

**Chapter 7.48 RCW  
NUISANCES**

**Sections**

- 7.48.010 Actionable nuisance defined.
- 7.48.020 Who may sue—Judgment for damages—Warrant for abatement—  
Injunction.
- 7.48.030 Issuance and execution of warrant.
- 7.48.040 Stay of issuance of warrant.
- 7.48.110 Houses of lewdness, assignation or prostitution may be  
abated—Voluntary abatement.
- 7.48.120 Nuisance defined.
- 7.48.130 Public nuisance defined.
- 7.48.140 Public nuisances enumerated.
- 7.48.150 Private nuisance defined.
- 7.48.155 Unlawful use of firearm or deadly weapon—Arrest required.
- 7.48.160 Authorized act not a nuisance.
- 7.48.170 Successive owners liable.
- 7.48.180 Abatement does not preclude action for damages.
- 7.48.190 Nuisance does not become legal by prescription.
- 7.48.200 Remedies.
- 7.48.210 Civil action, who may maintain.
- 7.48.220 Abatement, by whom.
- 7.48.230 Public nuisance—Abatement.
- 7.48.240 Certain places of resort declared nuisances.
- 7.48.250 Penalty—Abatement.
- 7.48.260 Warrant of abatement.
- 7.48.270 Stay of warrant.
- 7.48.280 Costs of abatement.
- 7.48.300 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Legislative  
finding and purpose.
- 7.48.305 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Presumed  
reasonable and not a nuisance—Exception—Damages.
- 7.48.310 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Definitions.
- 7.48.315 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Recovering  
lawsuit costs—Farmers.
- 7.48.320 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Recovering  
costs to investigate complaints—State and local  
agencies.
- 7.48.330 Firearm industry—Public nuisance.
- 7.48.905 Severability—1979 c 122.

*Nuisances*

*criminal: Chapter 9.66 RCW.*

*drug, injunctions: Chapter 7.43 RCW.*

*jurisdiction of superior court: State Constitution Art. 4 s  
6 (Amendment 28).*

**RCW 7.48.010 Actionable nuisance defined.** The obstruction of any highway or the closing of the channel of any stream used for boating or rafting logs, lumber or timber, or whatever is injurious to health or indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to essentially interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of the life and property, is a nuisance and the

subject of an action for damages and other and further relief. [Code 1881 s 605; 1877 p 126 s 610; 1869 p 144 s 599; 1854 p 207 s 405; RRS s 943.]

*Crimes*

*malicious mischief: Chapter 9.61 RCW.*  
*public nuisance: RCW 9.66.010.*

**RCW 7.48.020 Who may sue—Judgment for damages—Warrant for abatement—Injunction.** Such action may be brought by any person whose property is, or whose patrons or employees are, injuriously affected or whose personal enjoyment is lessened by the nuisance. If judgment be given for the plaintiff in such action, he or she may, in addition to the execution to enforce the same, on motion, have an order allowing a warrant to issue to the sheriff to abate and to deter or prevent the resumption of such nuisance. Such motion shall be allowed, of course, unless it appear on the hearing that the nuisance has ceased, or that such remedy is inadequate to abate or prevent the continuance of the nuisance, in which latter case the plaintiff may have the defendant enjoined. [1994 c 45 s 5; 1891 c 50 s 1; Code 1881 s 606; 1877 p 126 s 611; 1869 p 144 s 560; 1854 p 207 s 406; RRS s 944.]

**Findings—Declaration—Severability—1994 c 45:** See notes following RCW 7.48.140.

**RCW 7.48.030 Issuance and execution of warrant.** If the order be made, the clerk shall thereafter, at any time within six months, when requested by the plaintiff, issue such warrant directed to the sheriff, requiring him or her forthwith to abate the nuisance at the expense of the defendant, and return the warrant as soon thereafter as may be, with his or her proceedings indorsed thereon. The expenses of abating the nuisance may be levied by the sheriff on the property of the defendant, and in this respect the warrant is to be deemed an execution against property. [2011 c 336 s 210; Code 1881 s 607; 1877 p 126 s 612; 1869 p 145 s 561; 1854 p 207 s 407; RRS s 945.]

