

## CHAPTER 66

### REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Referred to in [§2C.5](#), [2C.20](#), [68B.32D](#), [123.5](#), [123.13](#), [307A.8](#), [331.322](#), [331.756\(75\)](#)

See also [chapter 69](#)

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#### 66.1 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires, “book”, “list”, “record”, or “schedule” kept by a county auditor, assessor, treasurer, recorder, sheriff, or other county officer means the county system as defined in [section 445.1](#).

[2000 Acts, ch 1148, §1](#)

#### 66.1A Removal by court.

Any appointive or elective officer, except such as may be removed only by impeachment, holding any public office in the state or in any division or municipality thereof, may be removed from office by the district court for any of the following reasons:

1. For willful or habitual neglect or refusal to perform the duties of the office.
2. For willful misconduct or maladministration in office.
3. For corruption.
4. For extortion.
5. Upon conviction of a felony.
6. For intoxication, or upon conviction of being intoxicated.
7. Upon conviction of violating the provisions of [chapter 68A](#).
8. For failure to pay a fine imposed pursuant to [section 39A.6](#) and not dismissed pursuant to [chapter 17A](#).

[S13, §1258-c; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1091; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.1] C2001, §66.1A

[2021 Acts, ch 12, §68, 73](#)

Referred to in [§185.9](#), [388.3](#)

Impeachable officers, Iowa Constitution, Art. III, §20

#### 66.2 Jurisdiction.

The jurisdiction of the proceeding provided for in [this chapter](#) shall be as follows:

1. As to state officers whose offices are located at the seat of government, the district court of Polk county.
2. As to state officers whose duties are confined to a district within the state, the district court of any county within such district.
3. As to county, municipal, or other officers, the district court of the county in which such officers’ duties are to be performed.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1092; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.2]

**66.3 Who may file petition.**

The petition for removal may be filed:

1. By the attorney general in all cases.
2. As to state officers, by not fewer than twenty-five electors of the state.
3. As to any other officer, by five registered voters of the district, county, or municipality where the duties of the office are to be performed.
4. As to district officers, by the county attorney of any county in the district.
5. As to all county and municipal officers, by the county attorney of the county where the duties of the office are to be performed.

[S13, §1258-d; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1093; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.3] [2001 Acts, ch 56, §6](#)

**66.4 Bond for costs.**

If the petition for removal is filed by anyone other than the attorney general or the county attorney, the court shall require the petitioners to file a bond in such amount and with such surety or sureties as the court may require, said bond to be approved by the clerk, to cover the costs of such removal suit, including attorney fees, if final judgment is not entered removing the officer charged.

[C35, §1093-e1; C39, §1093.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.4]  
 Referred to in [§602.8102\(20\)](#)  
 Presumption of approval of bond, [§636.10](#)

**66.5 Petition — other pleading.**

The petition shall be filed in the name of the state of Iowa. The accused shall be named as defendant, and the petition, unless filed by the attorney general, shall be verified. The petition shall state the charges against the accused and may be amended as in ordinary actions, and shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the district court of the county having jurisdiction. The petition shall be deemed denied but the accused may plead thereto.

[S13, §1258-d, -e; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1094; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.5]

Amendments, [R.C.P. 1.402\(4\), \(5\)](#)

**66.6 Notice.**

Upon the filing of a petition, notice of such filing and of the time and place of hearing shall be served upon the accused in the manner required for the service of notice of the commencement of an ordinary action. Said time shall not be less than ten days nor more than twenty days after completed service of said notice.

[S13, §1258-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1095; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.6]  
 Service of notice, [chapter 617](#)  
 Manner of service, [R.C.P. 1.301 – 1.315](#)

**66.7 Suspension from office.**

Upon presentation of the petition to the court, the court may suspend the accused from office, if in its judgment sufficient cause appear from the petition and affidavits which may be presented in support of the charges contained therein.

[S13, §1258-g; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1096; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.7]  
 Referred to in [§39A.6](#)

**66.8 Effect of suspension.**

In case of suspension, the order shall be served upon the officer in question and it shall be unlawful for the officer to exercise or attempt to exercise any of the functions of that office until such suspension is revoked.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1097; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.8]  
 Referred to in [§39A.6](#)

**66.9 Salary pending charge.**

An order of the district court suspending a public officer from the exercise of the office, after the filing of a petition for the removal from office of such officer, shall, from the date of

such order, automatically suspend the further payment to said officer of all official salary or compensation until said petition has been dismissed, or until said officer has been acquitted on any pending indictments charging misconduct in office.

