving the full term of office to which the clerk was elected.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 597, Sec. 69, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 669, Sec. 17, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1163 (H.B. [2702](#)), Sec. 18, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 644 (H.B. [4559](#)), Sec. 36, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.502. SEAL. A joint clerk performing the duties of the district clerk and the county clerk shall use the district court seal to authenticate official acts for the district court and the county court seal to authenticate official acts for the county court.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

SUBCHAPTER G. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 51.601. COURT REPORTER SERVICE FUND. (a) The commissioners court of the county shall administer the court reporter service fund to assist in the payment of court-reporter-related services, that may include maintaining an

adequate number of court reporters to provide services to the courts, obtaining court reporter transcription services, closed-caption transcription machines, Braille transcription services, or other transcription services, including a court reporter's preparation of an appellate record under the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure and Rule 145, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, to comply with state or federal laws, or providing any other service related to the functions of a court reporter.

(b) The commissioners court shall, in administering the court reporter service fund, assist any court in which a case is filed that requires the payment of the court reporter service fee. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1080, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 144, Sec. 2, eff. Aug. 28, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 1047 (H.B. [4529](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1175 (H.B. [3361](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2019.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. [41](#)), Sec. 5.01(c)(7), eff. January 1, 2022.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 861 (H.B. [3474](#)), Sec. 10.004, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.602. COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN CLERKS. The salaries of the clerks of the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, and the courts of appeals are determined by the legislature in the acts appropriating funds for the support of the judiciary. The legislature shall also fix the amount of supplemental salaries paid to those clerks from court fees and receipts.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 480, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1985.

Sec. 51.605. CONTINUING EDUCATION. (a) In this section, the word "clerk" includes a county clerk, district clerk, or county and district clerk.

(b) A clerk shall complete 20 hours of instruction regarding the performance of the clerk's duties of office before the first

anniversary of the date the clerk assumes those duties.

(c) After the first anniversary of the date a clerk assumes the duties of office, the clerk must each calendar year complete 20 hours of continuing education courses.

(d) A clerk may carry over from the current calendar year to the following calendar year not more than 10 hours of completed continuing education courses that exceed the number of hours of completed continuing education courses required under Subsection (c).

(e) As part of the 20 hours of initial instruction and of continuing education courses prescribed under this section, a district clerk must complete one hour of instruction on impaneling petit and grand juries.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 345, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1988. Renumbered from Sec. 51.604 by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 2, Sec. 16.01(23), eff. Aug. 28, 1989. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 13, eff. May 21, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 505, Sec. 23, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 154, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2004.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1022 (H.B. [2717](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 710 (H.B. [3314](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 25 (H.B. [1831](#)), Sec. 1, eff. May 15, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 476 (H.B. [616](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2023.

Sec. 51.606. PROHIBITED FEES. A clerk is not entitled to a fee for:

(1) the examination of a paper or record in the clerk's office;

(2) filing any process or document the clerk issues that is returned to court;

(3) a motion or judgment on a motion for security for

costs; or

- (4) taking or approving a bond for costs.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 268, Sec. 10, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 51.607. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW OR AMENDED COURT COSTS AND FEES. (a) Following each regular session of the legislature, the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall identify each law enacted by that legislature, other than a law disapproved by the governor, that imposes or changes the amount of a court cost or fee collected by the clerk of a district, county, statutory county, municipal, or justice court from a party to a civil case or a defendant in a criminal case, including a filing or docketing fee, jury fee, cost on conviction, or fee or charge for services or to cover the expenses of a public official or agency. This subsection does not apply to attorney's fees, civil or criminal fines or penalties, or amounts charged, paid, or collected on behalf of another party to a proceeding other than the state in a criminal case, including restitution or damages.

(b) The Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall prepare a list of each court cost or fee covered by Subsection (a) to be imposed or changed and shall publish the list in the Texas Register not later than August 1 after the end of the regular session of the legislature at which the law imposing or changing the amount of the cost or fee was enacted. The office shall include with the list a statement describing the operation of this section and stating the date the imposition or change in the amount of the court cost or fee will take effect under Subsection (c).

