
SENATE BILL 5185

State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session

By Senators Wilson, Mullet, and Palumbo

Read first time 01/16/17. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to immunity from liability for professional or
2 trade associations providing emergency response volunteers; and
3 amending RCW 38.52.180.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 38.52.180 and 2016 c 84 s 1 are each amended to read
6 as follows:

7 (1) There shall be no liability on the part of anyone including
8 any person, partnership, corporation, the state of Washington or any
9 political subdivision thereof who owns or maintains any building or
10 premises which have been designated by a local organization for
11 emergency management as a shelter from destructive operations or
12 attacks by enemies of the United States for any injuries sustained by
13 any person while in or upon said building or premises, as a result of
14 the condition of said building or premises or as a result of any act
15 or omission, or in any way arising from the designation of such
16 premises as a shelter, when such person has entered or gone upon or
17 into said building or premises for the purpose of seeking refuge
18 therein during destructive operations or attacks by enemies of the
19 United States or during tests ordered by lawful authority, except for
20 an act of willful negligence by such owner or occupant or his or her
21 servants, agents, or employees.

1 (2) All legal liability for damage to property or injury or death
2 to persons (except an emergency worker, regularly enrolled and acting
3 as such), caused by acts done or attempted during or while traveling
4 to or from an emergency or disaster, search and rescue, or training
5 or exercise authorized by the department in preparation for an
6 emergency or disaster or search and rescue, under the color of this
7 chapter in a bona fide attempt to comply therewith, except as
8 provided in subsections (3), (4), and (5) of this section regarding
9 covered volunteer emergency workers, shall be the obligation of the
10 state of Washington. Suits may be instituted and maintained against
11 the state for the enforcement of such liability, or for the
12 indemnification of persons appointed and regularly enrolled as
13 emergency workers while actually engaged in emergency management
14 duties, or as members of any agency of the state or political
15 subdivision thereof engaged in emergency management activity, or
16 their dependents, for damage done to their private property, or for
17 any judgment against them for acts done in good faith in compliance
18 with this chapter: PROVIDED, That the foregoing shall not be
19 construed to result in indemnification in any case of willful
20 misconduct, gross negligence, or bad faith on the part of any agent
21 of emergency management: PROVIDED, That should the United States or
22 any agency thereof, in accordance with any federal statute, rule, or
23 regulation, provide for the payment of damages to property and/or for
24 death or injury as provided for in this section, then and in that
25 event there shall be no liability or obligation whatsoever upon the
26 part of the state of Washington for any such damage, death, or injury
27 for which the United States government assumes liability.

28 (3) No act or omission by a covered volunteer emergency worker
29 while engaged in a covered activity shall impose any liability for
30 civil damages resulting from such an act or omission upon:

31 (a) The covered volunteer emergency worker;

32 (b) The supervisor or supervisors of the covered volunteer
33 emergency worker;

34 (c) Any facility or their officers or employees;

35 (d) The employer of the covered volunteer emergency worker;

36 (e) The owner of the property or vehicle where the act or
37 omission may have occurred during the covered activity;

38 (f) Any local organization that registered the covered volunteer
39 emergency worker; (~~and~~)

40 (g) The state or any state or local governmental entity; and

1 (h) Any professional or trade association.

2 (4) The immunity in subsection (3) of this section applies only
3 when the covered volunteer emergency worker was engaged in a covered
4 activity:

5 (a) Within the scope of his or her assigned duties;

6 (b) Under the direction of a local emergency management
7 organization or the department, or a local law enforcement agency for
8 search and rescue; and

9 (c) The act or omission does not constitute gross negligence or
10 willful or wanton misconduct.

11 (5) For purposes of this section:

12 (a) "Covered volunteer emergency worker" means an emergency
13 worker as defined in RCW 38.52.010 who (i) is not receiving or
14 expecting compensation as an emergency worker from the state or local
15 government, or (ii) is not a state or local government employee
16 unless on leave without pay status.

17 (b) "Covered activity" means:

18 (i) Providing assistance or transportation authorized by the
19 department during an emergency or disaster or search and rescue as
20 defined in RCW 38.52.010, whether such assistance or transportation
21 is provided at the scene of the emergency or disaster or search and
22 rescue, at an alternative care site, at a hospital, or while in route
23 to or from such sites or between sites; or

24 (ii) Participating in training or exercise authorized by the
25 department in preparation for an emergency or disaster or search and
26 rescue.

27 (6) Any requirement for a license to practice any professional,
28 mechanical, or other skill shall not apply to any authorized
29 emergency worker who shall, in the course of performing his or her
30 duties as such, practice such professional, mechanical, or other
31 skill during an emergency described in this chapter.

32 (7) The provisions of this section shall not affect the right of
33 any person to receive benefits to which he or she would otherwise be
34 entitled under this chapter, or under the workers' compensation law,
35 or under any pension or retirement law, nor the right of any such
36 person to receive any benefits or compensation under any act of
37 congress.

38 (8) Any act or omission by a covered volunteer emergency worker
39 while engaged in a covered activity using an off-road vehicle,
40 nonhighway vehicle, or wheeled all-terrain vehicle does not impose

1 any liability for civil damages resulting from such an act or
2 omission upon the covered volunteer emergency worker or the worker's
3 sponsoring organization.

--- END ---