

**7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District  
Douglas County, Kansas**

**Court Records  
User's Guide**



Douglas County District Court  
ATTN: Court Records  
111 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Lawrence, KS 66044  
Phone: 785-832-5141  
Fax: 785-832-5258  
Email: [courtrecords@douglas-county.com](mailto:courtrecords@douglas-county.com)

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## General Information

The repository for Douglas County district court records resides within the Office of the Clerk of the District Court on the lower level of the Judicial and Law Enforcement Building located at 111 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Lawrence, KS 66044. The office is located directly across from the elevators.

The official records custodian is Douglas Hamilton, Clerk of Court. The deputy records custodian, with responsibility for day-to-day operations, is Vernon Anderson. Both can be reached through the Office of the Clerk of the District Court.

Currently the hours of operation for the repository are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The telephone number is 785-832-5141. The fax number is 785-832-5258. Records personnel may also be reached by email at [courtrecords@douglas-county.com](mailto:courtrecords@douglas-county.com).

Douglas County district court records are governed by the provisions of the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA), [K.S.A. 45-215 et seq.](#) A good resource for [frequently asked questions about KORA](#) may be found at the Kansas Attorney General's website.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### ***1. How do I get a copy of my marriage or birth certificate?***

Marriage and birth certificates are housed at the Office of Vital Statistics in Topeka. They may be reached at 785-296-1400.

### ***2. How do I make a request for records?***

All requests must be in writing, but are not required to be submitted "in any particular form". K.S.A. 45-220(b). District Court, however, provides a [records request form](#) which may be filled out and submitted online at [www.douglas-county.com](http://www.douglas-county.com) > District Court > Court Records, copies of which may also be found in the lobby of the Clerk's office.

If you do not wish to use the form provided, please be sure to include your full name, address, daytime phone number, and a specific description of the record you need, including a case number if you have it. Requests may be submitted in person at the Clerk's office and may also be submitted by FAX to 785-832-5258 or by email to [courtrecords@douglas-county.com](mailto:courtrecords@douglas-county.com).

Records staff will not conduct a search or process any request requiring a legal determination to be made, such as whether a judgment is active or dormant, whether a lien exists, or for all documents in a record pertaining to child support or custody. K.S.A.20-3133.

Further, in accordance with [Kansas Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 189](#), "bulk requests for court records shall be denied . . .". Determination about whether a request is a bulk request will be made on a case-by-case basis.

### **3. How long does all this usually take?**

Records staff will act upon each request for records as soon as possible after receipt of the request. KORA, however, allows public agencies three (3) business days to respond to a request for records. K.S.A. 45-218(d). A response should not necessarily be construed as a successful completion.

All requests are subject to the availability of the records sought at the time the request is made. Records staff will not keep a request until such time as a record becomes available but will send notification within three (3) business days that the record is currently unavailable and to re-submit the request at a later date. Some examples might include, but are not limited to, a record that is checked out to an attorney, or a record that is in chambers pending a hearing.

### **4. Will it cost me anything?**

Yes, in most instances. Fees charged for access to or copies of court records are in accordance with KORA, [Kansas Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 156](#) and [Douglas County District Court Administrative Order No. 08-16](#). For your convenience, applicable charges are provided below:

Access Fee - \$12.00 per hour, billed in tenths of an hour  
 Copies - \$0.25/page  
 Certifications - \$1.00/document  
 Authentications - \$2.00/document  
 Shipping & Handling - \$1.00/request  
 (does not include extraordinary requests or shipping)  
 Faxed copies:  
     Local - \$1.00/page  
     Long Distance - \$2.00/page

#### **a. Extraordinary charges**

An access fee of \$12.00 per hour will be charged for files that must be retrieved from off-site storage for copying or viewing.

Searches on cases that are not in the court's computer database, which includes most cases prior to 1990, will require an advance payment of \$12.00, which is non-refundable. This payment does not turn on whether the search is successful. Charges in addition to the advance payment may apply, e.g., additional hours, copy fees, certifications, etc.

### **5. May I check out or view my case file?**

By rule, files may only be checked out to attorneys and abstracters, and only to those attorneys and abstracters with offices in Douglas County. Files may not be removed from the county without the knowledge of the Clerk.

In most cases you may view court file(s) in the lobby of the Clerk's office after completing a request for records. If you wish to have copies made from the file(s) you must fill out and submit a new request for records. The request will be

placed in the new request queue. Copies will not be made on the spot unless a very compelling reason is provided.

### ***6. May I request a copy of a record be sent to me as soon as it is filed?***

Court records staff will deny any requests made for records that do not yet exist, e.g., standing requests for records. As stated in [A.G. Opin. No. 98-51](#), "a request for documents which are not yet in existence does not adequately identify the documents sought.". A request for such records is not enforceable.