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d) and notwithstanding the effective date of the law imposing or changing the amount of a court cost or fee included on the list, the imposition or change in the amount of the court cost or fee does not take effect until the next January 1 after the law takes effect.

(d) Subsection (c) does not apply to a court cost or fee if the law imposing or changing the amount of the cost or fee takes effect on or after the January 1 following the regular session of the legislature at which the law was enacted.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 81(a), eff. Sept. 1, 2003 and Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 823, Sec. 1, eff. June 20, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 417 (S.B. 390), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 606 (S.B. 891), Sec. 9.02(a), eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 2.14, eff. January 1, 2022.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 919 (S.B. 1923), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 51.608. IMPOSITION OF COURT COSTS IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS. Notwithstanding any other law that establishes the amount of a court cost collected by the clerk of a district, county, or statutory county court from a defendant in a criminal proceeding based on the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, the amount of a court cost imposed on the defendant in a criminal proceeding must be the amount established under the law in effect on the date the defendant is convicted of the offense.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 744 (S.B. 389), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

Sec. 51.609. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY FOR DISCLOSURE OR RELEASE OF COURT DOCUMENTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Court clerk" means the clerk of the supreme court or the court of criminal appeals or the clerk of a court of appeals district court, county court, statutory county court, statutory probate court, justice court, or municipal court.

(2) "State court document database" means a database accessible by the public and established or authorized by the supreme court for storing documents filed with a court in this state.

(b) A court clerk is not responsible for the management or removal of a document from a state court document database and is not liable for damages resulting from the release of a document in the database if the clerk in good faith performs the duties as clerk

as provided by law and the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure.

(c) If a court clerk in good faith performs the duties as a clerk as provided by law and the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the clerk, the county in which the court is located, and the commissioners court of the county in which the court is located are immune from suit and from liability for the release or disclosure of information that is confidential or otherwise prohibited from disclosure by law, rule, or court order and that is accessed from a state court document database.

(d) A court clerk is not liable for the release of a sealed or confidential document in the clerk's custody unless the clerk acted intentionally, or with malice, reckless disregard, or gross negligence in the release of the document.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1040 (H.B. 685), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2019.

Sec. 51.610. UNCOLLECTIBLE FEES. (a) The clerk may request the court in which a court cost or fee was imposed on a party in a civil case to make a finding that the cost or fee is uncollectible if the cost or fee has been unpaid for at least 15 years.

(b) On a finding by a court that a court cost or fee imposed on a party in a civil case is uncollectible, the court may order the clerk to designate the cost or fee as uncollectible in the fee record. The clerk shall attach a copy of the court's order to the fee record.

(c) This section does not apply to a court cost or fee imposed by the supreme court, the court of criminal appeals, or a court of appeals.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 121 (H.B. 435), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Redesignated from Government Code, Section 51.609 by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 915 (H.B. 3607), Sec. 21.001(11), eff. September 1, 2021.

SUBCHAPTER I. ELECTRONIC FILING OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS

Sec. 51.801. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "electronic filing of documents" means the filing of data transmitted to a district or county clerk or a clerk of a court of appeals by the communication of information, displayed originally in written form, in the form of digital electronic signals transformed by computer and stored on microfilm, magnetic tape, optical disks, or any other medium.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.802. PLACE OF FILING. The place of filing is the receiving station designated by the district or county clerk or the clerk of the court of appeals to which electronic information is transmitted.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.803. SUPREME COURT REGULATION AND APPROVAL. (a) The supreme court shall adopt rules and procedures to regulate the use of electronic copying devices for filing in the courts.