[C35, §1097-e1; C39, §1097.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.9]

#### **66.10 Governor to direct filing.**

The governor shall direct the attorney general to file a petition for removal against any public officer whenever the governor has reasonable grounds for such direction. The attorney general shall comply with such direction and prosecute the action.

[S13, §1258-d, -e; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1098; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.10]

[2019 Acts, ch 59, §27](#)

Referred to in [§66.11](#)

#### **66.11 Duty of county attorney.**

The county attorney of any county in which an action is instituted under [section 66.10](#) shall, at the request of the attorney general, appear and assist in the prosecution of such action. In all other cases instituted in that county, the county attorney shall appear and prosecute when the officer sought to be removed is other than that county attorney.

[S13, §1258-d; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1099; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.11]

Referred to in [§331.756\(15\)](#)

#### **66.12 Special prosecutor.**

When the proceeding is brought to remove the county attorney, the court may appoint an attorney to appear in behalf of the state and prosecute such proceedings.

[S13, §1258-d; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1100; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.12]

#### **66.13 Application for outside judge.**

At any time not less than five days prior to the time the accused is required to appear, a copy of the petition may be filed by either party in the office of the clerk of the supreme court, together with an application to the supreme court for the appointment of a judge outside the judicial district in which the trial is to be had to hear said petition.

[S13, §1258-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1101; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.13]

#### **66.14 Appointment of judge.**

It shall be the duty of the chief justice of the supreme court, upon the filing of said copy and application, or in the chief justice's absence or inability to act, any justice thereof, to forthwith issue a written commission directing a district judge outside of such district to proceed to the county in which the complaint was filed, and hear the same. The clerk of the supreme court shall transmit a certified copy of said order to the clerk of the district court where the cause is pending.

[S13, §1258-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1102; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.14]

Referred to in [§66.15](#)

#### **66.15 Order by appointed judge.**

Upon the receipt of a commission issued pursuant to [section 66.14](#), the judge shall immediately make an order fixing a time and place of hearing in the county in which the petition is filed. The hearing date shall be not less than ten days nor more than twenty days from the date of the order.

[S13, §1258-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1103; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.15]

[2019 Acts, ch 59, §28](#)

Referred to in [§66.16](#), [66.17](#)

#### **66.16 Filing order — effect.**

The order for hearing issued pursuant to [section 66.15](#) shall be forwarded to the clerk of the district court of the county in which the hearing is to be had. The time and place for

the hearing specified in the order shall supersede the time and place specified in any notice already served.

[S13, §1258-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1104; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.16]  
[2019 Acts, ch 59, §29](#)

#### **66.17 Notice to accused.**

The clerk shall file the order issued pursuant to [section 66.15](#), and forthwith give the defendant, by mail, notice of the time and place of hearing.

[S13, §1258-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1105; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.17]  
[2019 Acts, ch 59, §30](#)  
Referred to in [§602.8102\(20\)](#)

#### **66.18 Nature of action — when triable.**

The proceeding shall be summary in its nature and shall be triable as an equitable action.

[S13, §1258-g; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1106; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.18]

Trial of equitable action, [chapter 624](#)

#### **66.19 Temporary officer.**

Upon a suspension, the board or person authorized to fill a vacancy in the office shall temporarily fill the office by appointment. In case of a suspension of a sheriff, the district court may designate an acting sheriff until a temporary sheriff is appointed. Orders of suspension and temporary appointment of county and township officers shall be certified to the county auditor for entry in the election book; those of city officers, certified to the clerk and entered upon the records; in case of other officers, to the person or body making the original appointment.

[C51, §404, 407, 410; R60, §635, 638, 641; C73, §752, 753, 758; C97, §1257; S13, §1258-g; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1107; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.19]

[83 Acts, ch 186, §10032](#)

Referred to in [§331.322](#), [331.505](#), [331.651](#)

#### **66.20 Judgment of removal.**

Judgment of removal, if rendered, shall be entered of record, and the vacancy forthwith filled as provided by law.

