

RCW 81.29.020 Carrier's liability for loss—Exceptions—Tariff schedule—Time for filing claims or instituting suits. (1) Any common carrier subject to regulation by the commission as to rates and service, receiving property for transportation wholly within the state of Washington from one point in the state of Washington to another point in the state of Washington, shall issue a receipt or bill of lading and is liable to the lawful holder thereof for any loss, damage, or injury to such property caused by it, or by any common carrier to which such property may be delivered, or over whose line or lines such property may pass when transported on a through bill of lading, and a contract, receipt, rule, regulation, or other limitation of any character, does not exempt such common carrier from the liability imposed; and any such common carrier receiving property for transportation wholly within the state of Washington, or any common carrier delivering property received and transported, is liable to the lawful holder of the receipt or bill of lading, or to any party entitled to recover thereon, whether such receipt or bill of lading has been issued or not, for the full actual loss, damage, or injury to such property caused by it or by any such common carrier to which such property may be delivered, or over whose line or lines such property may pass, when transported on a through bill of lading. Any limitation of liability, limitation of the amount of recovery, or representation or agreement as to value in any such receipt or bill of lading, or in any contract, rule, or regulation, or in any tariff filed with the commission is unlawful and void.

(2) Liability for full actual loss, damage, or injury, notwithstanding any limitation of liability or recovery or representation, agreement, or release as to value, and declaring any such limitation to be unlawful and void, does not apply: First, to baggage carried on commercial ferries or motor vehicles, or commercial ferries or motor vehicles carrying passengers; second, to property, concerning which the carrier is expressly authorized or required by order of the commission, to establish and maintain rates dependent upon the value declared in writing by the shipper or agreed upon in writing as the released value of the property, in which case such declaration or agreement has no other effect than to limit liability and recovery to an amount not exceeding the value so declared or released; and any tariff schedule that may be filed with the commission pursuant to such order must contain specific reference thereto and may establish rates varying with the value so declared and agreed upon; and the commission may make such order in cases where rates dependent upon and varying with declared or agreed values would, in its opinion, be just and reasonable under the circumstances and conditions surrounding the transportation.

(3) This section does not deprive any holder of a receipt or bill of lading of any remedy or right of action which he or she has under the existing law.

(4) It is unlawful for any receiving or delivering common carrier to provide by rule, contract, regulation, or otherwise a shorter period for the filing of claims than nine months, and for the institution of suits than two years, such period for institution of suits to be computed from the day when notice in writing is given by the carrier to the claimant that the carrier has disallowed the claim or any part or parts thereof specified in the notice.

(5) The liability imposed by this section applies to property reconsigned or diverted in accordance with the applicable tariffs

filed with the commission. [2007 c 234 s 37; 1982 c 83 s 1; 1980 c 132 s 1; 1961 c 14 s 81.29.020. Prior: 1945 c 203 s 2; 1923 c 149 s 1; Rem. Supp. 1945 s 3673-1. Formerly RCW 81.32.290 through 81.32.330.]

Effective date—1980 c 132: "This 1980 act shall take effect on July 1, 1980." [1980 c 132 s 4.]