(b) An instrument may only be filed as provided by this subchapter if the district, county, or court of appeals has established a system for receiving electronically transmitted information from an electronic copying device, and the system has been approved by the supreme court. A district or county clerk or clerk of a court of appeals who believes there is justification for use of an electronic filing system in the clerk's office must request approval of the system from the supreme court. The supreme court shall approve or disapprove the system and may withdraw approval any time the system does not meet its requirements.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.804. COMPLETION OF ELECTRONIC FILING. To complete an electronic filing:

(1) the person filing an instrument with the district or county clerk or the clerk of a court of appeals must transmit the

instrument electronically;

(2) the receiving station must transmit acknowledgment to the sending party by encoding electronic receipt of the transmission;

(3) the sending station must encode validation of the encoded receipt as correct; and

(4) the receiving station must respond by encoded transcription into the computer system that validation has occurred and that the electronic transmission has been completed.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.805. TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION OF DATA. (a) A receiving station, on completion of an electronic filing, shall:

(1) transmit data to the appropriate court as required; and

(2) distribute data as required by statute or rule.

(b) Data must be distributed or transmitted from or through the medium of direct computer transmission, microfilm, magnetic tape, or optical disks, or any other medium approved by the supreme court.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.806. SIGNATURE ON ORIGINAL. (a) If the supreme court determines that each document filed by electronic transmission must be signed in the original, that requirement is satisfied if the sending station at the point of origin maintains a hard copy with the original signature affixed that, on order of the court, shall be filed in original hard copy medium. The electronic transmission of the data to be filed must bear a facsimile or printing of the required signature. The signature may be represented in numerical form. The electronically reproduced document must bear a copy of the signature or its representation in numerical form.

(b) The electronically reproduced document shall be accepted as the signature document for all court-related purposes

unless the hard copy with the original signature affixed is requested by one or more parties to a suit or other agent required by statute, law, or other legal requirement. A request under this subsection must be made in the form of a motion to the court. If the court grants the motion, the court shall order that the original be filed with the court.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.807. LOCAL RULES. (a) The courts of a county may adopt local rules that govern the transmission and receipt of documents or reports stored or created in digital electronic or facsimile form and that provide for recognition of those documents as the original record for file or for evidentiary purposes.

(b) The rules shall be submitted to the supreme court for review and adoption as a part of the overall plan or procedure for the electronic filing of documents.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 148, Sec. 2.67(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 51.808. NOTICE OF SELF-HELP RESOURCES. (a) The clerk of each court in this state shall:

(1) post on the court's Internet website, if any, a link to:

(A) the self-help resources Internet website designated by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System, in consultation with the Texas Access to Justice Commission, that includes information on:

(i) lawyer referral services certified under Chapter 952, Occupations Code;

(ii) the name, location, and any Internet website of any local legal aid office; and

(iii) any court-affiliated self-help center serving the county in which the court is located; and

(B) the State Law Library's Internet website; and

(2) conspicuously display in the clerk's office in a location frequently accessed by the public a sign with the

information described in Subdivision (1).

(b) The Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall prescribe the format for the information required under Subsection (a).

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 760 (S.B. 1911), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

SUBCHAPTER I-1. ELECTRONIC FILING FEE

Sec. 51.851. ELECTRONIC FILING FEE.

(a) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1352 (S.B. 346), Section 1.19(11), eff. January 1, 2020.

(b) In addition to other fees authorized or required by law, the clerk of the supreme court or a court of appeals shall collect a \$30 fee on the filing of any civil action or proceeding requiring a filing fee, including an appeal, and on the filing of any counterclaim, cross-action, intervention, interpleader, or third-party action requiring a filing fee to be used as provided by Section 51.852.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 5.01(c)(12), eff. January 1, 2022.

(d) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1352 (S.B. 346), Section 1.19(11), eff. January 1, 2020.

(e) A court may waive payment of a fee due under this section for an individual the court determines is indigent.

(f) Fees due under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs in the case.

(g) Repealed by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 5.01(c)(12), eff. January 1, 2022.

(h) The clerk of the supreme court or of a court of appeals shall remit the fees collected under this section to the comptroller.

(i) The comptroller shall deposit the fees received under this section to the credit of the statewide electronic filing system fund established under Section 51.852.

(j) Repealed by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 5.01(c)(12), eff. January 1, 2022.