**RCW 7.48.040 Stay of issuance of warrant.** At any time before the order is made or the warrant issues, the defendant may, on motion to the court or judge thereof, have an order to stay the issue of such warrant for such period as may be necessary, not exceeding six months, to allow the defendant to abate the nuisance himself or herself, upon his or her giving bond to the plaintiff in a sufficient amount with one or more sureties, to the satisfaction of the court or judge thereof, that he or she will abate it within the time and in the manner specified in such order. The sureties shall justify as provided by law. If the defendant fails to abate such nuisance within the time specified, the warrant for the abatement of the nuisance may issue as if the same had not been stayed. [2011 c 336 s 211; 1957 c 51 s 11; Code 1881 s 608; 1877 p 127 s 613; 1869 p 145 s 562; RRS s 946.]

*Corporate surety—Insurance: Chapter 48.28 RCW.*

**RCW 7.48.110 Houses of lewdness, assignation or prostitution may be abated—Voluntary abatement.** If the owner of the building in which a nuisance is found to be maintained, appears and pays all costs of the proceeding, and files a bond with sureties to be approved by the clerk in the full value of the property to be ascertained by the court, conditioned that he or she will immediately abate said nuisance and prevent the same from being established or kept therein within a period of one year thereafter, the court or judge may, if satisfied of his or her good faith, order the premises, closed under the order of abatement, to be delivered to said owner, and said order closing the building canceled. The release of the property under the provisions of this section shall not release it from any judgment, lien, penalty, or liability to which it may be subject by law. [2011 c 336 s 217; 1927 c 94 s 3; 1913 c 127 s 7; RRS s 946-7.]

**RCW 7.48.120 Nuisance defined.** Nuisance consists in unlawfully doing an act, or omitting to perform a duty, which act or omission either annoys, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health or safety of others, offends decency, or unlawfully interferes with, obstructs or tends to obstruct, or render dangerous for passage, any lake or navigable river, bay, stream, canal or basin, or any public park, square, street or highway; or in any way renders other persons insecure in life, or in the use of property. [Code 1881 s 1235; 1875 p 79 s 1; RRS s 9914.]

*Crimes*

*malicious mischief: Chapter 9.61 RCW.*

*nuisances: Chapter 9.66 RCW.*

**RCW 7.48.130 Public nuisance defined.** A public nuisance is one which affects equally the rights of an entire community or neighborhood, although the extent of the damage may be unequal. [Code 1881 s 1236; 1875 p 79 s 2; RRS s 9912.]

*Crimes, nuisances: Chapter 9.66 RCW.*

**RCW 7.48.140 Public nuisances enumerated.** It is a public nuisance:

(1) To cause or suffer the carcass of any animal or any offal, filth, or noisome substance to be collected, deposited, or to remain in any place to the prejudice of others;

(2) To throw or deposit any offal or other offensive matter, or the carcass of any dead animal, in any watercourse, stream, lake, pond, spring, well, or common sewer, street, or public highway, or in any manner to corrupt or render unwholesome or impure the water of any such spring, stream, pond, lake, or well, to the injury or prejudice of others;

(3) To obstruct or impede, without legal authority, the passage of any river, harbor, or collection of water;

(4) To obstruct or encroach upon public highway, private ways, streets, alleys, commons, landing places, and ways to burying places or to unlawfully obstruct or impede the flow of municipal transit vehicles as defined in RCW 46.04.355 or passenger traffic, access to

municipal transit vehicles or stations as defined in \*RCW 9.91.025(2) (a), or otherwise interfere with the provision or use of public transportation services, or obstruct or impede a municipal transit driver, operator, or supervisor in the performance of that individual's duties;

(5) To carry on the business of manufacturing gun powder, nitroglycerine, or other highly explosive substance, or mixing or grinding the materials therefor, in any building within fifty rods of any valuable building erected at the time such business may be commenced;

(6) To establish powder magazines near incorporated cities or towns, at a point different from that appointed by the corporate authorities of such city or town; or within fifty rods of any occupied dwelling house;

(7) To erect, continue, or use any building, or other place, for the exercise of any trade, employment, or manufacture, which, by occasioning obnoxious exhalations, offensive smells, or otherwise is offensive or dangerous to the health of individuals or of the public;

(8) To suffer or maintain on one's own premises, or upon the premises of another, or to permit to be maintained on one's own premises, any place where wines, spirituous, fermented, malt, or other intoxicating liquors are kept for sale or disposal to the public in contravention of law;

(9) For an owner or occupier of land, knowing of the existence of a well, septic tank, cesspool, or other hole or excavation ten inches or more in width at the top and four feet or more in depth, to fail to cover, fence or fill the same, or provide other proper and adequate safeguards: PROVIDED, That this section shall not apply to a hole one hundred square feet or more in area or one that is open, apparent, and obvious.

