

**Chapter 49.12 RCW  
INDUSTRIAL WELFARE**

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**Reviser's note:** Throughout this chapter, the words "the committee" have been substituted for "the industrial welfare commission" or "the commission."

The industrial welfare commission was abolished and its powers and duties transferred to a new agency by the administrative code of 1921. In particular, 1921 c 7 § 135 abolished the commission while 1921 c 7 § 82 created an unnamed committee "which shall have the power and it shall be its duty:

(1) To exercise all the powers and perform all the duties now vested in, and required to be performed by, the industrial welfare commission."

1921 c 7 § 82 was codified by the 1941 Code Committee as RCW 43.22.280, wherein the Code Committee revised the wording of the session law to designate the unnamed committee as the "industrial welfare committee." The committee was apparently commonly known by that name, but such designation has no foundation in the statutes. RCW 43.22.280 was repealed by 1982 c 163 § 23. Powers, duties, and functions of the industrial welfare committee were transferred to the director of labor and industries. See RCW 43.22.282.

*Child labor: RCW 26.28.060, 26.28.070.*

*Food and beverage establishment workers' permits: Chapter 69.06 RCW.*

*Hours of labor: Chapter 49.28 RCW.*

*Paid sick leave required: RCW 49.46.200, 49.46.210.*

**RCW 49.12.005 Definitions.** For the purposes of this chapter:

(1) "Department" means the department of labor and industries.

(2) "Director" means the director of the department of labor and industries, or the director's designated representative.

(3) (a) Before May 20, 2003, "employer" means any person, firm, corporation, partnership, business trust, legal representative, or other business entity which engages in any business, industry, profession, or activity in this state and employs one or more employees but does not include the state, any state institution, any state agency, political subdivision of the state, or any municipal corporation or quasi-municipal corporation. However, for the purposes of RCW 49.12.265 through 49.12.295, 49.12.350 through 49.12.370, 49.12.450, and 49.12.460 only, "employer" also includes the state, any state institution, any state agency, political subdivisions of the state, and any municipal corporation or quasi-municipal corporation.

(b) On and after May 20, 2003, "employer" means any person, firm, corporation, partnership, business trust, legal representative, or other business entity which engages in any business, industry, profession, or activity in this state and employs one or more employees, and includes the state, any state institution, state agency, political subdivisions of the state, and any municipal corporation or quasi-municipal corporation. However, this chapter and the rules adopted thereunder apply to these public employers only to the extent that this chapter and the rules adopted thereunder do not conflict with: (i) Any state statute or rule; and (ii) respect to political subdivisions of the state and any municipal or quasi-municipal corporation, any local resolution, ordinance, or rule adopted under the authority of the local legislative authority before April 1, 2003.

(4) "Employee" means an employee who is employed in the business of the employee's employer whether by way of manual labor or otherwise. "Employee" does not include an individual who is at least sixteen years old but under twenty-one years old, in his or her capacity as a player for a junior ice hockey team that is a member of a regional, national, or international league and that contracts with an arena owned, operated, or managed by a public facilities district created under chapter 36.100 RCW.

(5) "Conditions of labor" means and includes the conditions of rest and meal periods for employees including provisions for personal privacy, practices, methods and means by or through which labor or services are performed by employees and includes bona fide physical qualifications in employment, but shall not include conditions of labor otherwise governed by statutes and rules and regulations relating to industrial safety and health administered by the department.

(6) For the purpose of chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. a minor is defined to be a person of either sex under the age of eighteen years. [2015 c 299 § 2; 2003 c 401 § 2; 1998 c 334 § 1; 1994 c 164 § 13; 1988 c 236 § 8; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 1.]

**Recognition—Intent—2015 c 299:** "The legislature recognizes that junior ice hockey teams that are members of regional, national, or internationally recognized leagues provide significant benefits to their players by teaching them valuable athletic skills and interpersonal life skills. These junior teams also provide significant financial support to their communities as tenants of arenas owned,

operated, or managed by public facilities districts. The legislature seeks to assist in the financial stability of public facilities districts and to ensure the viability of junior ice hockey in the state by clarifying that these young athletes are not employees of their teams." [2015 c 299 § 1.]

**Findings—Purpose—Intent—Effective date—2003 c 401:** See notes following RCW 49.12.187.

**Construction—1998 c 334:** See note following RCW 49.12.450.

**Legislative findings—Effective date—Implementation—Severability—1988 c 236:** See notes following RCW 49.12.270.

**RCW 49.12.010 Declaration.** The welfare of the state of Washington demands that all employees be protected from conditions of labor which have a pernicious effect on their health. The state of Washington, therefore, exercising herein its police and sovereign power declares that inadequate wages and unsanitary conditions of labor exert such pernicious effect. [1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 2; 1913 c 174 § 1; RRS § 7623.]

**RCW 49.12.020 Conditions of employment—Wages.** It shall be unlawful to employ any person in any industry or occupation within the state of Washington under conditions of labor detrimental to their health; and it shall be unlawful to employ workers in any industry within the state of Washington at wages which are not adequate for their maintenance. [1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 3; 1913 c 174 § 2; RRS § 7624.]

**RCW 49.12.033 Administration and enforcement of chapter by director of labor and industries.** See RCW 43.22.270(5).

**RCW 49.12.041 Investigation of wages, hours and working conditions—Statements, inspections authorized.** It shall be the responsibility of the director to investigate the wages, hours and conditions of employment of all employees, including minors, except as may otherwise be provided in chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. The director, or the director's authorized representative, shall have full authority to require statements from all employers, relative to wages, hours and working conditions and to inspect the books, records and physical facilities of all employers subject to chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. Such examinations shall take place within normal working hours, within reasonable limits and in a reasonable manner. [1994 c 164 § 14; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 5.]

**RCW 49.12.050 Employer's record of employees.** Every employer shall keep a record of the names of all employees employed by him or her, and shall on request permit the director to inspect such record. [2010 c 8 § 12004; 1994 c 164 § 15; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 14; 1913 c 174 § 7; RRS § 7626.]

**RCW 49.12.091 Investigation information—Findings—Rules prescribing minimum wages, working conditions.** After an investigation has been conducted by the department of wages, hours and conditions of labor subject to chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess., the director shall be furnished with all information relative to such investigation of wages, hours and working conditions, including current statistics on wage rates in all occupations subject to the provisions of chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. Within a reasonable time thereafter, if the director finds that in any occupation, trade or industry, subject to chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess., the wages paid to employees are inadequate to supply the necessary cost of living, but not to exceed the state minimum wage as prescribed in RCW 49.46.020, as now or hereafter amended, or that the conditions of labor are detrimental to the health of employees, the director shall have authority to prescribe rules and regulations for the purpose of adopting minimum wages for occupations not otherwise governed by minimum wage requirements fixed by state or federal statute, or a rule or regulation adopted under such statute, and, at the same time have the authority to prescribe rules and regulations fixing standards, conditions and hours of labor for the protection of the safety, health and welfare of employees for all or specified occupations subject to chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. Thereafter, the director shall conduct a public hearing in accordance with the procedures of the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW, for the purpose of the adoption of rules and regulations fixing minimum wages and standards, conditions and hours of labor subject to the provisions of chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. After such rules become effective, copies thereof shall be supplied to employers who may be affected by such rules and such employers shall post such rules, where possible, in such place or places, reasonably accessible to all employees of such employer. After the effective date of such rules, it shall be unlawful for any employer in any occupation subject to chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. to employ any person for less than the rate of wages specified in such rules or under conditions and hours of labor prohibited for any occupation specified in such rules: PROVIDED, That this section shall not apply to sheltered workshops. [1994 c 164 § 16; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 6.]

**RCW 49.12.101 Hearing.** Whenever wages, standards, conditions and hours of labor have been established by rule and regulation of the director, the director may upon application of either employers or employees conduct a public hearing for the purpose of the adoption, amendment or repeal of rules and regulations adopted under the authority of chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. [1994 c 164 § 17; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 7.]