(k) Money spent from fees collected under this section is subject to audit by the state auditor.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1290 (H.B. 2302), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1182 (S.B. 1139), Sec. 4.01, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1352 (S.B. 346), Sec. 1.15, eff. January 1, 2020.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1352 (S.B. 346), Sec. 1.19(11), eff. January 1, 2020.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 2.15, eff. January 1, 2022.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 472 (S.B. 41), Sec. 5.01(c)(12), eff. January 1, 2022.

Sec. 51.852. STATEWIDE ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM FUND.

(a) The statewide electronic filing system fund is an account in the general revenue fund.

(b) Money in the statewide electronic filing system fund may only be appropriated to the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System and used to:

(1) support a statewide electronic filing technology project for courts in this state;

(2) provide grants to counties to implement components of the project; or

(3) support court technology projects that have a statewide impact as determined by the office of court administration.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1290 (H.B. 2302), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

SUBCHAPTER J. CERTAIN FRAUDULENT RECORDS OR DOCUMENTS

Sec. 51.901. FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT OR INSTRUMENT. (a) If a clerk of the supreme court, clerk of the court of criminal appeals, clerk of a court of appeals, district clerk, county clerk, district

and county clerk, or municipal clerk has a reasonable basis to believe in good faith that a document or instrument previously filed or recorded or offered or submitted for filing or for filing and recording is fraudulent, the clerk shall:

(1) if the document is a purported judgment or other document purporting to memorialize or evidence an act, an order, a directive, or process of a purported court, provide written notice of the filing, recording, or submission for filing or for filing and recording to the stated or last known address of the person against whom the purported judgment, act, order, directive, or process is rendered; or

(2) if the document or instrument purports to create a lien or assert a claim on real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property, provide written notice of the filing, recording, or submission for filing or for filing and recording to the stated or last known address of the person named in the document or instrument as the obligor or debtor and to any person named as owning any interest in the real or personal property described in the document or instrument.

(b) A clerk shall provide written notice under Subsection (a):

(1) not later than the second business day after the date that the document or instrument is offered or submitted for filing or for filing and recording; or

(2) if the document or instrument has been previously filed or recorded, not later than the second business day after the date that the clerk becomes aware that the document or instrument may be fraudulent.

(c) For purposes of this section, a document or instrument is presumed to be fraudulent if:

(1) the document is a purported judgment or other document purporting to memorialize or evidence an act, an order, a directive, or process of:

(A) a purported court or a purported judicial entity not expressly created or established under the constitution or the laws of this state or of the United States; or

(B) a purported judicial officer of a purported

court or purported judicial entity described by Paragraph (A);

(2) the document or instrument purports to create a lien or assert a claim against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and:

(A) is not a document or instrument provided for by the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States;

(B) is not created by implied or express consent or agreement of the obligor, debtor, or the owner of the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property, if required under the laws of this state, or by implied or express consent or agreement of an agent, fiduciary, or other representative of that person; or

(C) is not an equitable, constructive, or other lien imposed by a court with jurisdiction created or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States; or

(3) the document or instrument purports to create a lien or assert a claim against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and the document or instrument is filed by an inmate or on behalf of an inmate.

(d) If a county clerk believes in good faith that a document filed with the county clerk to create a lien is fraudulent, the clerk shall:

(1) request the assistance of the county or district attorney to determine whether the document is fraudulent before filing or recording the document;

(2) request that the prospective filer provide to the county clerk additional documentation supporting the existence of the lien, such as a contract or other document that contains the alleged debtor or obligor's signature; and

(3) forward any additional documentation received to the county or district attorney.

(e) A presumption under Subsection (c)(3) may be rebutted by providing the filing officer in the filing office in which the document is filed or recorded the original or a copy of a sworn and notarized document signed by the obligor, debtor, or owner of the property designated as collateral stating that the person entered

into a security agreement with the inmate and authorized the filing of the financing statement as provided by Section 9.509, Business & Commerce Code.

(f) In this section:

(1) "Inmate" means a person housed in a secure correctional facility.

