

# Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities

## Overview

Five governing board members are collectively responsible for the operations of each conservation district. These governing board members are called *supervisors*.

Conservation district supervisors, as elected or appointed officials of a local government, have an obligation to uphold the law and fulfill the public trust, using taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible. Volunteering time does not make district supervisor obligations any different than those for other elected officials, such as county commissioners. Many responsibilities and requirements for how district supervisors are to conduct district business are outlined in the Conservation Districts Law ([RCW 89.08](#)). However, the concept of the public trust is broader. It encompasses the public’s expectation of a responsive, just, and equitable district government that’s accountable to its citizenry. Providing such a government is your primary challenge as a district supervisor.

## Conservation district supervisor powers and authorities

A conservation district supervisor’s legal powers and authorities are described in [RCW 89.08.210](#). Each one is listed in the table below with further explanation of each in the “Notes” column.

RCW 89.08.210	Notes
<b>shall</b> provide for the execution of surety bonds for officers and all employees who shall be entrusted with funds or property	Ensure that surety bonds are in place for at least the District Auditor (a board supervisor role) and the District Treasurer (staff/contractor role).
<b>shall</b> furnish to the commission, upon request, copies of such internal rules, regulations, orders, contracts, forms, and other documents as they shall adopt or employ, and such other information concerning their activities as the commission may require in the performance of its duties	Be responsive to Commission requests for information pertaining to all aspects of district operations. Only information that is specifically exempted from disclosure may be kept confidential by a district.
<b>shall</b> provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings, resolutions, regulations, and orders issued or adopted	Monthly minutes timely adopted District records organized, safe-guarded, and records retention requirements followed <a href="#">Public Records Act</a> (RCW 42.56) abided by
<b>shall</b> provide for an annual audit of the accounts of receipts and disbursements <i>in accordance with procedures prescribed by regulations of the commission</i>	At least annually, complete an internal audit of accounts ( <i>No regulations have been prescribed by the SCC at this time.</i> )

	<p>Ensure timely annual financial reporting to the <u>State Auditor's Office</u> (SAO)</p> <p>Ensure timely coordination and cooperation with the SAO for regular formal audits</p>
<p><b>shall</b> appoint such advisory committees as <b>may</b> be needed to assure the availability of appropriate channels of communication to the board of supervisors, to persons affected by district operations, and to local, regional, state and interstate special-purpose districts and agencies responsible for community planning, zoning, or other resource development activities</p>	<p>If a CD determines that an advisory committee is needed, then such a committee will be formally established by the Board; the committee's purpose, membership, and term should be described clearly in writing.</p>
<p><b>shall</b> keep such committees informed of its work, and such advisory committees shall submit recommendations from time to time to the board of supervisors</p>	<p>If an advisory committee is formed by a district, they are required to provide updates on district work to and hear recommendations of the committee.</p>
<p><b>may</b> employ a secretary, treasurer, technical experts, and such other officers, agents, and employees, permanent and temporary, as they may require, and determine their qualifications, duties, and compensation</p>	<p>At least annually adopt an organizational chart, staffing levels, and/or a salary schedule for district employees. Ensure a current employee handbook of district policies is available to all staff. Ensure all employment laws and policies are followed.</p>
<p><b>may</b> delegate to their chair, to one or more supervisors, or to one or more agents or employees such powers and duties as it deems proper</p>	<p>Ensure any delegations that are made are clear and made <i>in writing</i>, such as a delegation of authority to a manager or executive director.</p>
<p><b>may</b> call upon the attorney general for legal services, or may employ its own counsel and legal staff</p>	<p>Access to the Attorney General (AG) is through the SCC. The AG is not a free service. The SCC interacts with the AG on matters of a statewide nature on behalf of CDs.</p>
<p><b>may</b> invite the legislative body of any municipality or county near or within the district, to designate a representative to advise and consult with it on all questions of program and policy which may affect the property, water supply, or other interests of such municipality or county</p>	<p>May choose to invite advisors from municipal or county jurisdictions to advise the district as needed or desired.</p>

RCW 89.08.210 **are not the only legal obligations** for conservation district supervisors to be mindful of. All other local, state, and federal laws applicable to the operation of local government entities must also be followed, including but not limited to: The Municipal Ethics Act, Open Public Meetings Act, Public Records Act, Fair Labor Standards Act and other federal and state employment laws, civil rights

and equal opportunity laws, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is also important to note that if the conservation district acts outside of the corporate powers described in RCW 89.08 or a conservation district supervisor acts outside of their authorities, individual supervisors may be risking personal liability for those actions.

To learn more about [conservation district corporate status and powers](#) please visit the Supervisor Orientation tab located on the [State Conservation Commission](#) website.

## Additional Resources

- [Supervisor Reference Guide](#)
- [Conservation Accountability and Performance Program](#)
- [SCC Regional Managers](#)