

**Chapter 49.36 RCW**  
**LABOR UNIONS**

**Sections**

- 49.36.010 Unions legalized.
- 49.36.015 Injunctions in labor disputes.
- 49.36.020 Employment contracts—Remedy for violation.
- 49.36.030 Prosecutions prohibited.
- 49.36.040 Certain communications—Privilege from examination and disclosure.

*Collective bargaining with employees of city owned utilities: RCW 35.22.350.*

*Discrimination—Unfair practices: RCW 49.60.180 through 49.60.215, 49.60.220.*

*Prohibited practices: Chapter 49.44 RCW.*

*Supervisor of industrial relations: RCW 43.22.260.*

**RCW 49.36.010 Unions legalized.** It shall be lawful for working men and women to organize themselves into, or carry on labor unions for the purpose of lessening the hours of labor or increasing the wages or bettering the conditions of the members of such organizations; or carry out their legitimate purposes by any lawful means. [1919 c 185 § 1; RRS § 7611.]

**RCW 49.36.015 Injunctions in labor disputes.** No restraining order or injunction shall be granted by any court of this state, or any judge or judges thereof in any case between an employer and employee or between employer and employees or between employees or between persons employed and persons seeking employment involving or growing out of a dispute concerning terms or conditions of employment, unless necessary to prevent irreparable damage to property or to a personal right or to a property right of the party making the application, for which injury there is no adequate remedy at law, and such petition must be in writing describing such damage or injury feared by the applicant, and sworn to by the applicant or his or her agent or attorney. No such restraining order or injunction shall prohibit any such person or persons, whether singly or in concert, from terminating any relation of employment or from ceasing to perform any work or labor; or from paying or giving to, or withholding from any person engaged in such dispute, any strike benefits or other moneys or things of value; or from doing any act or thing which might lawfully be done in the absence of such dispute by any party thereto; nor shall any of the acts specified in this section be considered or held to be illegal or unlawful in any court of the state. [2010 c 8 § 12032; 1919 c 185 § 2; RRS § 7612.]

*Labor disputes: Chapter 49.32 RCW.*

**RCW 49.36.020 Employment contracts—Remedy for violation.** The labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce, and the right to enter into the relation of employer and employee or to change that relation except in violation of contract is a legal right. In all cases involving the violation of the contract of employment, either by the employee or employer where no irreparable damage is about to be done to the property, personal rights or property rights of either, no injunction shall be granted, but the parties shall be left to their remedy at law. [1919 c 185 § 3; RRS § 7613.]

*Injunctions in labor disputes: RCW 49.32.011.*

**RCW 49.36.030 Prosecutions prohibited.** No person shall be indicted, prosecuted, or tried in any court of this state for entering into or carrying on any lawful arrangement, agreement, or combination between themselves made with a view of lessening the number of hours of labor or increasing wages or bettering the conditions of working men and women, or for any lawful act done in pursuance thereof. [1919 c 185 § 4; RRS § 7614.]

**RCW 49.36.040 Certain communications—Privilege from examination and disclosure.** The privilege established by RCW 5.60.060(11) shall apply to all labor unions covered by this chapter. [2023 c 202 § 9.]

**Findings—2023 c 202:** See note following RCW 5.60.060.