(2) "Secure correctional facility" has the meaning assigned by Section 1.07, Penal Code.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 407 (S.B. 1589), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 895 (H.B. 2566), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 51.902. ACTION ON FRAUDULENT JUDGMENT LIEN. (a) A person against whom a purported judgment was rendered who has reason to believe that a document previously filed or recorded or submitted for filing or for filing and recording is fraudulent may complete and file with the district clerk a motion, verified by affidavit by a completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, that contains, at a minimum, the information in the following suggested form:

	MISC. DOCKET NO. _____
In Re: A Purported	In the _____ Judicial District
Judgment Lien Against	In and For _____
(Name of Purported	County, Texas
Debtor)	

Motion for Judicial Review of a Documentation Purporting to Create
a Judgment Lien

Now Comes (name) and files this motion requesting a judicial determination of the status of a court, judicial entity, or judicial officer purporting to have taken an action that is the basis of a judgment lien filed in the office of said clerk, and in support of the motion would show the court as follows:

I.

(Name), movant herein, is the person against whom the purported judgment was rendered.

II.

On (date), in the exercise of the county clerk's official duties as County Clerk of (county name) County, Texas, the county clerk received and filed or filed and recorded the documentation attached hereto and containing (number) pages. Said documentation purports to have been rendered on the basis of a judgment, act, order, directive, or process of a court, judicial entity, or judicial officer called therein "(name of purported court, judicial entity, or judicial officer)" against one (name of purported debtor).

III.

Movant alleges that the purported court, judicial entity, or judicial officer referred to in the attached documentation is one described in Section 51.901(c)(1), Government Code, as not legally created or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States, and that the documentation should therefore not be accorded lien status.

IV.

Movant further attests that the assertions contained herein are true and correct.

PRAYER

Movant requests the court to review the attached documentation and enter an order determining whether it should be accorded lien status, together with such other orders as the court deems appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signature and typed name and address)

(b) The completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, must be as follows:

AFFIDAVIT

THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, personally appeared

_____, who, being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

"My name is _____. I am over 21 years of age, of sound mind, with personal knowledge of the following facts, and fully competent to testify.

I further attest that the assertions contained in the accompanying motion are true and correct."

Further affiant sayeth not.

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN TO before
me, this _____ day of _____,
_____.

NOTARY PUBLIC, State of Texas
Notary's printed name:

My commission expires:

(c) A motion filed under this section may be ruled on by a district judge having jurisdiction over real property matters in the county where the subject documentation was filed. The court's finding may be made solely on a review of the documentation attached to the movant's motion and without hearing any testimonial evidence. The court's review may be made ex parte without delay or notice of any kind. The court's ruling on the motion, in the nature of a finding of fact and a conclusion of law, is unappealable if it is substantially similar to the form suggested in Subsection (g).

(d) The district clerk may not collect a filing fee for filing a motion under this section.

(e) After reviewing the documentation attached to a motion under this section, the district judge shall enter an appropriate finding of fact and conclusion of law, which must be filed and indexed in the same class of records in which the subject documentation or instrument was originally filed.

(f) The county clerk may not collect a filing fee for filing a district judge's finding of fact and conclusion of law under this section.

(g) A suggested form order appropriate to comply with this

section is as follows:

MISC. DOCKET NO. _____

In Re: A Purported
Judgment Lien Against
(Name of Purported
Debtor)

In the _____ Judicial District
In and For _____
County, Texas

Judicial Finding of Fact and Conclusion of Law Regarding a
Documentation Purporting to Create a Judgment Lien

On the (number) day of (month), (year), in the above entitled and numbered cause, this court reviewed a motion verified by affidavit of (name) and the documentation attached thereto. No testimony was taken from any party, nor was there any notice of the court's review, the court having made the determination that a decision could be made solely on review of the documentation under the authority vested in the court under Subchapter J, Chapter 51, Government Code.