**RCW 49.12.105 Variance order—Application—Issuance—Contents—Termination.** An employer may apply to the director for an order for a variance from any rule or regulation establishing a standard for wages, hours, or conditions of labor adopted by the director under this chapter. The director shall issue an order granting a variance if the director determines or decides that the applicant for the variance has shown good cause for the lack of compliance. Any order so issued shall prescribe the conditions the employer must maintain, and the

practices, means, methods, operations, standards and processes which the employer must adopt and utilize to the extent they differ from the standard in question. At any time the director may terminate and revoke such order, provided the employer was notified by the director of the termination at least thirty days prior to said termination. [1994 c 164 § 18; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 8.]

**RCW 49.12.110 Exceptions to minimum scale—Special certificate or permit.** Subject to RCW 49.46.170, for any occupation in which a minimum wage has been established, the director may issue to an employer, a special certificate or permit for an employee with a disability to such a degree that the employee is unable to obtain employment in the competitive labor market, or to a trainee or learner not otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of the apprenticeship council, a special certificate or permit authorizing the employment of such employee for a wage less than the legal minimum wage; and the director shall fix the minimum wage for said person, such special certificate or permit to be issued only in such cases as the director may decide the same is applied for in good faith and that such certificate or permit shall be in force for such length of time as the director shall decide and determine is proper. [2021 c 97 § 1; 2020 c 274 § 40; 1994 c 164 § 19; 1977 ex.s. c 80 § 35; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 13; 1913 c 174 § 13; RRS § 7632.]

**Purpose—Intent—Severability—1977 ex.s. c 80:** See notes following RCW 4.16.190.

**RCW 49.12.121 Wages and working conditions of minors—Special rules—Work permits.** (1) The department may at any time inquire into wages, hours, and conditions of labor of minors employed in any trade, business, or occupation in the state of Washington and may adopt special rules for the protection of the safety, health, and welfare of minor employees. However, the rules may not limit the hours per day or per week, or other specified work period, that may be worked by minors who are emancipated by court order.

(2) The department shall issue work permits to employers for the employment of minors, after being assured the proposed employment of a minor meets the standards for the health, safety, and welfare of minors as set forth in the rules adopted by the department. No minor person shall be employed in any occupation, trade, or industry subject to chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess., unless a work permit has been properly issued, with the consent of the parent, guardian, or other person having legal custody of the minor and with the approval of the school which such minor may then be attending. However, the consent of a parent, guardian, or other person, or the approval of the school which the minor may then be attending, is unnecessary if the minor is emancipated by court order.

(3) The minimum wage for minors shall be as prescribed in RCW 49.46.020. [1993 c 294 § 9; 1989 c 1 § 3 (Initiative Measure No. 518, approved November 8, 1988); 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 15.]

**Effective date—1993 c 294:** See RCW 13.64.900.

**Effective date—1989 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 518):** See note following RCW 49.46.010.

**RCW 49.12.123 Work permit for minor required.** In implementing state policy to assure the attendance of children in the public schools it shall be required of any person, firm or corporation employing any minor under the age of eighteen years to obtain a work permit as set forth in RCW 49.12.121 and keep such permit on file during the employment of such minor, and upon termination of such employment of such minor to return such permit to the department of labor and industries. [1991 c 303 § 8; 1983 c 3 § 156; 1973 c 51 § 3.]

**Severability—1973 c 51:** See note following RCW 28A.225.010.

**RCW 49.12.124 Actors or performers—Work permits and variances for minors.** For all minors employed as actors or performers in film, video, audio, or theatrical productions, the department shall issue a permit under RCW 49.12.121 and a variance under RCW 49.12.105 upon finding that the terms of the employment sufficiently protect the minor's health, safety, and welfare. The findings shall be based on information provided to the department including, but not limited to, the minor's working conditions and planned work schedule, adult supervision of the minor, and any planned educational programs. [1994 c 62 § 2.]

**RCW 49.12.130 Witness protected—Penalty.** Any employer who discharges, or in any other manner discriminates against any employee because such employee has testified or is about to testify, or because such employer believes that said employee may testify in any investigation or proceedings relative to the enforcement of RCW 49.12.010 through 49.12.180, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of from twenty-five dollars to one hundred dollars for each such misdemeanor. [1913 c 174 § 16; RRS § 7635.]

**RCW 49.12.140 Complaint of noncompliance.** Any worker or the parent or guardian of any minor to whom RCW 49.12.010 through 49.12.180 applies may complain to the director that the wages paid to the workers are less than the minimum rate and the director shall investigate the same and proceed under RCW 49.12.010 through 49.12.180 in behalf of the worker. [1994 c 164 § 20; 1913 c 174 § 17 1/2; RRS § 7637.]

**RCW 49.12.145 Complaint of noncompliance—Investigation—Penalties. (Effective July 1, 2024.)** (1)(a) If a complainant files a complaint with the department of labor and industries alleging a violation of RCW 49.28.140, the department shall investigate the complaint.

(b) The department may not investigate any such alleged violation of rights that occurred more than three years before the date that the complainant filed the complaint.

(c) Upon the investigation of a complaint, the department shall issue either a citation and notice of assessment or a determination of compliance, within 90 days after the date on which the department received the complaint, unless the complaint is otherwise resolved. The department may extend the period by providing advance written notice to the complainant and the employer setting forth good cause for an extension of the period and specifying the duration of the extension.

(d) The department shall send a citation and notice of assessment or the determination of compliance to both the employer and the complainant by service of process or using a method by which the mailing can be tracked, or the delivery can be confirmed to their last known addresses.

(2) If the department of labor and industries investigation finds that the complainant's allegation cannot be substantiated, the department shall issue a closure letter to the complainant and the employer detailing such finding.

(3) (a) If the department of labor and industries finds a violation of RCW 49.28.140, the department shall order the employer to pay the department a civil penalty.

(b) Except as provided otherwise in this chapter, the maximum penalty is \$1,000 for each violation, up to three violations. If there are four or more violations of this chapter for a health care facility, the employer is subject to a civil penalty of \$2,500 for the fourth violation, and \$5,000 for each subsequent violation.

(c) The department may not assess a civil penalty if the employer reasonably relied on: (i) A rule related to any of the requirements of RCW 49.28.140; (ii) a written order, ruling, approval, opinion, advice, determination, or interpretation of the director; or (iii) an interpretive or administrative policy issued by the department and filed with the office of the code reviser. In accordance with the department's retention schedule obligations under chapter 40.14 RCW, the department shall maintain a complete and accurate record of all written orders, rulings, approvals, opinions, advice, determinations, and interpretations for purposes of determining whether an employer is immune from civil penalties under (b) of this subsection.

(4) The department of labor and industries may, at any time, waive or reduce a civil penalty assessed under this section if the director of the department determines that the employer has taken corrective action to resolve the violation.

(5) The department of labor and industries shall deposit all civil penalties paid under this section in the supplemental pension fund established under RCW 51.44.033. [2023 c 114 § 12.]

**Effective date—2023 c 114:** See note following RCW 70.41.410.

**RCW 49.12.147 Complaint of noncompliance—Appeals—Notice—Hearings—Final orders. (Effective July 1, 2024.)** (1) A person, firm, or corporation aggrieved by a citation and notice of assessment or a determination of compliance by the department of labor and industries under RCW 49.12.145 may appeal the citation and notice of assessment to the director of the department by filing a notice of appeal with



the director within 30 days of the department's issuance of the citation and notice of assessment. A citation and notice of assessment or a determination of compliance not appealed within 30 days is final and binding, and not subject to further appeal.

(2) A notice of appeal filed with the director of the department of labor and industries under this section shall stay the effectiveness of the citation and notice of assessment or the determination of compliance pending final review of the appeal by the director as provided for in chapter 34.05 RCW.

