

Chapter 47.48 RCW
CLOSING HIGHWAYS AND RESTRICTING TRAFFIC

Sections

- 47.48.010 Closure or restriction authorized—Restriction for urban public transportation system use.
- 47.48.020 Notice of closure or restriction—Emergency closure.
- 47.48.031 Emergency closures by state patrol.
- 47.48.040 Penalty.
- 47.48.050 Transportation of radioactive or hazardous cargo—
Definition—Violation, penalty.
- 47.48.060 Registry of persons allowed access to property to conduct fire prevention despite closures—Liability.

Closure of Camas slough: RCW 88.28.055.

RCW 47.48.010 Closure or restriction authorized—Restriction for urban public transportation system use. Whenever the condition of any state highway, county road, or city street, either newly or previously constructed, altered, repaired, or improved, or any part thereof is such that for any reason its unrestricted use or continued use by vehicles or by any class of vehicles will greatly damage that state highway, county road, or city street, or will be dangerous to traffic, or it is being constructed, altered, repaired, improved, or maintained in such a manner as to require that use of the state highway, county road, or city street, or any portion thereof be closed or restricted as to all vehicles or any class of vehicles for any period of time, the secretary, if it is a state highway, the county legislative authority, if it is a county road, or the governing body of any city or town, if it is a city street, is authorized to close the state highway, county road, or city street, as the case may be, to travel by all vehicles or by any class of vehicles, or may declare a lower maximum speed for any class of vehicles, for such a definite period as it shall determine. Nothing in the law of this state prevents the secretary, county legislative authority, or governing body of any city or town from classifying vehicles according to gross weight, axle weight, height, width, length, braking area, performance, vehicle combinations, or tire equipment for the purposes of this section, or from restricting the use of any portion of any state highway, county road, or city street, as the case may be, to its use by an urban public transportation system. [1984 c 7 § 238; 1977 ex.s. c 216 § 1; 1967 c 108 § 9; 1961 c 13 § 47.48.010. Prior: 1937 c 53 § 65; RRS § 6400-65; prior: 1929 c 214 § 1; 1927 c 232 § 1; 1921 c 21 § 1; RRS § 6839.]

Restrictions on public highways to prevent damage: RCW 46.44.080.

Urban public transportation system defined: RCW 47.04.082.

RCW 47.48.020 Notice of closure or restriction—Emergency closure. Before any state highway, county road, or city street is closed to, or the maximum speed limit thereon reduced for, all vehicles or any class of vehicles, a notice thereof including the

effective date shall be published in one issue of a newspaper of general circulation in the county or city or town in which such state highway, county road, or city street or any portion thereof to be closed is located; and a like notice shall be posted on or prior to the date of publication of such notice in a conspicuous place at each end of the state highway, county road, or city street or portion thereof to be closed or restricted: PROVIDED, That no such state highway, county road, or city street or portion thereof may be closed sooner than three days after the publication and the posting of the notice herein provided for: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That in cases of emergency or conditions in which the maximum time the closure will be in effect is twelve hours or less the proper officers may, without publication or delay, close state highways, county roads, and city streets temporarily by posting notices at each end of the closed portion thereof and at all intersecting state highways if the closing be of a portion of a state highway, at all intersecting state highways and county roads if the closing be a portion of a county road, and at all intersecting city streets if the closing be of a city street. In all emergency cases or conditions in which the maximum time the closure will be in effect is twelve hours or less, as herein provided, the orders of the proper authorities shall be immediately effective. [1982 c 145 § 5; 1977 ex.s. c 216 § 2; 1961 c 13 § 47.48.020. Prior: 1937 c 53 § 66, part; RRS § 6400-66, part; prior: 1921 c 21 § 2, part; RRS § 6840, part. Formerly RCW 47.48.020 and 47.48.030.]

RCW 47.48.031 Emergency closures by state patrol. (1) Whenever the chief or another officer of the state patrol determines on the basis of a traffic investigation that an emergency exists or less than safe road conditions exist due to human-caused or natural disasters or extreme weather conditions upon any state highway, or any part thereof, state patrol officers may determine and declare closures and temporarily reroute traffic from any such affected highway.

(2) Any alteration of vehicular traffic on any state highway due to closure in emergency conditions is effective until such alteration has been approved or altered by the secretary of transportation or other department of transportation authorities in their local respective jurisdictions.

(3) All state highway closures by officers of the state patrol shall be immediately reported to the secretary of transportation and to other authorities in their local jurisdictions. [1981 c 197 § 1.]

RCW 47.48.040 Penalty. Except as provided under RCW 47.48.060, when any state highway, county road, or city street or portion thereof shall have been closed, or when the maximum speed limit thereon shall have been reduced, for all vehicles or any class of vehicles, as by law provided, any person, firm, or corporation disregarding such closing or reduced speed limit shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall in addition to any penalty for violation of the provisions of this section, be liable in any civil action instituted in the name of the state of Washington or the county or city or town having jurisdiction for any damages occasioned to such state highway, county road, or city street, as the case may be, as the result of disregarding such closing or reduced speed limit. [2007 c 252 § 3; 1977 ex.s. c 216 § 3; 1961 c 13 § 47.48.040. Prior: 1937 c 53 § 67; RRS § 6400-67; prior: 1921 c 21 § 3; RRS § 6841.]

**RCW 47.48.050 Transportation of radioactive or hazardous cargo—
Definition—Violation, penalty.** The chief or other officer of the Washington state patrol may prohibit the transportation of placarded radioactive or hazardous cargo over the highways of the state, or a portion thereof, if weather or other conditions create a substantial risk to public safety. For the purposes of this section hazardous cargo shall mean hazardous materials as defined in RCW 70.136.020(1). Violation of an order issued under this section constitutes a misdemeanor. [1983 c 205 § 1.]

Regulations on notice of prohibition on radioactive or hazardous cargo: RCW 47.01.270.

RCW 47.48.060 Registry of persons allowed access to property to conduct fire prevention despite closures—Liability. (1) Each county sheriff may, until a model policy pursuant to RCW 36.28A.140 is developed and implemented in the sheriff's county, establish and maintain a registry of persons authorized to access their land during a forest [fire] or wildfire. Upon request, the sheriff must include in the registry persons who demonstrate ownership of agriculture land or forestland within the county and who possess equipment that may be used for fire prevention or suppression activities. Persons included in the registry must be allowed to access their property to conduct fire prevention or suppression activities despite the closure of any state highway, county road, or city street under this chapter.

(2) (a) Residents, landowners, and others in lawful possession and control of land in the state are not liable for unintentional injuries or loss suffered by persons entering upon, or passing through, their land pursuant to this section.

(b) Federal, state, and local agencies, and their employees, are not liable for any action, or failure to act, when facilitating the access described in this section. [2007 c 252 § 2.]