The court finds as follows (only an item checked and initialed is a valid court ruling):

_____ The documentation attached to the motion herein refers to a legally constituted court, judicial entity, or judicial officer created by or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States. This judicial finding and conclusion of law does not constitute a finding as to any underlying claims of the parties.

_____ The documentation attached to the motion herein DOES NOT refer to a legally constituted court, judicial entity, or judicial officer created by or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States. There is no valid judgment lien created by the documentation.

This court makes no finding as to any underlying claims of the parties involved and expressly limits its finding of fact and conclusion of law to a ministerial act. The county clerk shall file this finding of fact and conclusion of law in the same class of records as the subject documentation was originally filed, and the court directs the county clerk to index it using the same names that were used in indexing the subject document.

SIGNED ON THIS THE _____ DAY OF _____.

DISTRICT JUDGE

_____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT

_____ COUNTY, TEXAS

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Sec. 51.903. ACTION ON FRAUDULENT LIEN ON PROPERTY. (a) A person who is the purported debtor or obligor or who owns real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and who has reason to believe that the document purporting to create a lien or a claim against the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property previously filed or submitted for filing and recording is fraudulent may complete and file with the district clerk a motion, verified by affidavit by a completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, that contains, at a minimum, the information in the following suggested form:

	MISC. DOCKET NO. _____
In Re: A Purported	In the _____ Judicial District
Lien or Claim Against	In and For _____
(Name of Purported	County, Texas
Debtor)	

Motion for Judicial Review of Documentation or Instrument
Purporting to Create a Lien or Claim

Now Comes (name) and files this motion requesting a judicial determination of the status of documentation or an instrument purporting to create an interest in real or personal property or a lien or claim on real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property filed in the office of the Clerk of (county name) County, Texas, and in support of the motion would show the court as follows:

I.

(Name), movant herein, is the purported obligor or debtor or person who owns the real or personal property or the interest in real or personal property described in the documentation or instrument.

II.

On (date), in the exercise of the county clerk's official duties as County Clerk of (county name) County, Texas, the county clerk received and filed and recorded the documentation or instrument attached hereto and containing (number) pages. Said documentation or instrument purports to have created a lien on real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property against one (name of purported debtor).

III.

Movant alleges that the documentation or instrument attached hereto is fraudulent, as defined by Section 51.901(c)(2), Government Code, and that the documentation or instrument should therefore not be accorded lien status.

IV.

Movant attests that assertions herein are true and correct.

V.

Movant does not request the court to make a finding as to any underlying claim of the parties involved and acknowledges that this motion does not seek to invalidate a legitimate lien. Movant further acknowledges that movant may be subject to sanctions, as provided by Chapter 10, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, if this motion is determined to be frivolous.

PRAYER

Movant requests the court to review the attached documentation or instrument and enter an order determining whether it should be accorded lien status, together with such other orders as the court deems appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signature and typed name and address)

(b) The completed form for ordinary certificate of acknowledgment, of the same type described by Section 121.007, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, must be as follows:

AFFIDAVIT

THE STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF _____

BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, personally appeared

_____, who, being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

"My name is _____. I am over 21 years of age, of sound mind, with personal knowledge of the following facts, and fully competent to testify.

I further attest that the assertions contained in the accompanying motion are true and correct."

Further affiant sayeth not.

SUBSCRIBED and SWORN TO before
me, this _____ day of _____,
_____.

NOTARY PUBLIC, State of Texas
Notary's printed name:

My commission expires:

(c) A motion under this section may be ruled on by a district judge having jurisdiction over real property matters in the county where the subject document was filed. The court's finding may be made solely on a review of the documentation or instrument attached to the motion and without hearing any testimonial evidence. The court's review may be made ex parte without delay or notice of any kind. An appellate court shall expedite review of a court's finding under this section.

(d) The district clerk may not collect a filing fee for filing a motion under this section.

(e) After reviewing the documentation or instrument attached to a motion under this section, the district judge shall enter an appropriate finding of fact and conclusion of law, which must be filed and indexed in the same class of records in which the subject documentation or instrument was originally filed. A copy of the finding of fact and conclusion of law shall be sent, by first class mail, to the movant and to the person who filed the fraudulent lien or claim at the last known address of each person within seven days of the date that the finding of fact and conclusion of law is issued by the judge.

