

## STARTING A CIVIL LAWSUIT

# Common Statutes of Limitations

Statutes of limitation are just that: they are statutes (laws) that place time limits on certain actions. After a set amount of time, claims cannot be enforced in court.

Here are some of the most common limits:

Injury to  
Person

3 years

RCW 4.16.080(2)

Collection of  
Debts

6 years

RCW 4.16.040

Libel/Slander

2 years

RCW 4.16.100(1)

Trespass

3 years

RCW 4.16.080(1)

Fraud

3 years

RCW 4.16.080(4)

Contracts

Written: 6  
years

RCW 4.16.040(1)

Oral: 3 years

RCW 4.16.080(3)

Damage to  
Personal  
Property

2 years

RCW 4.16.080(2)

Professional  
Malpractice

Medical: 3  
years from  
incident

**OR**

1 year from  
discovery

(8 years max)

RCW 4.16.350(3)

## *Exceptions*

Special circumstances can sometimes pause a statute of limitation. This is called "tolling."

Review RCW 4.16 and/or contact an attorney to learn how that might affect your case.

## *Keep in mind*

If you file  
past your  
statute of  
limitation,  
the court  
clerk won't  
deny your  
filing!

You can technically start a case despite a lapsed statute of limitation.

These are merely a defensive tool to get your case disposed early on.