Every person who has the care, government, management, or control of any building, structure, powder magazine, or any other place mentioned in this section shall, for the purposes of this section, be taken and deemed to be the owner or agent of the owner or owners of such building, structure, powder magazine or other place, and, as such, may be proceeded against for erecting, contriving, causing, continuing, or maintaining such nuisance. [1994 c 45 s 2; 1955 c 237 s 1; 1895 c 14 s 1; Code 1881 s 1246; RRS s 9913.]

**\*Reviser's note:** The reference to RCW 9.91.025(2) (a) appears to be erroneous. Reference to RCW 9.91.025(2) was apparently intended.

**Findings—Declaration—1994 c 45:** "The legislature finds that it is important to the general welfare to protect and preserve public safety in the operation of public transportation facilities and vehicles, in order to protect the personal safety of both passengers and employees. The legislature further finds that public transportation facilities and services will be utilized more fully by the general public if they are assured of personal safety and security in the utilization.

The legislature recognizes that cities, towns, counties, public transportation benefit areas, and other municipalities that offer public transportation services have the independent authority to adopt regulations, rules, and guidelines that regulate conduct in public transportation vehicles and facilities to protect and preserve the public safety in the operation of the vehicles and facilities. The legislature finds that this act is not intended to limit the

independent authority to regulate conduct by these municipalities. The legislature, however, further finds that this act is necessary to provide statewide guidelines that regulate conduct in public transportation vehicles and facilities to further enhance the independent regulatory authority of cities, towns, counties, public transportation benefit areas, and any other municipalities that offer public transportation services." [1994 c 45 s 1.]

**Severability—1994 c 45:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1994 c 45 s 6.]

*Crimes*

*malicious mischief: Chapter 9.61 RCW.*

*nuisance: Chapter 9.66 RCW.*

*Devices simulating traffic control signs declared public nuisance: RCW 47.36.180.*

**RCW 7.48.150 Private nuisance defined.** Every nuisance not included in the definition of RCW 7.48.130 is private. [Code 1881 s 1237; 1875 p 79 s 3; RRS s 9915.]

**RCW 7.48.155 Unlawful use of firearm or deadly weapon—Arrest required.** The unlawful use of a firearm or other deadly weapon by a person in, or adjacent to his or her dwelling, that imminently threatens the physical safety of other people in the adjacent area, so as to essentially interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of their residences, is a nuisance and may be abated, and the person who unlawfully used the firearm or deadly weapon is subject to the punishment provided in this chapter. This section does not apply unless the person who unlawfully used the firearm or other deadly weapon is arrested for this activity. [1992 c 38 s 10.]

**Intent—Effective date—1992 c 38:** See notes following RCW 59.18.352.

**RCW 7.48.160 Authorized act not a nuisance.** Nothing which is done or maintained under the express authority of a statute, can be deemed a nuisance. [Code 1881 s 1238; 1875 p 79 s 4; RRS s 9916.]

**RCW 7.48.170 Successive owners liable.** Every successive owner of property who neglects to abate a continuing nuisance upon, or in the use of such property caused by a former owner, is liable therefor in the same manner as the one who first created it. [Code 1881 s 1239; 1875 p 79 s 5; RRS s 9917.]

**RCW 7.48.180 Abatement does not preclude action for damages.** The abatement of a nuisance does not prejudice the right of any person

to recover damages for its past existence. [Code 1881 s 1240; 1875 p 79 s 6; RRS s 9918.]

**RCW 7.48.190 Nuisance does not become legal by prescription.** No lapse of time can legalize a public nuisance, amounting to an actual obstruction of public right. [Code 1881 s 1241; 1875 p 80 s 7; RRS s 9919.]

**RCW 7.48.200 Remedies.** The remedies against a public nuisance are: Indictment or information, a civil action, or abatement. The remedy by indictment or information shall be as regulated and prescribed in this chapter. When a civil action for damage is resorted to, the practice shall conform to RCW 7.48.010 through 7.48.040. [1957 c 51 s 12; Code 1881 s 1242; 1875 p 80 s 8; RRS s 9920.]

**RCW 7.48.210 Civil action, who may maintain.** A private person may maintain a civil action for a public nuisance, if it is specially injurious to himself or herself but not otherwise. [2011 c 336 s 218; Code 1881 s 1243; 1875 p 80 s 9; RRS s 9921.]

