

WAC 16-228-1120 How are penalties calculated? (1) Median penalty selection. In the disposition of administrative cases, the department shall use the penalty assignment schedule listed in WAC 16-228-1130 to determine appropriate penalties. The department shall calculate the appropriate penalty based on the level of violation and the adverse effect(s) or potential adverse effects at the time of the incident(s) giving rise to the violation. The median penalty shall be assessed unless a proportionate adjustment is warranted and/or there are aggravating or mitigating factors present. The median penalty as listed in WAC 16-228-1130 may be proportionately adjusted and/or aggravated to a level more than the maximum penalty listed for the violation in the penalty assignment schedule table. The median penalty under the penalty assignment schedule may not be proportionately adjusted and/or mitigated to a level less than the minimum penalty listed for the violation.

(2) Proportionate adjustment of median penalty.

(a) The department reserves the right to proportionately increase the civil penalty and proportionately decrease the licensing action under certain circumstances. Such circumstances include situations where licensing action(s) as a deterrent are ineffective and include, but are not limited to:

(i) Violations by persons who are not licensed; and

(ii) Situations where the civil penalty assessed is not substantially equivalent to the violator's economic benefit derived from the violation.

(b) The department also reserves the right to proportionately decrease the civil penalty and increase the licensing action in circumstances that demonstrate the ineffectiveness of a civil penalty as a deterrent. Nothing shall prevent the department from proportionally adjusting a licensing action to a level greater than the maximum licensing action listed in the penalty assignment schedule.

(3) Aggravating factors. The department may consider circumstances enhancing the penalty based on the seriousness of the violation. Aggravating factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) The number of separate alleged violations contained within a single notice of intent.

(b) The high magnitude of the harm, or potential harm, including quantity and/or degree, to humans, animals, plants, property or the environment caused by the violation(s).

(c) The similarity of the current alleged violation to previous violations committed within the last three years.

(d) The extent to which the alleged violation is part of a pattern of the same or substantially similar conduct.

(4) When the department determines that one or more aggravating factors are present, the department may assess the maximum penalty as listed within the level of violation or may, in its discretion, increase the penalty to a level greater than the maximum penalty, including but not limited to revocation of the license.

(5) Mitigating factors. The department may consider circumstances reducing the penalty based upon the seriousness of the violation. Mitigating factors include but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Voluntary disclosure of a violation.

(b) The low magnitude of the harm, or potential harm, including quantity and/or degree, caused by the violation.

(c) Voluntary taking of remedial measures that will result in increased public protection, or that will result in a decreased likelihood that the violation will be repeated.

(6) When the department determines that one or more mitigating factors are present, the department may assess the minimum penalty for the violation from the penalty schedule.

(7) The department considers each violation to be a separate and distinct event. When a person has committed multiple violations, the violations are cumulative for purposes of calculating the appropriate penalty. Penalties are added together.

(8) Violation(s) committed during the period when an individual's license is suspended or revoked shall be subject to the maximum civil penalty of seven thousand five hundred dollars and/or revocation of the license for a period of up to five years. Violation(s) committed by unlicensed individuals are subject to the provisions of this chapter, including the penalty provision.

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 17.21, 15.58, 34.05 RCW. WSR 03-22-029, § 16-228-1120, filed 10/28/03, effective 11/28/03. Statutory Authority: Chapters 17.21 and 15.58 RCW. WSR 01-01-058, § 16-228-1120, filed 12/12/00, effective 1/12/01. Statutory Authority: Chapters 15.54, 15.58 and 17.21 RCW. WSR 99-22-002, § 16-228-1120, filed 10/20/99, effective 11/20/99.]