

RCW 64.35.610 Disputed claim—Notice—Arbitration procedures—

Duties of parties. A qualified warranty may include mandatory binding arbitration of all disputes arising out of or in connection with a qualified warranty. The provision may provide that all claims for a single condominium be heard by the same arbitrator, but shall not permit the joinder or consolidation of any other person or entity. The arbitration shall comply with the following minimum procedural standards:

(1) Any demand for arbitration shall be delivered by certified mail return receipt requested, and by ordinary first-class mail. The party initiating the arbitration shall address the notice to the address last known to the initiating party in the exercise of reasonable diligence, and also, for any entity which is required to have a registered agent in the state of Washington, to the address of the registered agent. Demand for arbitration is deemed effective three days after the date deposited in the mail;

(2) All disputes shall be heard by one qualified arbitrator, unless the parties agree to use three arbitrators. If three arbitrators are used, one shall be appointed by each of the disputing parties and the first two arbitrators shall appoint the third, who will chair the panel. The parties shall select the identity and number of the arbitrator or arbitrators after the demand for arbitration is made. If, within thirty days after the effective date of the demand for arbitration, the parties fail to agree on an arbitrator or the agreed number of arbitrators fail to be appointed, then an arbitrator or arbitrators shall be appointed under *RCW 7.04.050 by the presiding judge of the superior court of the county in which the condominium is located;

(3) In any arbitration, at least one arbitrator must be a lawyer or retired judge. Any additional arbitrator must be either a lawyer or retired judge or a person who has experience with construction and engineering standards and practices, written construction warranties, or construction dispute resolution. No person may serve as an arbitrator in any arbitration in which that person has any past or present financial or personal interest;

(4) The arbitration hearing must be conducted in a manner that permits full, fair, and expeditious presentation of the case by both parties. The arbitrator is bound by the law of Washington state. Parties may be, but are not required to be, represented by attorneys. The arbitrator may permit discovery to ensure a fair hearing, but may limit the scope or manner of discovery for good cause to avoid excessive delay and costs to the parties. The parties and the arbitrator shall use all reasonable efforts to complete the arbitration within six months of the effective date of the demand for arbitration or, when applicable, the service of the list of defects in accordance with RCW 64.50.030;

(5) Except as otherwise set forth in this section, arbitration shall be conducted under *chapter 7.04 RCW, unless the parties elect to use the construction industry arbitration rules of the American arbitration association, which are permitted to the extent not inconsistent with this section. The expenses of witnesses including expert witnesses shall be paid by the party producing the witnesses. All other expenses of arbitration shall be borne equally by the parties, unless all parties agree otherwise or unless the arbitrator awards expenses or any part thereof to any specified party or parties.

The parties shall pay the fees of the arbitrator as and when specified by the arbitrator;

(6) Demand for arbitration given pursuant to subsection (1) of this section commences a judicial proceeding for purposes of RCW 64.34.452;

(7) The arbitration decision shall be in writing and must set forth findings of fact and conclusions of law that support the decision. [2004 c 201 § 1601.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 7.04 RCW was repealed in its entirety by 2005 c 433 § 50, effective January 1, 2006.