**RCW 7.48.220 Abatement, by whom.** A public nuisance may be abated by any public body or officer authorized thereto by law. [Code 1881 s 1244; 1875 p 80 s 10; RRS s 9922.]

**RCW 7.48.230 Public nuisance—Abatement.** Any person may abate a public nuisance which is specially injurious to him or her by removing, or if necessary, destroying the thing which constitutes the same, without committing a breach of the peace, or doing unnecessary injury. [2011 c 336 s 219; Code 1881 s 1245; 1875 p 80 s 11; RRS s 9923.]

**RCW 7.48.240 Certain places of resort declared nuisances.** Houses of ill fame, kept for the purpose, where persons are employed for purposes of prostitution; all public houses or places of resort where gambling is carried on, or permitted; all houses or places within any city, town, or village, or upon any public road, or highway where drunkenness, gambling, fighting or breaches of the peace are carried on, or permitted; all opium dens, or houses, or places of resort where opium smoking is permitted, are nuisances, and may be abated, and the owners, keepers, or persons in charge thereof, and persons carrying on such unlawful business shall be punished as provided in this chapter. [1973 1st ex.s. c 154 s 18; Code 1881 s 1247; 1875 p 81 s 13; RRS s 9924.]

**Severability—1973 1st ex.s. c 154:** See note following RCW 2.12.030.

**RCW 7.48.250 Penalty—Abatement.** Whoever is convicted of erecting, causing or contriving a public or common nuisance as

described in this chapter, or at common law, when the same has not been modified or repealed by statute, where no other punishment therefor is specially provided, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and the court with or without such fine, may order such nuisance to be abated, and issue a warrant as hereinafter provided: PROVIDED, That orders and warrants of abatement shall not be issued by district judges. [1987 c 202 s 136; 1957 c 45 s 1; Code 1881 s 1248; 1875 p 81 s 14; RRS s 9925.]

**Intent—1987 c 202:** See note following RCW 2.04.190.

**RCW 7.48.260 Warrant of abatement.** When, upon indictment or information, complaint or action, any person is adjudged guilty of a nuisance, if it be in superior court the court may in addition to the fine imposed, if any, or to the judgment for damages or costs, for which a separate execution may issue, order that such nuisance be abated, or removed at the expense of the defendant, and after inquiry into and estimating, as nearly as may be, the sum necessary to defray the expenses of such abatement, the court may issue a warrant therefor: PROVIDED, That if the conviction was had in a district court, the district judge shall not issue the order and warrant of abatement, but on application therefor, shall transfer the cause to the superior court which shall proceed to try the issue of abatement in the same manner as if the action had been originally commenced therein. [1987 c 202 s 137; 1957 c 45 s 2; Code 1881 s 1249; 1875 p 81 s 15; RRS s 9926, part. FORMER PARTS OF SECTION: Code 1881 s 1250; 1875 p 81 s 16.]

**Intent—1987 c 202:** See note following RCW 2.04.190.

**RCW 7.48.270 Stay of warrant.** Instead of issuing such warrant, the court may order the same to be stayed upon motion of the defendant, and upon his or her entering into a bond in such sum and with such surety as the court may direct to the state, conditioned either that the defendant will discontinue said nuisance, or that within a time limited by the court, and not exceeding six months, he or she will cause the same to be abated and removed, as either is directed by the court, and upon his or her default to perform the condition of his or her bond, the same shall be forfeited, and the court, upon being satisfied of such default, may order such warrant forthwith to issue, and an order to show cause why judgment should not be entered against the sureties of said bond. [2011 c 336 s 220; 1957 c 45 s 3; Code 1881 s 1251; 1875 p 81 s 17; RRS s 9927.]

**RCW 7.48.280 Costs of abatement.** The expense of abating a nuisance, by virtue of a warrant, can be collected by the officer in the same manner as damages and costs are collected on execution, except that the materials of any buildings, fences, or other things that may be removed as a nuisance, may be first levied upon and sold by the officer, and if any of the proceeds remain after satisfying the expense of the removal, such balance must be paid by the officer to the defendant or to the owner of the property levied upon, and if said proceeds are not sufficient to pay such expenses, the officer must

collect the residue thereof. [Code 1881 s 1252; 1875 p 82 s 18; RRS s 9928.]

