

WAC 388-97-1840 Retaliation or discrimination prohibited. (1)

The licensee or the nursing home must not discriminate or retaliate in any manner against a resident or employee in its nursing home who has initiated or participated in any action or proceeding authorized under nursing home licensing law. Examples of such participation include, but are not limited to the following:

(a) The resident, or someone acting on behalf of the resident, or the employee:

(i) Made a complaint, including a whistle blower complaint, to the department, the department of health, the long-term care ombuds, attorney general's office, the courts or law enforcement;

(ii) Provided information to the department, the department of health, the long-term care ombuds, attorney general's office, the courts or law enforcement; or

(iii) Testified in a proceeding related to the nursing home or its staff.

(2) For purposes of this chapter, **"retaliation"** or **"discrimination"** against a resident means an act including, but not limited to:

(a) Verbal or physical harassment or abuse;

(b) Any attempt to expel the resident from the facility;

(c) Nonmedically indicated social, dietary, or mobility restriction(s);

(d) Lessening of the level of care when not medically appropriate;

(e) Nonvoluntary relocation within a nursing home without appropriate medical, psychosocial, or nursing justification;

(f) Neglect or negligent treatment;

(g) Withholding privileges;

(h) Monitoring resident's phone, mail or visits without resident's permission;

(i) Withholding or threatening to withhold food or treatment unless authorized by terminally ill resident or the resident's representative;

(j) Persistently delaying responses to resident's request for services of assistance; or

(k) Infringement on a resident's rights described in chapter 74.42 RCW, RCW 74.39A.060(7), WAC 388-97-0180, and also, for medicaid and medicare certified nursing facilities, in federal laws and regulations.

(3) For purposes of this chapter, **"retaliation"** or **"discrimination"** against an employee means an act including, but not limited to:

(a) Harassment;

(b) Unwarranted firing;

(c) Unwarranted demotion;

(d) Unjustified disciplinary action;

(e) Denial of adequate staff to perform duties;

(f) Frequent staff changes;

(g) Frequent and undesirable office changes;

(h) Refusal to assign meaningful work;

(i) Unwarranted and unsubstantiated report of misconduct under Title 18 RCW;

(j) Unsubstantiated letters of reprimand;

(k) Unsubstantiated unsatisfactory performance evaluations;

(l) Denial of employment;

(m) A supervisor or superior encouraging coworkers to behave in a hostile manner toward the whistle blower; or

(n) Workplace reprisal or retaliatory action as defined in RCW 74.34.180 (3)(b).

(4) For purposes of this chapter, a "**whistle blower**" is defined in WAC 388-97-0001.

(5) If, within one year of the complaint by or on behalf of a resident, the resident is involuntarily discharged from the nursing home, or is subjected to any type of discriminatory treatment, there will be a presumption that the action was in retaliation for the filing of the complaint. Under these circumstances, the nursing home will have the burden of establishing that the action was not retaliatory, in accordance with RCW 18.51.220 and 74.34.180(2).

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 18.51 and 74.42 RCW. WSR 14-12-040, § 388-97-1840, filed 5/29/14, effective 6/29/14. Statutory Authority: Chapters 18.51 and 74.42 RCW and 42 C.F.R. 489.52. WSR 08-20-062, § 388-97-1840, filed 9/24/08, effective 11/1/08.]