### ***7. Do you conduct criminal background research?***

Records personnel will not conduct criminal background searches. [Kansas Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 156](#) states, "[p]ersons requesting criminal records searches for employment, credit, or the like shall be referred to the executive branch agency most likely to have centralized reference files, e.g., the Kansas Bureau of Investigation or the Division of Vehicles.". You may reach the KBI at 785-296-8200 and the Division of Vehicles at 785-296-3671.

### ***8. What about other types of background research?***

Because of budget and staffing considerations in our records office, we no longer have the time or the available staff to conduct general name research for individuals or various other entities. We are always happy, however, to provide records or copies of records if we are provided with an actual case number.

Additionally, the Kansas Attorney General's website, in the Frequently Asked Questions about the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA), Question Division A, FAQ 10, states, "The KORA applies to public records possessed by a public agency at the time the request is made. It does not require that a public agency do research for you, create a record it does not already possess, or write out their response to your questions.".

You may, if you wish, subscribe to our online database to conduct your own searches by contacting Information Technology at 785-832-5299. In the alternative, you may use the public access terminals in the lobby of the Clerk's office.

### ***9. May I view or get copies of confidential records?***

Confidential records are those records sealed by the court or by rule or statute. Generally, confidential records are not available to the general public for viewing or copying. If, however, you feel that you should be able to view a particular record you must fill out a request form, attach a consent letter explaining precisely what you wish to view or have copied, sign the letter, and attach a copy of a photo ID such as a driver's license.

Upon receipt of these items, records staff will present the request, letter and ID to a judge who will make the determination about whether your request should be completed.

## Attorneys and Abstracters

### ***Checking out court files***

Attorneys and abstracters with offices located within Douglas County may check out court files in accordance with [Local Court Rule \(LCR\) No. 3](#) and [Kansas Supreme Court Rule 106\(a\)](#), the latter providing that “[n]o file or record of the court shall be permitted to be outside of the physical possession and control of the clerk or judge except on the signed receipt of an attorney or of an abstracter, and subject to being returned immediately upon request. No file or record shall be taken outside of the county of the clerk's office except with the knowledge and consent of the clerk or by order of the judge.”.

Files may be picked up at the Clerk's office after signing a receipt for custody of records. An authorized designee of the attorney or an employee of the abstracter's firm may sign the receipt.

Further in accordance with LCR 3, attorneys and abstracters may have the files for seven (7) days after which they must return them directly to the court. The files must also be returned immediately upon request of the court.

Files **may not** be disassembled for copying or for any other reason.

### ***Copies of court records***

Copies of records may be requested in accordance with [FAQ No. 2](#) above. Unless a very compelling reason is provided, requests for copies will not be acted upon immediately.

Charges will apply to copies made by the repository staff, all in accordance with KORA, [Kansas Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 156](#) and [Douglas County District Court Administrative Order No. 08-16](#). At this time, court-appointed attorneys in criminal cases will not be charged for copies of records associated with their appointed cases so long as they so identify themselves when making a request.

### ***Billing***

Billing is generally accomplished by one of two methods:

#### **General Billing**

An invoice is generated and presented at the time an individual request is completed. This is the most typical way billing is accomplished. Payment is due at the time the request is picked up or, if mailed or faxed, payment is expected within 30 days. If payment has not been received within 90 days, the requester may be required to pay in advance for future requests or may be unable to request more records until such time as outstanding invoices are paid.

## Monthly Accounts

Those firms or offices who generate a regular flow of requests may ask to be billed monthly. This may be accomplished by contacting the deputy records custodian at 785-832-5141 or by email to [courtrecords@douglas-county.com](mailto:courtrecords@douglas-county.com).

Monthly accounts are billed near the first of the month for the previous month. A statement is mailed, or placed inside your court mailbox, along with copies of the individual invoices. There are no additional fees or charges attached to monthly accounts, but those applying for an account must be requesting invoiced services on a regular basis throughout the month. Monthly accounts are not restricted to local firms or offices. Non-payment penalties are the same as laid out in General Billing above.

## Resources

The following resources are presented for your convenience.

Office of Vital Statistics  
1000 S.W. Jackson St.  
Topeka, KS 66612-2221  
785-296-1400

Kansas Bureau of Investigation  
1620 S.W. Tyler  
Topeka, KS 66612  
785-296-8200

Driver Control Bureau  
PO Box 12021  
Topeka, KS 66612-2021  
785-296-3671

Kansas Attorney General  
120 S.W. 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Topeka, KS 66612  
785-296-2215

Lawrence Municipal Court  
1006 New Hampshire  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
785-832-6190

Lawrence Police Department  
111 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
785-832-7509 (non-emergency)

Douglas County District Attorney  
111 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
785-841-0211

Douglas County Sheriff's Office  
111 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
785-832-5203

Douglas County Register of Deeds  
1100 Massachusetts St. (Unit 300)  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
785-832-5282