**RCW 7.48.300 Agricultural activities and forest practices—  
Legislative finding and purpose.** The legislature finds that agricultural activities conducted on farmland and forest practices in urbanizing areas are often subjected to nuisance lawsuits, and that such suits encourage and even force the premature removal of the lands from agricultural uses and timber production. It is therefore the purpose of RCW 7.48.300 through 7.48.310 and 7.48.905 to provide that agricultural activities conducted on farmland and forest practices be protected from nuisance lawsuits. [1992 c 52 s 2; 1979 c 122 s 1.]

**RCW 7.48.305 Agricultural activities and forest practices—  
Presumed reasonable and not a nuisance—Exception—Damages.** (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, agricultural activities conducted on farmland and forest practices, if consistent with good agricultural and forest practices and established prior to surrounding nonagricultural and nonforestry activities, are presumed to be reasonable and shall not be found to constitute a nuisance unless the activity or practice has a substantial adverse effect on public health and safety.

(2) Agricultural activities and forest practices undertaken in conformity with all applicable laws and rules are presumed to be good agricultural and forest practices not adversely affecting the public health and safety for purposes of this section and RCW 7.48.300. An agricultural activity that is in conformity with such laws and rules shall not be restricted as to the hours of the day or day or days of the week during which it may be conducted.

(3) The act of owning land upon which a growing crop of trees is located, even if the tree growth is being managed passively and even if the owner does not indicate the land's status as a working forest, is considered to be a forest practice occurring on the land if the crop of trees is located on land that is capable of supporting a merchantable stand of timber that is not being actively used for a use that is incompatible with timber growing. If the growing of trees has been established prior to surrounding nonforestry activities, then the act of tree growth is considered a necessary part of any other subsequent stages of forest practices necessary to bring a crop of trees from its planting to final harvest and is included in the provisions of this section.

(4) Nothing in this section shall affect or impair any right to sue for damages. [2009 c 200 s 2; 2007 c 331 s 2. Prior: 1992 c 151 s 1; 1992 c 52 s 3; 1979 c 122 s 2.]

**Intent—2009 c 200:** "Commercial forestry produces jobs and revenue while also providing clean water and air, wildlife habitat, open space, and carbon storage. Maintaining a base of forestlands that can be utilized for commercial forestry is of utmost importance for the state.

As the population of the state increases, forestlands are converted to residential, suburban, and urban uses. The encroachment of these other uses into neighboring forestlands often makes it more difficult for forestland owners to continue practicing commercial

forestry. It is the legislature's intent that a forestland owner's right to practice commercial forestry in a manner consistent with the state forest practices laws be protected and preserved." [2009 c 200 s 1.]

**Findings—Intent—2007 c 331:** "The legislature finds that agricultural activities are often subjected to nuisance lawsuits. The legislature also finds that such lawsuits hasten premature conversion of agricultural lands to other uses. The legislature further finds that agricultural activities must be able to adopt new technologies and diversify into new crops and products if the agricultural industry is to survive and agricultural lands are to be conserved. Therefore, the legislature intends to enhance the protection of agricultural activities from nuisance lawsuits, and to further the clear legislative directive of the state growth management act to maintain and enhance the agricultural industry and conserve productive agricultural lands." [2007 c 331 s 1.]

**RCW 7.48.310 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Definitions.** For the purposes of RCW 7.48.305 only:

(1) "Agricultural activity" means a condition or activity which occurs on a farm in connection with the commercial production of farm products and includes, but is not limited to, marketed produce at roadside stands or farm markets; noise; odors; dust; fumes; operation of machinery and irrigation pumps; movement, including, but not limited to, use of current county road ditches, streams, rivers, canals, and drains, and use of water for agricultural activities; ground and aerial application of seed, fertilizers, conditioners, and plant protection products; keeping of bees for production of agricultural or apicultural products; employment and use of labor; roadway movement of equipment and livestock; protection from damage by wildlife; prevention of trespass; construction and maintenance of buildings, fences, roads, bridges, ponds, drains, waterways, and similar features and maintenance of stream banks and watercourses; and conversion from one agricultural activity to another, including a change in the type of plant-related farm product being produced. The term includes use of new practices and equipment consistent with technological development within the agricultural industry.

(2) "Farm" means the land, buildings, freshwater ponds, freshwater culturing and growing facilities, and machinery used in the commercial production of farm products.

(3) "Farmland" means land or freshwater ponds devoted primarily to the production, for commercial purposes, of livestock, freshwater aquacultural, or other farm products.