[S13, §1258-h; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1108; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.20]

Vacancies in office, [chapter 69](#)

#### **66.21 Hearing on appeal.**

In case of appeal, the supreme court shall fix the time of hearing and the filing of abstracts and arguments, and said cause shall be advanced and take precedence over all other causes upon the court calendar, and shall be heard at the next term after the appeal is taken, provided the abstract and arguments are filed in said court in time for said action to be heard.

[S13, §1258-i; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1109; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.21]

#### **66.22 Effect of appeal.**

The taking of an appeal by the defendant and the filing of a supersedeas bond shall not operate to stay the proceedings of the district court, or restore said defendant to office pending such appeal.

[S13, §1258-i; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1110; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.22]

#### **66.23 Effect of dismissal.**

If the petition for removal is dismissed, the defendant shall be reimbursed for the reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the defendant in making a defense, including reasonable attorney's fees, as determined by the court. If the petition for removal is filed by the attorney general, the state shall pay the expenses. If the petition for removal is filed by the county attorney or special prosecutor, the expenses shall be paid by the political subdivision of the state represented by the county attorney or special prosecutor. The payment shall be

made out of any funds in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated, or out of the county treasury, or the general fund of the city or other subdivision of the state, as the case may be.

[S13, §1258-i; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1111; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.23]  
83 Acts, ch 123, §47, 209

#### **66.24 Want of probable cause.**

If the action is instituted upon complaint of citizens, and it appears to the court that there was no reasonable cause for filing the complaint, such expense may be taxed as costs against the complaining parties.

[S13, §1258-i; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1112; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.24]

#### **66.25 Reserved.**

#### **66.26 Appointive state officers.**

Any appointive state officer may also be removed from office by a majority vote of the executive council for any of the following causes:

1. Habitual or willful neglect of duty.
2. Any disability preventing a proper discharge of the duties of the office.
3. Gross partiality.
4. Oppression.
5. Extortion.
6. Corruption.
7. Willful misconduct or maladministration in office.
8. Conviction of felony.
9. A failure to produce and fully account for all public funds and property in the officer's hands at any inspection or settlement.
10. Becoming ineligible to hold the office.

[S13, §1258-b; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1114; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.26]

Referred to in §4A.11, 46.5

#### **66.27 Subpoenas — contempt.**

The executive council, in any investigation held by it, may issue subpoenas for witnesses and for the production of records, books, papers, and other evidence. If a witness, duly subpoenaed, refuses to appear, or refuses to testify, or otherwise refuses to comply with said subpoena, such fact shall be certified by such council to the district court or judge of the county where the hearing is being held and said court or judge shall proceed with said refusal as though the same had occurred in a legal proceeding before said court or judge.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1115; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.27]  
Contempts, chapter 665

#### **66.28 Witness fees.**

Witnesses, if in the employ of the state, shall not be entitled to any witness fees, but shall receive the mileage allowed witnesses in the district court. Other witnesses shall receive the fees and mileage allowed witnesses in district court. A sum sufficient to pay the fees and mileage is appropriated out of any unappropriated funds in the state treasury.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1116; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.28]  
2019 Acts, ch 24, §12

Witness fees, §622.69 – 622.75

#### **66.29 City elective officers.**

Any city officer elected by the people may be removed from office, after hearing on written charges filed with the council of such city for any cause which would be ground for an

equitable action for removal in the district court, but such removal can only be made by a two-thirds vote of the entire council.

[R60, §1087; C73, §516; C97, §1258; SS15, §1258; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1117; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.29]

Referred to in [§66.30](#)

Removal of municipal officers, [§66.1A](#), 372.15

### **66.30 Ordinance.**

The council may, by ordinance, provide as to the manner of preferring and hearing charges filed pursuant to [section 66.29](#). A person shall not be removed twice by the council from the same office for the same offense. Proceedings before the council shall not be a bar to proceedings in the district court as provided in [this chapter](#).

[R60, §1087; C73, §516; C97, §1258; S13, §1258-a; SS15, §1258; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §1118; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §66.30]

[2019 Acts, ch 59, §31](#)

### **66.31 County and city hospital trustees.**

A county or city hospital board of trustees may include in their bylaws a process for removal of a trustee for which there is cause that would be grounds for an equitable action for removal in the district court. The process shall provide for a hearing on written charges filed with the board of trustees.

[2018 Acts, ch 1033, §1](#)

Removal from office, [§66.1A](#)