Elections Division of the Washington State Secretary of State
Info on signature gathering

1. There's a rumor that the signatures and addresses are a matter of public record. FACT: Original petitions are stored in hard copy in the archives, and the public may look through them sheet by sheet. However there is no searchable database, nor is this information available online or anywhere outside of the archives.
2. Ditto marks are permissible.
3. Abbreviations like "Bham" for Bellingham or "What" for Whatcom are permissible, but it depends on how easy they are for examiners to figure out. "LI" for Lummi Island is a tough one.
4. "WA" for the name of the county is not useful. However, if the examiners can find a bona fide signature from the information given, it is valid.
5. Writing the name above what the petition signer has written is permissible. If a signer has written "WA," writing "What" or "Whatcom" above it is OK. If a signer writes down the wrong county, writing the right one above is OK.
6. The Secretary of State's office does not require signature gatherers to sign the oath on the back ("Petition Gatherer, Sign Here"). Signature-gathering companies may, however.
7. Some folks wonder if signatures from several counties can appear on one petition. They can.
8. If a person cannot remember and happens to sign petitions on two occasions, if the Elections Division catches it, it considers the first signature valid and the duplicate(s) invalid.
9. 17-year-olds may register to vote if they turn 18 before Election Day. They join the voter rolls on their birthdays. They may sign petitions, but if the examiner checks for their signatures before their birthdays, they will not come up, and the signatures will be invalid.

BOTTOM LINE: If an examiner can find a bona fide signature from the information given, it is valid. (And there is nothing wrong with making the job easier.)