

RCW 9.94A.7604 Legal financial obligations—Notice of payroll deduction—Employer or entity rights and responsibilities. (1) An employer or entity upon whom a notice of payroll deduction is served, shall make an answer to the department within twenty days after the date of service. The answer shall confirm compliance and institution of the payroll deduction or explain the circumstances if no payroll deduction is in effect. The answer shall also state whether the offender is employed by or receives earnings from the employer or entity, whether the employer or entity anticipates paying earnings, and the amount of earnings. If the offender is no longer employed, or receiving earnings from the employer or entity, the answer shall state the present employer or entity's name and address, if known.

(2) Service of a notice of payroll deduction upon an employer or entity requires an employer or entity to immediately make a mandatory payroll deduction from the offender/employee's unpaid disposable earnings. The employer or entity shall thereafter at each pay period deduct the amount stated in the notice divided by the number of pay periods per month. The employer or entity must remit the proper amounts to the appropriate clerk of the court on each date the offender/employee is due to be paid.

(3) The employer or entity may combine amounts withheld from the earnings of more than one employee in a single payment to the clerk of the court, listing separately the amount of the payment that is attributable to each individual employee.

(4) The employer or entity may deduct a processing fee from the remainder of the employee's earnings after withholding under the notice of payroll deduction, even if the remainder is exempt under RCW 9.94A.761. The processing fee may not exceed:

(a) Ten dollars for the first disbursement made by the employer to the clerk of the court; and

(b) One dollar for each subsequent disbursement made under the notice of payroll deduction.

(5) The notice of payroll deduction shall remain in effect until released by the department or the court enters an order terminating the notice.

(6) An employer shall be liable to the obligee for the amount of court-ordered legal financial obligation moneys that should have been withheld from the offender/employee's earnings, if the employer:

(a) Fails or refuses, after being served with a notice of payroll deduction, to deduct and promptly remit from unpaid earnings the amounts of money required in the notice; or

(b) Fails or refuses to submit an answer to the notice of payroll deduction after being served. In such cases, liability may be established in superior court. Awards in superior court shall include costs, interest under RCW 19.52.020 and 4.56.110, reasonable attorney fees, and staff costs as part of the award.

(7) No employer who complies with a notice of payroll deduction under this chapter may be liable to the employee for wrongful withholding.

(8) No employer may discipline or discharge an employee or refuse to hire a person by reason of an action authorized in this chapter. If an employer disciplines or discharges an employee or refuses to hire a person in violation of this section, the employee or person shall have a cause of action against the employer. The employer shall be liable for double the amount of lost wages and any other damages suffered as a result of the violation and for costs and reasonable attorney fees,

and shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars for each violation. The employer may also be ordered to hire, rehire, or reinstate the aggrieved individual. [1991 c 93 § 5. Formerly RCW 9.94A.200020.]

Retroactive application—Captions not law—1991 c 93: See notes following RCW 9.94A.7601.