(f) The county clerk may not collect a fee for filing a district judge's finding of fact and conclusion of law under this section.

(g) A suggested form order appropriate to comply with this section is as follows:

	MISC. DOCKET NO. _____
In Re: A Purported	In the _____ Judicial District
Lien or Claim Against	In and For _____
(Name of Purported	County, Texas
Debtor)	

Judicial Finding of Fact and Conclusion of Law Regarding a
Documentation or Instrument Purporting to Create a Lien or Claim

On the (number) day of (month), (year), in the above entitled and numbered cause, this court reviewed a motion, verified by affidavit, of (name) and the documentation or instrument attached thereto. No testimony was taken from any party, nor was there any notice of the court's review, the court having made the determination that a decision could be made solely on review of the documentation or instrument under the authority vested in the court under Subchapter J, Chapter 51, Government Code.

The court finds as follows (only an item checked and initialed is a valid court ruling):

_____ The documentation or instrument attached to the motion herein IS asserted against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property and:

(1) IS provided for by specific state or federal statutes or constitutional provisions;

(2) IS created by implied or express consent or agreement of the obligor, debtor, or the owner of the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property, if required under the laws of this state, or by consent of an agent, fiduciary, or other representative of that person; or

(3) IS an equitable, constructive, or other lien imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction created or established under the constitution or laws of this state or of the United States.

_____ The documentation or instrument attached to the motion

herein:

(1) IS NOT provided for by specific state or federal statutes or constitutional provisions;

(2) IS NOT created by implied or express consent or agreement of the obligor, debtor, or the owner of the real or personal property or an interest in the real or personal property, if required under the law of this state or by implied or express consent or agreement of an agent, fiduciary, or other representative of that person;

(3) IS NOT an equitable, constructive, or other lien imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction created by or established under the constitution or laws of this state or the United States; or

(4) IS NOT asserted against real or personal property or an interest in real or personal property. There is no valid lien or claim created by this documentation or instrument.

This court makes no finding as to any underlying claims of the parties involved, and expressly limits its finding of fact and conclusion of law to the review of a ministerial act. The county clerk shall file this finding of fact and conclusion of law in the same class of records as the subject documentation or instrument was originally filed, and the court directs the county clerk to index it using the same names that were used in indexing the subject documentation or instrument.

SIGNED ON THIS THE _____ DAY OF _____.

DISTRICT JUDGE

_____ JUDICIAL DISTRICT

_____ COUNTY, TEXAS

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Sec. 51.904. WARNING SIGN. A clerk described by Section 51.901(a) shall post a sign, in letters at least one inch in height, that is clearly visible to the general public in or near the clerk's office stating that it is a crime to intentionally or knowingly file a fraudulent court record or a fraudulent instrument with the clerk.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

Sec. 51.905. DOCUMENTS FILED WITH SECRETARY OF STATE. (a) If the lien or other claim that is the subject of a judicial finding of fact and conclusion of law authorized by this subchapter is one that is authorized by law to be filed with the secretary of state, any person may file a certified copy of the judicial finding of fact and conclusion of law in the records of the secretary of state, who shall file the certified copy of the finding in the same class of records as the subject document or instrument was originally filed and index it using the same names that were used in indexing the subject document or instrument.

(b) The secretary of state may charge a filing fee of \$15 for filing a certified copy of a judicial finding of fact and conclusion of law under this section.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 189, Sec. 14, eff. May 21, 1997.

SUBCHAPTER L. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE FOR BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES
FOR INDIGENTS

Sec. 51.941. ADDITIONAL FILING FEE IN APPELLATE COURTS FOR BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FOR INDIGENTS. (a) In addition to other fees authorized or required by law, the clerk of the supreme court and courts of appeals shall collect a \$25 fee on the filing of any civil action or proceeding requiring a filing fee, including an appeal, and on the filing of any counterclaim, cross-action, intervention, interpleader, or third-party action requiring a filing fee.