(3) Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the director of the department of labor and industries shall assign the hearing to an administrative law judge of the office of administrative hearings to conduct the hearing and issue an initial order. The hearing and review procedures shall be conducted in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW, and the standard of review by the administrative law judge of an appealed citation and notice of assessment or determination of compliance shall be de novo. Any party who seeks to challenge an initial order shall file a petition for administrative review with the director within 30 days after service of the initial order. The director shall conduct administrative review in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW.

(4) The director of the department of labor and industries shall issue all final orders after appeal of the initial order. The final order of the director is subject to judicial review in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW.

(5) Orders that are not appealed within the time period specified in this section and chapter 34.05 RCW are final and binding, and not subject to further appeal.

(6) An employer who fails to allow adequate inspection of records in an investigation by the department of labor and industries under this section within a reasonable time period may not use such records in any appeal under this section to challenge the correctness of any determination by the department of the penalty assessed. [2023 c 114 § 13.]

**Effective date—2023 c 114:** See note following RCW 70.41.410.

**RCW 49.12.149 Complaint of noncompliance—Collections.**  
**(Effective July 1, 2024.)** Collections of unpaid citations assessing civil penalties under RCW 49.28.150, 49.12.145, and 49.12.147 will be pursuant to RCW 49.48.086. [2023 c 114 § 14.]

**Effective date—2023 c 114:** See note following RCW 70.41.410.

**RCW 49.12.150 Civil action to recover underpayment.** If any employee shall receive less than the legal minimum wage, except as hereinbefore provided in RCW 49.12.110, said employee shall be entitled to recover in a civil action the full amount of the legal minimum wage as herein provided for, together with costs and attorney's fees to be fixed by the court, notwithstanding any agreement to work for such lesser wage. In such action, however, the employer shall be credited with any wages which have been paid upon account. [1913 c 174 § 18; RRS § 7638.]

**RCW 49.12.170 Penalty.** Except as otherwise provided in RCW 49.12.390 or 49.12.410, any employer employing any person for whom a minimum wage or standards, conditions, and hours of labor have been specified, at less than said minimum wage, or under standards, or conditions of labor or at hours of labor prohibited by the rules and regulations of the director; or violating any other of the provisions of chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess., shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one thousand dollars. [1994 c 164 § 21; 1991 c 303 § 6; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 16; 1913 c 174 § 17; RRS § 7636.]

*Witnesses protected—Penalty: RCW 49.12.130.*

**RCW 49.12.180 Annual report.** The director shall report annually to the governor on its investigations and proceedings. [1994 c 164 § 22; 1977 c 75 § 73; 1913 c 174 § 20; RRS § 7640.]

**RCW 49.12.185 Exemptions from chapter.** Chapter 16, Laws of 1973 2nd ex. sess. shall not apply to newspaper vendors or carriers and domestic or casual labor in or about private residences and agricultural labor as defined in RCW 50.04.150, as now or hereafter amended. [1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 17.]

**RCW 49.12.187 Collective bargaining rights not affected.** This chapter shall not be construed to interfere with, impede, or in any way diminish the right of employees to bargain collectively with their employers through representatives of their own choosing concerning wages or standards or conditions of employment. However, rules adopted under this chapter regarding appropriate rest and meal periods as applied to employees in the construction trades may be superseded by a collective bargaining agreement negotiated under the national labor relations act, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 151 et seq., if the terms of the collective bargaining agreement covering such employees specifically require rest and meal periods and prescribe requirements concerning those rest and meal periods.

Employees of public employers may enter into collective bargaining contracts, labor/management agreements, or other mutually agreed to employment agreements that specifically vary from or supersede, in part or in total, rules adopted under this chapter regarding appropriate rest and meal periods. [2003 c 401 § 3; 2003 c 146 § 1; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 16 § 18.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2003 c 146 § 1 and by 2003 c 401 § 3, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Findings—Purpose—Intent—2003 c 401:** "The legislature finds that the enactment of chapter 236, Laws of 1988 amended the definition of employer under the industrial welfare act, chapter 49.12 RCW, to ensure that the family care provisions of that act applied to the state and political subdivisions. The legislature further finds that this amendment of the definition of employer may be interpreted as

creating an ambiguity as to whether the other provisions of chapter 49.12 RCW have applied to the state and its political subdivisions. The purpose of this act is to make retroactive, remedial, curative, and technical amendments to clarify the intent of chapter 49.12 RCW and chapter 236, Laws of 1988 and resolve any ambiguity. It is the intent of the legislature to establish that, prior to May 20, 2003, chapter 49.12 RCW and the rules adopted thereunder did not apply to the state or its agencies and political subdivisions except as expressly provided for in RCW 49.12.265 through 49.12.295, 49.12.350 through 49.12.370, 49.12.450, and 49.12.460." [2003 c 401 § 1.]

**Effective date—2003 c 401:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 20, 2003]." [2003 c 401 § 6.]

**RCW 49.12.200 Women may pursue any calling open to men.** That hereafter in this state every avenue of employment shall be open to women; and any business, vocation, profession and calling followed and pursued by men may be followed and pursued by women, and no person shall be disqualified from engaging in or pursuing any business, vocation, profession, calling or employment or excluded from any premises or place of work or employment on account of sex. [1963 c 229 § 1; 1890 p 519 § 1; RRS § 7620.]

*Qualifications of electors: State Constitution Art. 6 § 1 (Amendment 63).*

*Sex equality—Rights and responsibility: State Constitution Art. 31 §§ 1, 2 (Amendment 61).*

**RCW 49.12.240 Employee inspection of personnel file.** Every employer shall, at least annually, upon the request of an employee, permit that employee to inspect any or all of his or her own personnel file(s). [1985 c 336 § 1.]

*Destruction or retention of information relating to state employee misconduct: RCW 41.06.450 through 41.06.460.*

**RCW 49.12.250 Employee inspection of personnel file—Erroneous or disputed information.** (1) Each employer shall make such file(s) available locally within a reasonable period of time after the employee requests the file(s).

(2) An employee annually may petition that the employer review all information in the employee's personnel file(s) that are regularly maintained by the employer as a part of his business records or are subject to reference for information given to persons outside of the company. The employer shall determine if there is any irrelevant or erroneous information in the file(s), and shall remove all such information from the file(s). If an employee does not agree with the employer's determination, the employee may at his or her request have placed in the employee's personnel file a statement containing the

employee's rebuttal or correction. Nothing in this subsection prevents the employer from removing information more frequently.

(3) A former employee shall retain the right of rebuttal or correction for a period not to exceed two years. [1985 c 336 § 2.]

**RCW 49.12.260 Employee inspection of personnel file—**

**Limitations.** RCW 49.12.240 and 49.12.250 do not apply to the records of an employee relating to the investigation of a possible criminal offense. RCW 49.12.240 and 49.12.250 do not apply to information or records compiled in preparation for an impending lawsuit which would not be available to another party under the rules of pretrial discovery for causes pending in the superior courts. [1985 c 336 § 3.]

**RCW 49.12.265 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—**

**Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.295 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Child" means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis who is: (a) Under eighteen years of age; or (b) eighteen years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

(2) "Grandparent" means a parent of a parent of an employee.

(3) "Parent" means a biological or adoptive parent of an employee or an individual who stood in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child.

(4) "Parent-in-law" means a parent of the spouse of an employee.

(5) "Sick leave or other paid time off" means time allowed under the terms of an appropriate state law, collective bargaining agreement, or employer policy, as applicable, to an employee for illness, vacation, and personal holiday. If paid time is not allowed to an employee for illness, "sick leave or other paid time off" also means time allowed under the terms of an appropriate state law, collective bargaining agreement, or employer policy, as applicable, to an employee for disability under a plan, fund, program, or practice that is: (a) Not covered by the employee retirement income security act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1001 et seq.; and (b) not established or maintained through the purchase of insurance.