(4) "Farm product" means those plants and animals useful to humans and includes, but is not limited to, forages and sod crops, dairy and dairy products, poultry and poultry products, livestock, including breeding, grazing, and recreational equine use, fruits, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, trees, freshwater fish and fish products, apiaries and apiary products, equine and other similar products, or any other product which incorporates the use of food, feed, fiber, or fur.

(5) "Forest practice" means any activity conducted on or directly pertaining to forestland, as that term is defined in RCW 76.09.020, and relating to growing, harvesting, or processing timber. The term

"forest practices" includes, but is not limited to, road and trail construction, final and intermediate harvesting, precommercial thinning, reforestation, fertilization, prevention and suppression of diseases and insects, salvage of trees, brush control, and owning land where trees may passively grow until one of the preceding activities is deemed timely by the owner. [2009 c 200 s 3; 2007 c 331 s 3; 1992 c 52 s 4; 1991 c 317 s 2; 1979 c 122 s 3.]

**Intent—2009 c 200:** See note following RCW 7.48.305.

**Findings—Intent—2007 c 331:** See note following RCW 7.48.305.

**RCW 7.48.315 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Recovering lawsuit costs—Farmers.** (1) A farmer who prevails in any action, claim, or counterclaim alleging that agricultural activity on a farm constitutes a nuisance may recover the full costs and expenses determined by a court to have been reasonably incurred by the farmer as a result of the action, claim, or counterclaim.

(2) A farmer who prevails in any action, claim, or counterclaim (a) based on an allegation that agricultural activity on a farm is in violation of specified laws, rules, or ordinances, (b) where such activity is not found to be in violation of the specified laws, rules, or ordinances, and (c) actual damages are realized by the farm as a result of the action, claim, or counterclaim, may recover the full costs and expenses determined by a court to have been reasonably incurred by the farmer as a result of the action, claim, or counterclaim.

(3) The costs and expenses that may be recovered according to subsection (1) or (2) of this section include actual damages and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. For the purposes of this subsection, "actual damages" include lost revenue and the replacement value of crops or livestock damaged or unable to be harvested or sold as a result of the action, claim, or counterclaim.

(4) In addition to any sums recovered according to subsection (1) or (2) of this section, a farmer may recover exemplary damages if a court finds that the action, claim, or counterclaim was initiated maliciously and without probable cause.

(5) A farmer may not recover the costs and expenses authorized in this section from a state or local agency that investigates or pursues an enforcement action pursuant to an allegation as specified in subsection (2) of this section. [2005 c 511 s 1.]

**RCW 7.48.320 Agricultural activities and forest practices—Recovering costs to investigate complaints—State and local agencies.** A state or local agency required to investigate a complaint alleging agricultural activity on a farm is in violation of specified laws, rules, or ordinances and where such activity is not found to be in violation of such specified laws, rules, or ordinances may recover its full investigative costs and expenses if a court determines that the complaint was initiated maliciously and without probable cause. [2005 c 511 s 2.]

**RCW 7.48.330 Firearm industry—Public nuisance.** (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Firearm industry member" means a person engaged in the wholesale or retail sale, manufacturing, distribution, importing, or marketing of a firearm industry product, or any officer or agent to act on behalf of such a person or who acts in active concert or participation with such a person.

(b) "Firearm industry product" means a product that meets any of the following conditions:

(i) The firearm industry product was sold, made, distributed, or marketed in this state;

(ii) The firearm industry product was intended to be sold, made, distributed, or marketed in this state; or

(iii) The firearm industry product was used or possessed in this state, and it was reasonably foreseeable that the product would be used or possessed in this state.

(c) "Firearm trafficker" means a person who acquires, transfers, or attempts to acquire or transfer a firearm for purposes of unlawful commerce including, but not limited to, a subsequent transfer to another individual who is prohibited from possessing the firearm industry product under state or federal law.

(d) "Person" means any natural person, firm, corporation, company, partnership, society, joint stock company, municipality or other political subdivision of the state, or any other entity or association.

(e) "Product" means:

(i) A firearm;

(ii) Ammunition;

(iii) A component part of a firearm or ammunition, including a completed frame or receiver or unfinished frame or receiver, as defined in RCW 9.41.010;

(iv) An accessory or device that is designed or adapted to be inserted into, affixed onto, or used in conjunction with a firearm, if the device is marketed or sold to the public and that is designed, intended, or able to be used to increase a firearm's rate of fire, concealability, magazine capacity, or destructive capacity, or to increase the firearm's stability and handling when the firearm is repeatedly fired;

(v) A machine or device that is marketed or sold to the public that is designed, intended, or able to be used to manufacture or produce a firearm or any other product listed in this subsection (1) (e).