(b) Court fees under this section shall be collected in the same manner as other fees, fines, or costs in the case.

(c) The clerk shall send the fees collected under this section to the comptroller not later than the last day of the month following each calendar quarter.

(d) The comptroller shall deposit the fees received under this section to the credit of the basic civil legal services account of the judicial fund for use in programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent.

(e) In this section, "indigent" means an individual who earns not more than 125 percent of the income standard established by applicable federal poverty guidelines.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 699, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Renumbered from Sec. 51.901 by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 19.01(28), eff. Sept. 1, 1999. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 209, Sec. 73(a), eff. Jan. 1, 2004.

Sec. 51.942. RULES. (a) The supreme court shall adopt:

(1) rules and procedures for the distribution of funds under this subchapter; and

(2) rules and procedures for imposing sanctions, including the reduction or cancellation of funding.

(b) Funds may be distributed only to nonprofit organizations that provide basic civil legal services to persons meeting the income eligibility requirements established by the supreme court.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 699, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Renumbered from Sec. 51.902 by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 19.01(28), eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Sec. 51.943. BASIC CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES ACCOUNT. (a) The basic civil legal services account is an account in the judicial fund administered by the supreme court.

(b) Funds in the basic civil legal services account may be used only for the support of programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent. The comptroller may pay money from the account only on vouchers approved by the supreme court.

(c) Except as provided by this subsection, funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used to directly or indirectly support a class action lawsuit, abortion-related litigation, or a lawsuit against a governmental entity, political party, candidate, or officeholder for an action taken in the individual's official capacity or for lobbying for or against a candidate or issue. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, funds from the basic civil legal services account may not

be used for the representation of an individual who is confined to a local, state, or federal jail or prison. Funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used to provide legal services to an individual who is not legally in this country, unless necessary to protect the physical safety of the individual. Funds from the basic civil legal services account may be used to support a lawsuit brought by an individual, solely on behalf of the individual or the individual's dependent or ward, to compel a governmental entity to provide benefits that the individual or the individual's dependent or ward is expressly eligible to receive, by statute or regulation, including social security benefits, aid to families with dependent children, financial assistance under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code, food stamps, special education for the handicapped, Medicare, Medicaid, subsidized or public housing, and other economic, shelter, or medical benefits provided by a government directly to an indigent individual, but not to support a claim for actual or punitive damages.

(d) Except as provided by this subsection, funds from the basic civil legal services account may not be used for a lawsuit or other legal matter that if undertaken on behalf of an indigent individual by an attorney in private practice might reasonably be expected to result in payment of a fee for legal services from an award to the individual client from public funds or from an opposing party. Funds from the basic civil legal services account may be used to support a lawsuit if the indigent individual seeking legal assistance made a reasonable effort to obtain legal services from an attorney in private practice for the particular legal matter, including contacting attorneys who practice law in the judicial district that is the residence of the indigent individual and who normally accept cases of a similar nature, and the indigent individual has been unable to obtain legal services.

(e) The supreme court shall file a report with the Legislative Budget Board at the end of each fiscal year showing disbursements from the account and the purpose for each disbursement and the sanctions imposed, if any. All funds expended are subject to audit by the supreme court, the comptroller, and the state auditor.

(f) The purpose of this subchapter is to increase the funds available for basic civil legal services to the indigent. Funds available from the basic civil legal services account may be supplemented by local or federal funds and private or public grants.

(g) A legal aid society or legal services program that is awarded attorney's fees in a case shall send the attorney's fees to the comptroller if any attorney representing any party involved in the case was paid in that case directly from funds from a grant made under this subchapter. The comptroller shall deposit the fees to the credit of the basic civil legal services account of the judicial fund for use in programs approved by the supreme court that provide basic civil legal services to the indigent.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 699, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Renumbered from Sec. 51.903 by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 19.01(28), eff. Sept. 1, 1999.