(6) "Spouse" means a husband or wife, as the case may be. [2005 c 499 § 1; 2002 c 243 § 2.]

**Effective date—2002 c 243:** "This act takes effect January 1, 2003." [2002 c 243 § 4.]

**RCW 49.12.270 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members.** (1) If, under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement or employer policy applicable to an employee, the employee is entitled to sick leave or other paid time off, then an employer shall allow an employee to use any or all of the employee's choice of sick leave or other paid time off to care for: (a) A child of the employee with a health condition that requires treatment or supervision; or (b) a spouse, parent, parent-in-law, or grandparent of the employee who has a

serious health condition or an emergency condition. An employee may not take advance leave until it has been earned. The employee taking leave under the circumstances described in this section must comply with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement or employer policy applicable to the leave, except for any terms relating to the choice of leave.

(2) Use of leave other than sick leave or other paid time off to care for a child, spouse, parent, parent-in-law, or grandparent under the circumstances described in this section shall be governed by the terms of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement or employer policy, as applicable. [2002 c 243 § 1; 1988 c 236 § 3.]

**Effective date—2002 c 243:** See note following RCW 49.12.265.

**Legislative findings—1988 c 236:** "The legislature recognizes the changing nature of the workforce brought about by increasing numbers of working mothers, single parent households, and dual career families. The legislature finds that the needs of families must be balanced with the demands of the workplace to promote family stability and economic security. The legislature further finds that it is in the public interest for employers to accommodate employees by providing reasonable leaves from work for family reasons. In order to promote family stability, economic security, and the public interest, the legislature hereby establishes a minimum standard for family care. Nothing contained in this act shall prohibit any employer from establishing family care standards more generous than the minimum standards set forth in this act." [1988 c 236 § 1.]

**Effective date—1988 c 236:** "This act shall take effect on September 1, 1988." [1988 c 236 § 12.]

**Implementation—1988 c 236:** "Prior to September 1, 1988, the department of labor and industries may take such steps as are necessary to ensure that chapter 236, Laws of 1988 is implemented on September 1, 1988." [1988 c 236 § 10.]

**Severability—1988 c 236:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1988 c 236 § 11.]

**RCW 49.12.275 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—Poster required.** The department shall develop and furnish to each employer a poster which describes an employer's obligations and an employee's rights under RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.295. The poster must include notice about any state law, rule, or regulation governing maternity disability leave and indicate that federal or local ordinances, laws, rules, or regulations may also apply. The poster must also include a telephone number and an address of the department to enable employees to obtain more information regarding RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.295. Each employer must display this poster in a conspicuous place. Every employer shall also post its leave policies, if any, in a conspicuous place. Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a right to continued employment. [1988 c 236 § 2.]

**Legislative findings—Effective date—Implementation—Severability**  
—1988 c 236: See notes following RCW 49.12.270.

**RCW 49.12.280 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—Administration and enforcement.** The department shall administer and investigate violations of RCW 49.12.270 and 49.12.275. [1988 c 236 § 4.]

**Legislative findings—Effective date—Implementation—Severability**  
—1988 c 236: See notes following RCW 49.12.270.

**RCW 49.12.285 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—Monetary penalties.** The department may issue a notice of infraction if the department reasonably believes that an employer has failed to comply with RCW 49.12.270 or 49.12.275. The form of the notice of infraction shall be adopted by rule pursuant to chapter 34.05 RCW. An employer who is found to have committed an infraction under RCW 49.12.270 or 49.12.275 may be assessed a monetary penalty not to exceed two hundred dollars for each violation. An employer who repeatedly violates RCW 49.12.270 or 49.12.275 may be assessed a monetary penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars for each violation. For purposes of this section, the failure to comply with RCW 49.12.275 as to an employee or the failure to comply with RCW 49.12.270 as to a period of leave sought by an employee shall each constitute separate violations. An employer has twenty days to appeal the notice of infraction. Any appeal of a violation determined to be an infraction shall be heard and determined by an administrative law judge. Monetary penalties collected under this section shall be deposited into the general fund. [1988 c 236 § 5.]

**Legislative findings—Effective date—Implementation—Severability**  
—1988 c 236: See notes following RCW 49.12.270.

**RCW 49.12.287 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—Discharge of employee not permitted.** An employer shall not discharge, threaten to discharge, demote, suspend, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against an employee because the employee: (1) Has exercised, or attempted to exercise, any right provided under RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.295; or (2) has filed a complaint, testified, or assisted in any proceeding under RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.295. [2002 c 243 § 3.]

**Effective date—2002 c 243:** See note following RCW 49.12.265.

**RCW 49.12.290 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—Collective bargaining agreement not reduced.** Nothing in RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.295 shall be construed to reduce any provision in a collective bargaining agreement. [1988 c 236 § 6.]

**Legislative findings—Effective date—Implementation—Severability**  
—1988 c 236: See notes following RCW 49.12.270.

**RCW 49.12.295 Sick leave, time off—Care of family members—Notification of employers.** The department shall notify all employers of the provisions of RCW 49.12.270 through 49.12.290. [1988 c 236 § 7.]

**Legislative findings—Effective date—Implementation—Severability—1988 c 236:** See notes following RCW 49.12.270.

**RCW 49.12.300 House-to-house sales by minor—Registration of employer.** (1) No person under sixteen years of age may be employed in house-to-house sales unless the department grants a variance permitting specific employment under criteria adopted by department rule.

(2) No person sixteen or seventeen years of age may be employed in house-to-house sales unless the employer:

(a) Obtains and maintains a validated registration certificate issued by the department. Application for registration shall be made on a form prescribed by the director, which shall include but not be limited to:

(i) The employer's name, permanent address, and telephone number;

(ii) The employer's social security number and industrial insurance number or, in lieu of these numbers, the employer's unified business identifier account number; and

(iii) A description of the work to be performed by persons aged sixteen or seventeen and the working conditions under which the work will be performed;

(b) Provides each employee sixteen or seventeen years of age, before beginning work, an identification card in a form prescribed by the director. The card shall include, but not be limited to, a picture of the employee, the employee's name, the name and address of the employer, a statement that the employer is registered with the department of labor and industries, and the registration number. The person employed in house-to-house sales shall show the identification card to each customer or potential customer of the person;

(c) Ensures supervision by a person aged twenty-one years or over during all working hours, with each supervisor responsible for no more than five persons; and

(d) If transporting an employee sixteen or seventeen years of age to another state, obtains the express written consent of the employee's parent or legal guardian.

(3) An employer may not employ a person sixteen or seventeen years of age in house-to-house sales after the hour of nine p.m.

(4) The department shall adopt by rule procedures for the renewal, denial, or revocation of registrations required by this section. [1989 c 216 § 1.]

**RCW 49.12.310 House-to-house sales by minor—Advertising by employer—Penalty.** (1) Any person advertising to employ a person in house-to-house sales with an advertisement specifically prescribing a minimum age requirement that is under the age of twenty-one shall:

(a) Register with the department as provided in RCW 49.12.300(2)(a); and

(b) Include the following information in any advertisement:

(i) The registration number required by subsection (1)(a) of this section;

(ii) The specific nature of the employment and the product or services to be sold; and

(iii) The average monthly compensation paid in the previous six months to new employees, taking into account any deductions made pursuant to the employment contract.

(2) Advertising to recruit or employ a person in house-to-house sales shall not be false, misleading, or deceptive.

(3) A violation of this section is an unfair act or practice in violation of the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. The remedies and sanctions provided under chapter 19.86 RCW shall not preclude application of other available remedies and sanctions.

(4) No publisher, radio broadcast licensee, advertising agency, or agency or medium for the dissemination of an advertisement may be subject to penalties by reason of dissemination of any false, misleading, or deceptive advertisement, or for an advertisement that fails to meet the requirements of subsection (1) of this section, unless he or she has refused on the request of the director to furnish the name and address of the person purchasing the advertising. [1989 c 216 § 2.]

