
SENATE BILL 5850

State of Washington 55th Legislature 1997 Regular Session

By Senators Anderson, Newhouse, Haugen and Horn

Read first time 02/17/97. Referred to Committee on Commerce & Labor.

1 AN ACT Relating to employment in the construction industry;
2 amending RCW 51.24.035 and 51.16.140; adding new sections to chapter
3 49.17 RCW; creating a new section; providing an effective date; and
4 declaring an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 51.24.035 and 1987 c 212 s 1801 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 (1) Notwithstanding RCW 51.24.030(1), the injured worker or
9 beneficiary may not seek damages (~~((against a design professional who is
10 a third person and who has been retained to perform professional
11 services on a construction project, or any employee of a design
12 professional who is assisting or representing the design professional
13 in the performance of professional services on the site of the
14 construction project, unless responsibility for safety practices is
15 specifically assumed by contract, the provisions of which were mutually
16 negotiated, or the design professional actually exercised control over
17 the portion of the premises where the worker was injured))~~ for an
18 injury or occupational disease occurring in the course of employment at
19 the site of a construction project, whether accomplished by a single

1 contract or by multiple contracts, against the owner or developer of
2 the project or against any person or entity performing work, furnishing
3 materials, or providing services to or for the construction project
4 including, but not limited to, design professionals, construction
5 managers, general or prime contractors, suppliers, subcontractors of
6 any tier, and any employee of a design professional, construction
7 manager, general or prime contractor, supplier, or subcontractor of any
8 tier.

9 (2) The immunity provided by this section does not extend to any
10 person or entity who injures a worker by deliberate intention as
11 defined in RCW 51.24.020, and it is against public policy to seek
12 indemnification in construction contracts against such liability. Such
13 contractual clauses are void and unenforceable.

14 (3) The immunity provided by this section does not extend to
15 manufacturers and product sellers for product liability actions as
16 defined in chapter 7.72 RCW.

17 (4) The immunity provided by this section does not apply to the
18 negligent preparation of design plans and specifications by a design
19 professional.

20 ((+3)) (5) For the purposes of this section, "design professional"
21 means an architect, professional engineer, land surveyor, or landscape
22 architect, who is licensed or authorized by law to practice such
23 profession, or any corporation organized under chapter 18.100 RCW or
24 authorized under RCW 18.08.420 or 18.43.130 to render design services
25 through the practice of one or more of such professions.

26 **Sec. 2.** RCW 51.16.140 and 1989 c 385 s 3 are each amended to read
27 as follows:

28 (1) Every employer who is not a self-insurer shall deduct from the
29 pay of each of his or her workers one-half of the amount he or she is
30 required to pay((7)) for medical benefits within each risk
31 classification, except that for workers in the construction industry,
32 the amount deducted shall not be more than one-half of the basic manual
33 premium rate established by the department for the applicable risk
34 classification. Such amount shall be periodically determined by the
35 director and reported by him or her to all employers under this title:
36 PROVIDED, That the state governmental unit shall pay the entire amount
37 into the medical aid fund for volunteers, as defined in RCW 51.12.035,
38 and the state apprenticeship council shall pay the entire amount into

1 the medical aid fund for registered apprentices or trainees, for the
2 purposes of RCW 51.12.130. The deduction under this section is not
3 authorized for premiums assessed under RCW 51.16.210.

4 (2) It shall be unlawful for the employer, unless specifically
5 authorized by this title, to deduct or obtain any part of the premium
6 or other costs required to be by him or her paid from the wages or
7 earnings of any of his or her workers, and the making of or attempt to
8 make any such deduction shall be a gross misdemeanor.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 49.17 RCW
10 to read as follows:

11 All construction employers have a duty to provide a safe place to
12 work for their own employees and the employees of their subcontractors
13 of any tier working at the site of a construction project. This duty
14 shall be considered within the context of standard construction
15 industry practices. Such duty includes implementation of a safety
16 program that is effective in practice.

17 All construction employers shall take reasonable steps to ensure
18 that their safety programs are designed to comply with Title 51 RCW and
19 this chapter, including the development, implementation, and periodic
20 evaluation of a written accident prevention plan specific to the site
21 of each construction project. All construction employers shall
22 designate an individual with responsibility for construction jobsite
23 safety. All construction employers shall inform their own employees of
24 the name and telephone number of that designated individual. The prime
25 contractor or general contractor shall post the name and telephone
26 number of its designated individual at the site of a construction
27 project. All subcontractors shall inform the prime contractor or
28 general contractor of the name and telephone number of the
29 subcontractor's designated individual responsible for construction
30 jobsite safety.

31 Suggestions for safety improvements and identification of potential
32 hazards at the site of a construction project are to be encouraged.
33 Permissible disciplinary actions for violation of these or other
34 appropriately communicated requirements include, but are not limited
35 to: Verbal or written reprimand, suspension from work, and termination
36 for cause. Such disciplinary actions for violations shall be subject
37 to the disciplinary provisions set forth in an employer's written

1 policy statement or in a written agreement between an employer and
2 employees, if such a written agreement exists.

3 Neither violation of the provisions of this section nor the
4 issuance of a citation under this chapter eliminates or effects any
5 change to the immunity conferred in RCW 51.24.035.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 49.17 RCW
7 to read as follows:

8 The prime contractor or general contractor has the primary
9 responsibility for compliance with safety regulations at each
10 construction jobsite. If a construction employer's safety program is
11 effective in practice, no citation shall be issued to the construction
12 employer for violations of this chapter by any of the construction
13 employer's subcontractors of any tier. A safety program shall be
14 considered effective in practice if it complies with the following:

15 (1) A prime contractor or general contractor's subcontractors are
16 required, by contract, to comply with the provisions of this chapter;
17 and

18 (2) The prime contractor or general contractor develops,
19 implements, and enforces a written accident prevention program for each
20 construction project; and

21 (3) The prime contractor or general contractor requires each
22 subcontractor at the site of a construction project to provide an
23 accident prevention plan for that construction project, which shall be
24 available at the construction jobsite or at the prime contractor or
25 general contractor's main business office located within the state of
26 Washington; and

27 (4) The prime contractor or general contractor posts at that
28 construction project the name and telephone number of its designated
29 individual with responsibility for construction jobsite safety at that
30 construction jobsite; and

31 (5) The prime contractor or general contractor provides to its
32 employees all safety equipment necessary for that construction jobsite;
33 and

34 (6) The prime contractor or general contractor provides, or
35 requires by contract its subcontractors to provide to the
36 subcontractor's employees, all safety equipment necessary for that
37 construction jobsite.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The department of labor and industries shall
2 adopt rules in consultation with the affected parties, that are
3 consistent with the legislative intent of this act to implement this
4 act.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) Sections 1, 3, 4, and 5 of this act are
6 necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health,
7 or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public
8 institutions, and take effect immediately.

9 (2) Section 2 of this act takes effect January 1, 1998.

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