RCW 36.28.010 General duties—Volunteer aid, training, and limitations. The sheriff is the chief executive officer and conservator of the peace of the county. In the execution of the office, the sheriff and the sheriff's deputies:

(1) Shall uphold and enforce the Constitution and laws of the state of Washington, as interpreted and applied by the state supreme court, and uphold the United States Constitution;

(2) Shall be authorized to address all violations of the law and arrest persons who break the law;

(3) Shall defend the county against those who, by riot or otherwise, endanger the public peace or safety;

(4) Shall execute the process and orders of the courts of justice or judicial officers, when delivered for that purpose, according to law;

(5) Shall execute all warrants delivered for that purpose by other public officers, according to the provisions of particular statutes;

(6) Shall obey lawful judicial orders or directions;

(7) Shall keep and preserve the peace in their respective counties, and are authorized to work in collaboration with other law enforcement agencies pursuant to the Washington mutual aid peace officers powers act, chapter 10.93 RCW;

(8) Shall effect the service of process in civil or criminal cases; and

(9)(a)(i) May call to their aid volunteers and youth cadets, as defined in RCW 35.21.722. Any sheriff in any county that uses volunteers or youth cadets to assist in the sheriff's work may not provide authority to them, unless they have completed peace officer training and maintained certification requirements, to enforce criminal laws; engage in pursuits; detain or arrest; use force; carry or use firearms or other weapons; use surveillance technologies except fixed cameras within sheriff's offices; or share information from law enforcement databases with any party other than the sheriff or the volunteer supervisor designated in accordance with (b) of this subsection. They also may not be authorized to enforce civil immigration laws. However, volunteers who are qualified retired law enforcement officers under the federal law enforcement officers safety act improvements act of 2010 (18 U.S.C. Sec. 926C) may be authorized to carry firearms as part of their volunteer work for the law enforcement agency. Additionally, volunteers and youth cadets may not be authorized to use dogs to track people or animals, and may not use dogs to apprehend or bite people or animals. They may, however, use dogs to assist with search and rescue, including assisting with canine human remains detection, cadaver search, evidence search, or other search-oriented support of a law enforcement investigation.

(ii) A sheriff may authorize volunteers to assist with roles including, but not limited to, technical and administrative support, bicycle recovery, community crime prevention coordination, vehicle maintenance, helping with search and rescue as described in (a)(i) of this subsection, serving as faith leaders, transport, parking enforcement and traffic management, assisting with parks and recreation, animal control and caring for domestic animals, and other public safety-related community service, education, and outreach work.

(b) Limitations on authority pursuant to (a) of this subsection, and the required supervision of volunteers and youth cadets, must be set forth in agency policies. Agency policies must also include

limitations on the authority of, and requirements for, specially commissioned officers, including requirements that specially commissioned officers must be supervised by the law enforcement agency that commissioned them, other than when acting pursuant to RCW 10.93.050. Policies and ordinances must require appropriate training for any firearms or other weapons that specially commissioned officers or youth cadets are authorized to use. Agency policies must also require that volunteers, youth cadets, and specially commissioned officers be clearly identifiable by the public as such, and as distinguishable from peace officers, with limitations on the use of face coverings consistent with standards in state law for law enforcement. Sheriffs, police chiefs, and marshals must only provide badges or other identifying insignia to volunteers, youth cadets, and specially commissioned officers that are authorized in agency policy, and such identification may only be used by them while on duty in their authorized roles.

(c) A specially commissioned Washington peace officer as defined in RCW 10.93.020 is not considered a volunteer for purposes of this section.

(d) The requirements of this subsection must be implemented in accordance with RCW 36.01.400 and take effect January 1, 2027, to provide time for adoption of policies, laws, and ordinances. [2026 c 258 s 8; 2009 c 549 s 4050; 1965 c 92 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.28.010. Prior: (i) 1891 c 45 s 1; RRS s 4157. (ii) Code 1881 s 2769; 1862 p 557 s 4; 1854 p 434 s 4; RRS s 4168.]

Findings—Intent—Effective date—2026 c 258: See notes following RCW 35.21.333.