**RCW 49.12.320 Definitions.** For the purposes of RCW 49.12.300 and 49.12.310:

(1) "Employ" includes to engage, suffer, or permit to work, but does not include voluntary or donated services performed for no compensation, or without expectation or contemplation of compensation as the adequate consideration for the services performed, for an educational, charitable, religious, state or local government body or agency, or nonprofit organization, or services performed by a newspaper vendor or a person in the employ of his or her parent or stepparent.

(2) "House-to-house sales" includes a sale or other transaction in consumer goods, the demonstration of products or equipment, the obtaining of orders for consumer goods, or the obtaining of contracts for services, in which the employee personally solicits the sale or transaction at a place other than the place of business of the employer. [1989 c 216 § 3.]

**RCW 49.12.330 Rules.** The department shall adopt rules to implement RCW 49.12.300 through 49.12.320. [1989 c 216 § 4.]

**RCW 49.12.350 Parental leave—Legislative findings.** The legislature finds that employers often distinguish between biological parents, and adoptive parents and stepparents in their employee leave policies. Many employers who grant leave to their employees to care for a newborn child either have no policy or establish a more restrictive policy regarding whether an adoptive parent or stepparent can take similar leave. The legislature further finds that many employers establish different leave policies for men and women regarding the care of a newborn or newly placed child. The legislature recognizes that the bonding that occurs between a parent and child is important to the nurturing of that child, regardless of whether the



parent is the child's biological parent and regardless of the gender of the parent. For these reasons, the legislature declares that it is the public policy of this state to require that employers who grant leave to their employees to care for a newborn child make the same leave available upon the same terms for adoptive parents and stepparents, men and women. [1989 1st ex.s. c 11 § 22.]

**Effective date—1989 1st ex.s. c 11:** "This act shall take effect September 1, 1989." [1989 1st ex.s. c 11 § 27.]

**RCW 49.12.360 Parental leave—Discrimination prohibited.** (1) An employer must grant an adoptive parent or a stepparent, at the time of birth or initial placement for adoption of a child under the age of six, the same leave under the same terms as the employer grants to biological parents. As a term of leave, an employer may restrict leave to those living with the child at the time of birth or initial placement.

(2) An employer must grant the same leave upon the same terms for men as it does for women.

(3) The department shall administer and investigate violations of this section. Notices of infraction, penalties, and appeals shall be administered in the same manner as violations under RCW 49.12.285.

(4) For purposes of this section, "leave" means any leave from employment granted to care for a newborn or a newly adopted child at the time of placement for adoption.

(5) Nothing in this section requires an employer to:

(a) Grant leave equivalent to maternity disability leave; or

(b) Establish a leave policy to care for a newborn or newly placed child if no such leave policy is in place for any of its employees. [2003 c 401 § 4; 1989 1st ex.s. c 11 § 23.]

**Findings—Purpose—Intent—Effective date—2003 c 401:** See notes following RCW 49.12.187.

**Effective date—1989 1st ex.s. c 11:** See note following RCW 49.12.350.

**RCW 49.12.370 Parental leave—Collective bargaining agreement or employee benefit plan—Application.** In the case of employees covered by an unexpired collective bargaining agreement that expires on or after September 1, 1989, or by an employee benefit program or plan with a stated year ending on or after September 1, 1989, the effective date of RCW 49.12.360 shall be the later of: (1) The first day following expiration of the collective bargaining agreement; or (2) the first day of the next plan year. [1989 1st ex.s. c 11 § 24.]

**Effective date—1989 1st ex.s. c 11:** See note following RCW 49.12.350.

**RCW 49.12.380 Child labor laws—Information program.** Upon adoption of the rules under \*section 1 of this act, the department of labor and industries shall implement a comprehensive program to inform employers of the rules adopted. The program shall include mailings,

public service announcements, seminars, and any other means deemed appropriate to inform all Washington employers of their rights and responsibilities regarding the employment of minors. [1991 c 303 § 2.]

**\*Reviser's note:** Section 1 of this act, which amended RCW 49.12.121, was vetoed by the governor.

**RCW 49.12.390 Child labor laws—Violations—Civil penalties—Restraining orders.** (1) (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2) of this section, if the director, or the director's designee, finds that an employer has violated any of the requirements of RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, or a rule or order adopted or variance granted under RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, a citation stating the violations shall be issued to the employer. The citation shall be in writing, describing the nature of the violation including reference to the standards, rules, or orders alleged to have been violated. An initial citation for failure to comply with RCW 49.12.123 or rules requiring a minor work permit and maintenance of records shall state a specific and reasonable time for abatement of the violation to allow the employer to correct the violation without penalty. The director or the director's designee may establish a specific time for abatement of other nonserious violations in lieu of a penalty for first time violations. The citation and a proposed penalty assessment shall be given to the highest management official available at the workplace or be mailed to the employer at the workplace. In addition, the department shall mail a copy of the citation and proposed penalty assessment to the central personnel office of the employer. Citations issued under this section shall be posted at or near the place where the violation occurred.

(b) Except when an employer corrects a violation as provided in (a) of this subsection, he or she shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars depending on the size of the business and the gravity of the violation. The employer shall pay the amount assessed within thirty days of receipt of the assessment or notify the director of his or her intent to appeal the citation or the assessment penalty as provided in RCW 49.12.400.

(2) If the director, or the director's designee, finds that an employer has committed a serious or repeated violation of the requirements of RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, or any rule or order adopted or variance granted under RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, the employer is subject to a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars for each day the violation continues. For the purposes of this subsection, a serious violation shall be deemed to exist if death or serious physical harm has resulted or is imminent from a condition that exists, or from one or more practices, means, methods, operations, or processes that have been adopted or are in use by the employer, unless the employer did not, and could not with the exercise of reasonable diligence, know of the presence of the violation.

(3) In addition to any other authority provided in this section, if, upon inspection or investigation, the director, or director's designee, believes that an employer has violated RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, or a rule or order adopted or variance granted under RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, and that the violation creates a danger from which there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result to a minor employee, the director, or

director's designee, may issue an order immediately restraining the condition, practice, method, process, or means creating the danger in the workplace. An order issued under this subsection may require the employer to take steps necessary to avoid, correct, or remove the danger and to prohibit the employment or presence of a minor in locations or under conditions where the danger exists.

(4) An employer who violates any of the posting requirements of RCW 49.12.121 or rules adopted implementing RCW 49.12.121 shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than one hundred dollars for each violation.

(5) A person who gives advance notice, without the authority of the director, of an inspection to be conducted under this chapter shall be assessed a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars.

(6) Penalties assessed under this section shall be paid to the director and deposited into the general fund. [1991 c 303 § 3.]

**RCW 49.12.400 Child labor laws—Appeal.** A person, firm, or corporation aggrieved by an action taken or decision made by the department under RCW 49.12.390 may appeal the action or decision to the director by filing notice of the appeal with the director within thirty days of the department's action or decision. A notice of appeal filed under this section shall stay the effectiveness of a citation or notice of the assessment of a penalty pending review of the appeal by the director, but such appeal shall not stay the effectiveness of an order of immediate restraint issued under RCW 49.12.390. Upon receipt of an appeal, a hearing shall be held in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW. The director shall issue all final orders after the hearing. The final orders are subject to appeal in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW. Orders not appealed within the time period specified in chapter 34.05 RCW are final and binding. [1991 c 303 § 4.]

**RCW 49.12.410 Child labor laws—Violations—Criminal penalties.**

(1) An employer who knowingly or recklessly violates the requirements of RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, or a rule or order adopted under RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

(2) An employer whose practices in violation of the requirements of RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, or a rule or order adopted under RCW 49.12.121 or 49.12.123, result in the death or permanent disability of a minor employee is guilty of a class C felony punishable according to chapter 9A.20 RCW. [2003 c 53 § 273; 1991 c 303 § 5.]

**Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53:** See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

**RCW 49.12.420 Child labor laws—Exclusive remedies.** The penalties established in RCW 49.12.390 and 49.12.410 for violations of RCW 49.12.121 and 49.12.123 are exclusive remedies. [1991 c 303 § 7.]

**RCW 49.12.450 Compensation for required employee work apparel—Exceptions—Changes.** (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 49.46 RCW or other provisions of this chapter, the obligation of an

employer to furnish or compensate an employee for apparel required during work hours shall be determined only under this section.

(2) Employers are not required to furnish or compensate employees for apparel that an employer requires an employee to wear during working hours unless the required apparel is a uniform.

(3) As used in this section, "uniform" means:

(a) Apparel of a distinctive style and quality that, when worn outside of the workplace, clearly identifies the person as an employee of a specific employer;

(b) Apparel that is specially marked with an employer's logo;

(c) Unique apparel representing an historical time period or an ethnic tradition; or

(d) Formal apparel.

(4) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, if an employer requires an employee to wear apparel of a common color that conforms to a general dress code or style, the employer is not required to furnish or compensate an employee for that apparel. For the purposes of this subsection, "common color" is limited to the following colors or light or dark variations of such colors: White, tan, or blue, for tops; and tan, black, blue, or gray, for bottoms. An employer is permitted to require an employee to obtain two sets of wearing apparel to accommodate for the seasonal changes in weather which necessitate a change in wearing apparel.

(5) If an employer changes the color or colors of apparel required to be worn by any of his or her employees during a two-year period of time, the employer shall furnish or compensate the employees for the apparel. The employer shall be required to furnish or compensate only those employees who are affected by the change. The two-year time period begins on the date the change in wearing apparel goes into effect and ends two years from this date. The beginning and end of the two-year time period applies to all employees regardless of when the employee is hired.

(6) For the purposes of this section, personal protective equipment required for employee protection under chapter 49.17 RCW is not deemed to be employee wearing apparel. [2016 c 202 § 55; 1998 c 334 § 2.]

**Construction—1998 c 334:** "Nothing in this act shall be construed to alter the terms, conditions, or practices contained in any collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of June 11, 1998, until the expiration date of such agreement." [1998 c 334 § 3.]

**RCW 49.12.460 Volunteer firefighters, reserve officers, civil air patrol members—Employer duties—Violations—Definitions.** (1) An employer may not discharge from employment or discipline:

(a) A volunteer firefighter or reserve officer because of leave taken related to an alarm of fire or an emergency call; or

(b) A civil air patrol member because of leave taken related to an emergency service operation.

(2) (a) A volunteer firefighter or reserve officer or civil air patrol member who believes he or she was discharged or disciplined in violation of this section may file a complaint alleging the violation with the director. The volunteer firefighter or reserve officer or civil air patrol member may allege a violation only by filing such a complaint within ninety days of the alleged violation.

(b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the director must cause an investigation to be made as the director deems appropriate and must determine whether this section has been violated. Notice of the director's determination must be sent to the complainant and the employer within ninety days of receipt of the complaint.

(c) If the director determines that this section was violated and the employer fails to reinstate the employee or withdraw the disciplinary action taken against the employee, whichever is applicable, within thirty days of receipt of notice of the director's determination, the volunteer firefighter or reserve officer or civil air patrol member may bring an action against the employer alleging a violation of this section and seeking reinstatement or withdrawal of the disciplinary action.

(d) In any action brought under this section, the superior court shall have jurisdiction, for cause shown, to restrain violations under this section and to order reinstatement of the employee or withdrawal of the disciplinary action.

(3) For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Alarm of fire or emergency call" means responding to, working at, or returning from a fire alarm or an emergency call, but not participating in training or other nonemergency activities.

(b) "Civil air patrol member" means a person who is a member of the Washington wing of the civil air patrol.

(c) "Emergency service operation" means the following operations of the civil air patrol:

(i) Search and rescue missions designated by the air force rescue coordination center;

(ii) Disaster relief, when requested by the federal emergency management agency or the department of homeland security;

(iii) Humanitarian services, when requested by the federal emergency management agency or the department of homeland security;

(iv) United States air force support designated by the first air force; and

(v) Counterdrug missions.

(d) "Employer" means an employer who had twenty or more full-time equivalent employees in the previous year.

(e) "Reinstatement" means reinstatement with back pay, without loss of seniority or benefits, and with removal of any related adverse material from the employee's personnel file, if a file is maintained by the employer.

(f) "Withdrawal of disciplinary action" means withdrawal of disciplinary action with back pay, without loss of seniority or benefits, and with removal of any related adverse material from the employee's personnel file, if a file is maintained by the employer.

(g) "Volunteer firefighter" means a firefighter covered under chapter 41.24 RCW who:

(i) Voluntarily performs, regardless of reimbursement, any assigned or authorized duties on behalf of or at the direction of a firefighting or emergency response unit of a city, county, fire district, regional fire protection district, port district, or the state, including but not limited to service pursuant to RCW 43.43.960 through 43.43.975; and

(ii) (A) Has notified their employer of their firefighter status and intent to serve as a volunteer if already at the place of employment when called to serve as a volunteer; or

(B) If not already at the place of employment when called to serve as a volunteer, has been ordered to remain at their position by the commanding authority at the scene of the fire.

(h) "Reserve officer" has the meaning provided in RCW 41.24.010.

(4) The legislature declares that the public policies articulated in this section depend on the procedures established in this section and no civil or criminal action may be maintained relying on the public policies articulated in this section without complying with the procedures set forth in this section, and to that end all civil actions and civil causes of action for such injuries and all jurisdiction of the courts of this state over such causes are hereby abolished, except as provided in this section. [2021 c 105 § 2; 2010 c 170 § 1; 2004 c 44 § 1; 2003 c 401 § 5; 2001 c 173 § 1.]

**Finding—2021 c 105:** "In 2020, wildfire swept across central Washington. In the aftermath, it was found that volunteer firefighters were not allowed to leave work to fight for their family homes simply because they would have been paid as wildland firefighters. The legislature finds that volunteer firefighters, even those compensated for wildland firefighting, should be allowed to leave work to protect their communities." [2021 c 105 § 1.]

**Effective date—2021 c 105:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 16, 2021]." [2021 c 105 § 3.]

**Findings—Purpose—Intent—Effective date—2003 c 401:** See notes following RCW 49.12.187.

**RCW 49.12.471 Farm internship project.** (1) The director shall establish a farm internship project for the employment of farm interns on small farms under special certificates at wages, if any, as authorized by the department and subject to such limitations as to time, number, proportion, and length of service as provided in this section and as prescribed by the department.

(2)(a) A small farm may employ no more than three interns at one time under this section.

(b) For any small farm located in a county that became eligible to participate in the farm intern [internship] project on May 4, 2023, at least one of the interns employed by the farm must be an individual who, in addition to meeting the farm's qualifications applicable to all intern applicants, also has direct experience working as a migrant farmworker or whose parent or grandparent has direct experience working as a migrant farmworker. If a farm is employing only one intern and the farm does not receive any applications from individuals who meet the criteria set forth in this subsection, the requirement of this subsection does not apply. If a farm is employing more than one intern, the farm must employ at least one intern who meets the criteria set forth in this subsection.

(3) A small farm must apply for a special certificate on a form made available by the director. The application must set forth: The name of the farm and a description of the farm seeking the certificate; the type of work to be performed by a farm intern; a description of the internship program; the period of time for which

the certificate is sought and the duration of an internship; the number of farm interns for which a special certificate is sought; the wages, if any, that will be paid to the farm intern; any room and board, stipends, and other remuneration the farm will provide to a farm intern; and the total number of workers employed by the farm.

