

**Chapter 22.28 RCW**  
**SAFE DEPOSIT COMPANIES**

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**RCW 22.28.010 Definitions.** The term safe deposit company as used in RCW 22.28.010 through 22.28.060 shall be construed to extend to and include all banks, trust companies and other corporations organized under the laws of the state of Washington or of the United States of America, and doing business in the state of Washington; which are empowered by law to let vaults, safes or other receptacles upon the premises occupied by such bank, trust company or corporation. [1923 c 186 § 1; RRS § 3382.]

**RCW 22.28.020 Safe deposit company a warehouse operator.** Whenever any safe deposit company shall take or receive as bailee for hire and for safekeeping or storage any jewelry, plate, money, specie, bullion, stocks, bonds, mortgages, securities, or valuable paper of any kind, or other valuable personal property, and shall have issued a receipt therefor, it shall be deemed to be a warehouse operator as to such property and the provisions of Article 7 of the Uniform Commercial Code, Title 62A RCW, shall apply to such deposit, or to the proceeds thereof, to the same extent and with the same effect, and be enforceable in the same manner as is now provided with reference to warehouse operators in said act. [2011 c 336 § 650; 1983 c 3 § 26; 1923 c 186 § 2; RRS § 3383.]

**RCW 22.28.030 Exercise of due care required.** Whenever any safe deposit company shall let or lease any vault, safe, box or other receptacle for the keeping or storage of personal property such safe deposit company shall be bound to exercise due care to prevent the opening of such vault, safe, box or receptacle by any person other than the lessee thereof, or his or her duly authorized agent, and the parties may provide in writing the terms, conditions, and liabilities in the lease. Authorized agent as used in this section includes, but is not limited to, a duly appointed personal representative, an attorney-in-fact, a special representative, or a trustee acting under a revocable living trust. [2005 c 97 § 15; 1923 c 186 § 3; RRS § 3384.]

**RCW 22.28.040 Procedure when rent is unpaid.** If the amount due for the rental of any safe or box in the vaults of any safe deposit company shall not have been paid for one year, it may, at the expiration thereof, send to the person in whose name such safe or box stands on its books a notice in writing in securely closed, postpaid and certified mail, return receipt requested, directed to such person at his or her post office address, as recorded upon the books of the safe deposit company, notifying such person that if the amount due for the rental of such safe or box is not paid within thirty days from date, the safe deposit company will then cause such safe or box to be opened, and the contents thereof to be inventoried, sealed, and placed in one of its general safes or boxes.

Upon the expiration of thirty days from the date of mailing such notice, and the failure of the person in whose name the safe or box stands on the books of the company to pay the amount due for the rental thereof to the date of notice, the corporation may, in the presence of two officers of the corporation, cause such safe or box to be opened, and the contents thereof, if any, to be removed, inventoried and sealed in a package, upon which the officers shall distinctly mark the name of the person in whose name the safe or box stood on the books of the company, and the date of removal of the property, and when such package has been so marked for identification by the officers, it shall be placed in one of the general safes or boxes of the company at a rental not to exceed the original rental of the safe or box which was opened, and shall remain in such general safe or box for a period of not less than one year, unless sooner removed by the owner thereof, and two officers of the corporation shall thereupon file with the company a certificate which shall fully set out the date of the opening of such safe or box, the name of the person in whose name it stood and a reasonable description of the contents, if any.

A copy of such certificate shall within ten days thereafter be mailed to the person in whose name the safe or box so opened stood on the books of the company, at his or her last known post office address, in securely closed, postpaid and certified mail, return receipt requested, together with a notice that the contents will be kept, at the expense of such person, in a general safe or box in the vaults of the company, for a period of not less than one year. At any time after the mailing of such certificate and notice, and before the expiration of one year, such person may require the delivery of the contents of the safe as shown by said certificate, upon the payment of all rentals due at the time of opening of the safe or box, the cost of opening the box, and the payment of all further charges accrued during the period the contents remained in the general safe or box of the company.

The company may sell all the property or articles of value set out in said certificate, at public auction, provided a notice of the time and place of sale has been published once within ten days prior to the sale in a newspaper published in the county where the contents of the safe or box is located and where the holder chooses to conduct the sale. If the holder chooses not to sell the contents at public sale, the contents shall be delivered to the department of revenue as unclaimed property.

From the proceeds of the sale, the company shall deduct amounts which shall then be due for rental up to the time of opening the safe, the cost of opening thereof, and the further cost of safekeeping all of its contents for the period since the safe or box was opened, plus

any additional charges accruing to the time of sale, including advertising and cost of sale. The balance, if any, of such proceeds, together with any unsold property, shall be deposited by the company within thirty days after the receipt of the same, with the department of revenue as unclaimed property. The company shall file with such deposit a certificate stating the name and last known place of residence of the owner of the property sold, the articles sold, the price obtained therefor, and showing that the notices herein required were duly mailed and that the sale was advertised as required herein. [2011 c 336 § 651; 1983 c 289 § 1; 1923 c 186 § 4; RRS § 3385. Formerly RCW 22.08.050, 22.28.040.]

**RCW 22.28.060 Destruction of paper contents—Other remedies available.** Whenever the contents of any such safe or box, so opened, shall consist either wholly or in part, of documents or letters or other papers of a private nature, such documents, letters, or papers shall not be sold, but shall be deposited with the department of revenue as unclaimed property unless sooner claimed by the owner. The department may hold or destroy documents or letters or other papers, and the holder shall not be held liable to any person or persons whatsoever for the destruction of papers or other contents which the department declines to accept.

The provision of this section shall not preclude any other remedy by action or otherwise now existing for the enforcement of the claims of a corporation against the person in whose name such safe or box stood, nor bar the right of a safe deposit company to recover so much of the debt due it as shall not be paid by the proceeds of the sale of the property deposited with it. The sale or disposition of property in accordance with this chapter shall discharge the holder of all liability to the owner for such sale or disposition, irrespective of whether a better price could have been obtained by a sale at a different time or in a different method from that selected by the holder. [1983 c 289 § 2; 1923 c 186 § 5; RRS § 3386. Formerly RCW 22.28.060, 22.28.070.]