(4) Upon receipt of an application, the department shall review the application and issue a special certificate to the requesting farm within fifteen days if the department finds that:

(a) The farm qualifies as a small farm;

(b) There have been no serious violations of chapter 49.46 RCW or Title 51 RCW that provide reasonable grounds to believe that the terms of an internship agreement may not be complied with;

(c) The issuance of a certificate will not create unfair competitive labor cost advantages nor have the effect of impairing or depressing wage or working standards established for experienced workers for work of a like or comparable character in the industry or occupation at which the intern is to be employed;

(d) A farm intern will not displace an experienced worker;

(e) If subsection (2)(b) of this section applies, the farm has included in the application either: (i) An attestation from at least one farm intern stating that the farm intern is an individual who has direct experience working as a migrant farmworker or whose parent or grandparent has direct experience working as a migrant farmworker; or (ii) an attestation that the farm is employing only one intern and the farm did not receive any applications from individuals who meet the criteria set forth in subsection (2)(b) of this section; and

(f) The farm demonstrates that the interns will perform work for the farm under an internship program that: (i) Provides a curriculum of learning modules and supervised participation in farm work activities designed to teach farm interns about farming practices and farm enterprises; (ii) is based on the bona fide curriculum of an educational or vocational institution; (iii) encourages the interns to participate in career and technical education or other educational content with courses in agriculture or related programs of study at a community or technical college; and (iv) is reasonably designed to provide the intern with vocational knowledge and skills about farming practices and enterprises. In assessing an internship program, the department may consult with relevant college and university departments and extension programs and state and local government agencies involved in the regulation or development of agriculture.

(5) A special certificate issued under this section must specify the terms and conditions under which it is issued, including: The name of the farm; the duration of the special certificate allowing the employment of farm interns and the duration of an internship; the total number of interns authorized under the special certificate; the authorized wage rate, if any; and any room and board, stipends, and other remuneration the farm will provide to the farm intern. A farm intern may be paid at wages specified in the certificate only during the effective period of the certificate and for the duration of the internship.

(6) If the department denies an application for a special certificate, notice of denial must be mailed to the farm. The farm listed on the application may, within fifteen days after notice of such action has been mailed, file with the director a petition for review of the denial, setting forth grounds for seeking such a review. If reasonable grounds exist, the director or the director's authorized representative may grant such a review and, to the extent deemed

appropriate, afford all interested persons an opportunity to be heard on such review.

(7) Before employing a farm intern, a farm must submit a statement on a form made available by the director stating that the farm understands: The requirements of the industrial welfare act, this chapter, that apply to farm interns; that the farm must pay workers' compensation premiums in the assigned intern risk class and must pay workers' compensation premiums for nonintern work hours in the applicable risk class; and that if the farm does not comply with subsection (8) of this section, the director may revoke the special certificate.

(8) The director may revoke a special certificate issued under this section if a farm fails to: Comply with the requirements of the industrial welfare act, this chapter, that apply to farm interns; pay workers' compensation premiums in the assigned intern risk class; or pay workers' compensation premiums in the applicable risk class for nonintern work hours.

(9) Before the start of a farm internship, the farm and the intern must sign a written agreement and send a copy of the agreement to the department. The written agreement must, at a minimum:

(a) Describe the internship program offered by the farm, including the skills and objectives the program is designed to teach and the manner in which those skills and objectives will be taught;

(b) Explicitly state that the intern is not entitled to unemployment benefits or minimum wages for work and activities conducted pursuant to the internship program for the duration of the internship;

(c) Describe the responsibilities, expectations, and obligations of the intern and the farm, including the anticipated number of hours of farm activities to be performed by and the anticipated number of hours of curriculum instruction provided to the intern per week;

(d) Describe the activities of the farm and the type of work to be performed by the farm intern; and

(e) Describe any wages, room and board, stipends, and other remuneration the farm will provide to the farm intern.

(10) The department must limit the administrative costs of implementing the internship program by relying on farm organizations and other stakeholders to perform outreach and inform the farm community of the program and by limiting employee travel to the investigation of allegations of noncompliance with program requirements.

(11) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Farm intern" means an individual who provides services to a small farm under a written agreement and primarily as a means of learning about farming practices and farm enterprises.

(b) "Farm internship program" means an internship program described under subsection (4)(e) of this section.

(c) "Small farm" means a farm:

(i) Organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation;

(ii) That reports on the applicant's schedule F of form 1040 or other applicable form filed with the United States internal revenue service annual sales less than \$265,000; and

(iii) Where all the owners or partners of the farm provide regular labor to and participate in the management of the farm, and own or lease the productive assets of the farm.



(12) The department shall monitor and evaluate the farm internships authorized by this section and report to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2024. The report must include, but not be limited to: The number of small farms that applied for and received special certificates; the number of interns employed as farm interns; the nature of the educational activities provided to the farm interns; the wages and other remuneration paid to farm interns; the number of and type of workers' compensation claims for farm interns; the employment of farm interns following farm internships; and other matters relevant to assessing farm internships authorized in this section. [2023 c 269 § 2; 2020 c 212 § 1.]

**Findings—2023 c 269:** "The legislature finds that encouraging participation in agriculture is valuable. The farm internship program allows students to experience farming practices and get hands-on experience with farming activities. The internship program has existed since 2014 and was piloted in a few select counties. The legislature finds that this program is valuable, should be extended to all counties, and should continue without an expiration date." [2023 c 269 § 1.]

**Effective date—2023 c 269:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 4, 2023]." [2023 c 269 § 6.]

**Effective date—2020 c 212:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [March 27, 2020]." [2020 c 212 § 5.]

**RCW 49.12.480 Meal and rest breaks for health care facility employees. (Effective until July 1, 2024.)** (1) An employer shall provide employees with meal and rest periods as required by law, subject to the following:

(a) Rest periods must be scheduled at any point during each work period during which the employee is required to receive a rest period;

(b) Employers must provide employees with uninterrupted meal and rest breaks. This subsection (1)(b) does not apply in the case of:

(i) An unforeseeable emergent circumstance, as defined in RCW 49.28.130; or

(ii) A clinical circumstance, as determined by the employee, employer, or employer's designee, that may lead to a significant adverse effect on the patient's condition:

(A) Without the knowledge, specific skill, or ability of the employee on break; or

(B) Due to an unforeseen or unavoidable event relating to patient care delivery requiring immediate action that could not be planned for by an employer;

(c) For any rest break that is interrupted before ten complete minutes by an employer or employer's designee under the provisions of (b)(ii) of this subsection, the employee must be given an additional ten minute uninterrupted rest break at the earliest reasonable time during the work period during which the employee is required to receive a rest period. If the elements of this subsection are met, a

rest break shall be considered taken for the purposes of the minimum wage act as defined by chapter 49.46 RCW.

(2) The employer shall provide a mechanism to record when an employee misses a meal or rest period and maintain these records.

(3) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(a) "Employee" means a person who:

(i) Is employed by a health care facility;

(ii) Is involved in direct patient care activities or clinical services;

(iii) Receives an hourly wage or is covered by a collective bargaining agreement; and

(iv) Is a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW, a surgical technologist registered under chapter 18.215 RCW, a diagnostic radiologic technologist or cardiovascular invasive specialist certified under chapter 18.84 RCW, a respiratory care practitioner licensed under chapter 18.89 RCW, or a nursing assistant-certified as defined in RCW 18.88A.020.

(b) "Employer" means hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW, except that the following hospitals are excluded until July 1, 2021:

(i) Hospitals certified as critical access hospitals under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1395i-4;

(ii) Hospitals with fewer than twenty-five acute care beds in operation; and

(iii) Hospitals certified by the centers for medicare and medicaid services as sole community hospitals as of January 1, 2013, that: Have had less than one hundred fifty acute care licensed beds in fiscal year 2011; have a level III adult trauma service designation from the department of health as of January 1, 2014; and are owned and operated by the state or a political subdivision. [2019 c 296 § 1.]

**Effective date—2019 c 296:** "This act takes effect January 1, 2020." [2019 c 296 § 4.]

**RCW 49.12.480 Meal and rest breaks for health care facility employees. (Effective July 1, 2024.)** (1) An employer shall provide employees with meal and rest periods as required by law, subject to the following:

(a) Rest periods must be scheduled at any point during each work period during which the employee is required to receive a rest period;

(b) Employers must provide employees with uninterrupted meal and rest breaks. This subsection (1)(b) does not apply in the case of:

(i) An unforeseeable emergent circumstance, as defined in RCW 49.28.130; or

(ii) An unforeseeable clinical circumstance, as determined by the employee that may lead to a significant adverse effect on the patient's condition, unless the employer or employer's designee determines that the patient may suffer life-threatening adverse effects;

(c) For any work period for which an employee is entitled to one or more meal periods and more than one rest period, the employee and the employer may agree that a meal period may be combined with a rest period. This agreement may be revoked at any time by the employee. If the employee is required to remain on duty during the combined meal and rest period, the time shall be paid. If the employee is released

from duty for an uninterrupted combined meal and rest period, the time corresponding to the meal period shall be unpaid, but the time corresponding to the rest period shall be paid.

(2) (a) The employer shall provide a mechanism to record when an employee misses a meal or rest period and maintain these records.

(b) The employer must provide a quarterly report to the department of the total meals and rest periods missed in violation of this section during the quarter covered by the report, and the total number of meals and rest periods required during the quarter. The reports are due to the department 30 calendar days after the conclusion of the calendar quarter.

(c) The provisions of (b) in this subsection (2) do not apply to hospitals defined in RCW 70.41.420(7)(b)(iv) until July 1, 2026.

(3) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(a) "Employee" means a person who:

(i) Is employed by an employer;

(ii) Is involved in direct patient care activities or clinical services; and

(iii) Receives an hourly wage or is covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

(b) "Employer" means hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW. [2023 c 114 § 8; 2019 c 296 § 1.]

**Effective date—2023 c 114:** See note following RCW 70.41.410.

**Effective date—2019 c 296:** "This act takes effect January 1, 2020." [2019 c 296 § 4.]

**RCW 49.12.483 Meal and rest breaks for health care facility employees—Enforcement—Penalties—Retaliatory actions—Appeals. (Effective July 1, 2024.)** (1) The department must enforce the provisions of RCW 49.12.480, including reviewing reports submitted under RCW 49.12.480(2) to ensure they are timely, complete, and on the department-issued form.

(2) (a) Upon the department's review of the employer's report due under RCW 49.12.480(2), if the department determines that an employer is not 80 percent compliant with the meal and rest break requirements under RCW 49.12.480, and more than 20 percent of the required meals and rest periods were missed, or if an employer fails to properly submit a report, the department may offer to provide technical assistance to the employer, although until June 30, 2026, the department must offer technical assistance to the employer.

(b) Beginning July 1, 2026, if the department finds that an employer has exceeded the quarterly threshold in (a) of this subsection for missed meals and rest periods, the department must impose a penalty. The provisions of this subsection do not apply to employers who are hospitals defined in RCW 70.41.420(7)(b)(iv) until July 1, 2028.

(c) (i) The penalties assessed by the department each time the department imposes a penalty under (b) of this subsection are as follows:

(A) For hospitals certified as critical access hospitals under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1395i-4, or with up to 25 licensed beds: \$5,000;

(B) For hospitals with 26 to 99 licensed beds: \$10,000;

(C) For hospitals with 100 to 299 beds: \$15,000; and

(D) For hospitals with 300 or more beds: \$20,000.

(ii) If the department imposes a penalty in a third consecutive quarter, the department must double the penalty amounts in (c)(i) of this subsection for subsequent consecutive quarters. An employer in compliance for a single quarter is no longer subject to the penalties for subsequent violations under this subsection (c)(ii).

(3)(a) An employer may not take any adverse action against employees for exercising any right under RCW 49.12.480. An adverse action means any action taken or threatened by an employer against an employee for exercising the employee's rights under RCW 49.12.480 or this section, but does not include noncoercive counseling, coaching, training, or other resources offered to an employee.

(b) The department must investigate complaints related to compliance with (a) of this subsection. The director may require the testimony of witnesses and the production of documents as part of the director's investigation.

(c) If the director determines that an employer has violated (a) of this subsection, the director may:

(i) Order payment to the department of a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 for an employer's first violation and not more than \$5,000 for any subsequent related violation;

(ii) Order appropriate relief under this subsection (3) that includes any earnings the employee did not receive due to the employer's adverse action, including interest of one percent per month on all earnings owed. The earnings and interest owed will be calculated from the first date earnings were owed to the employee; or

(iii) Order the employer to restore the employee to the position of employment held by the employee when the retaliation occurred, or restore the employee to an equivalent position with equivalent employment hours, work schedule, benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

(4)(a)(i) An employer must provide valid data in reports required under RCW 49.12.480(2). Valid data means that the data included in the reports is attested to by an employer's designee and has not been inappropriately manipulated or modified; and

(ii) Employees must be free from coercion into inaccurate recording of their meal and rest periods under RCW 49.12.480.

(b) The department must investigate complaints related to compliance with (a) of this subsection that are facially based on the actual knowledge of the complaining party. The director may require the testimony of witnesses and the production of documents as part of the director's investigation.

(c) If the director determines that an employer has violated (a) of this subsection, the director may:

(i) Order the employer to pay the department a civil penalty of not more than \$1,000 for an employer's first violation and not more than \$5,000 for any subsequent related violation; and

(ii) Order appropriate relief that includes any earnings the employee did not receive due to the employer's adverse action, including interest of one percent per month on all earnings owed. The earnings and interest owed will be calculated from the first date earnings were owed to the employee.

(5) The department may investigate and take appropriate enforcement action under this section without any complaint if the department discovers data in the course of an investigation or inspection.

(6) Any appeals of the department's decisions, including assessed penalties, and collection or deposit of civil penalties under this section must be pursuant to RCW 49.12.145 through 49.12.149.

(7) For the purposes of this section, "coercion" means compelling or inducing an employee to engage in conduct which the employee has a legal right to abstain from or to abstain from the conduct which the employee has a legal right to engage in. [2023 c 114 § 9.]

**Effective date—2023 c 114:** See note following RCW 70.41.410.

**RCW 49.12.485 Hospital staffing committee—Oversight. (Effective July 1, 2024.)** By July 1, 2024, the department and the department of health must jointly establish a formal agreement that identifies the roles of each of the two agencies with respect to the oversight and enforcement of RCW 70.41.420(7) and 70.41.425 (1) and (5)(b), as follows:

(1) To the extent feasible, provide for oversight and enforcement actions by a single agency, and must include measures to avoid multiple citations for the same violation; and

(2) Include provisions that allow for data sharing, including hospital staffing plans, reports submitted under RCW 70.41.420(7), and hospital staffing committee complaints submitted to the department of health. [2023 c 114 § 6.]

**Effective date—2023 c 114:** See note following RCW 70.41.410.

**RCW 49.12.902 Effective date—1991 c 303 §§ 3-7.** Sections 3 through 7 of this act shall take effect April 1, 1992. [1991 c 303 § 12.]

**RCW 49.12.903 Construction—Chapter applicable to state registered domestic partnerships—2009 c 521.** For the purposes of this chapter, the terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family shall be interpreted as applying equally to state registered domestic partnerships or individuals in state registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons, and references to dissolution of marriage shall apply equally to state registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated, to the extent that such interpretation does not conflict with federal law. Where necessary to implement chapter 521, Laws of 2009, gender-specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law shall be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state registered domestic partnerships. [2009 c 521 § 130.]