(f) "Reasonable controls" means reasonable procedures, safeguards, and business practices, including but not limited to screening, security, and inventory practices, that are designed and implemented to do all of the following:

(i) Prevent the sale or distribution of a firearm industry product to a straw purchaser, a firearm trafficker, a person prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law, or a person who the firearm industry member has reasonable cause to believe is at substantial risk of using a firearm industry product to harm themselves or unlawfully harm another, or of unlawfully possessing or using a firearm industry product;

(ii) Prevent the loss of a firearm industry product or theft of a firearm industry product from a firearm industry member; and

(iii) Ensure that the firearm industry member complies with all provisions of state and federal law and does not otherwise promote the unlawful sale, manufacture, distribution, importing, possession, marketing, or use of a firearm industry product.

(g) "Straw purchaser" means a person who wrongfully purchases or obtains a firearm industry product on behalf of a third party. "Straw purchaser" does not include one who makes a bona fide gift to a person who is not prohibited by law from possessing a firearm industry product. For the purposes of this subsection (1)(g), a gift is not a "bona fide gift" if the third party has offered or given the purchaser or transferee a service or thing of value in connection with the transaction.

(2) This section applies to a firearm industry member engaged in the manufacture, distribution, importation, marketing, or wholesale or retail sale of a firearm industry product.

(3) A firearm industry member shall not knowingly create, maintain, or contribute to a public nuisance in this state through the sale, manufacturing, distribution, importing, or marketing of a firearm industry product.

(4) A firearm industry member shall establish, implement, and enforce reasonable controls regarding its manufacture, sale, distribution, importing, use, and marketing of firearm industry products.

(5) A firearm industry member shall take reasonable precautions to ensure the firearm industry member does not sell or distribute a firearm industry product to a downstream distributor or retailer of firearm industry products that fails to establish and implement reasonable controls.

(6) A firearm industry member shall not manufacture, distribute, import, market, offer for wholesale, or offer for retail sale a firearm industry product that is:

(a) Designed, sold, or marketed in a manner that foreseeably promotes conversion of legal firearm industry products into illegal firearm industry products; or

(b) Designed, sold, or marketed in a manner that is targeted at minors or individuals who are legally prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms.

(7) A violation of this section is a public nuisance.

(8) The legislature finds that the acts or practices covered by this section are matters vitally affecting the public interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. A violation of this section is not reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of business and is an unfair or deceptive act in trade or commerce and an unfair method of competition for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW.

(9) A firearm industry member's conduct in violation of any provision of this section constitutes a proximate cause of the public nuisance if the harm is a reasonably foreseeable effect of the conduct, notwithstanding any intervening actions, including but not limited to criminal actions by third parties. This subsection is not intended to establish a causation requirement for a claim brought by the attorney general pursuant to the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW.

(10) Whenever it appears to the attorney general that a firearm industry member has engaged in or is engaging in conduct in violation of this section, the attorney general may commence an action to seek and obtain any remedies available for violations of this chapter, and

may also seek and obtain punitive damages up to an amount not to exceed three times the actual damages sustained by the state, reasonable attorneys' fees, and costs of the action.

(11) Whenever the attorney general believes that any person (a) may be in possession, custody, or control of any information which he or she believes to be relevant to the subject matter of an investigation of a possible violation of this section, or (b) may have knowledge of any information which the attorney general believes relevant to the subject matter of such an investigation, the attorney general may, prior to the institution of a civil proceeding thereon, execute in writing and cause to be served upon such a person, a civil investigative demand requiring such person to produce such documentary material and permit inspection and copying, to answer in writing written interrogatories, to give oral testimony, or any combination of such demands pertaining to such documentary material or information, subject to the provisions of RCW 19.86.110 (2) through (9). Any person or entity that receives a civil investigative demand issued pursuant to RCW 19.86.110 and that has an objection to answering in whole or in part may avail themselves of the procedural protections afforded in RCW 19.86.110(8). Further, the attorney general shall not share with a law enforcement agency conducting a criminal investigation any materials or information obtained via a response to a civil investigative demand issued pursuant to RCW 19.86.110 unless such information or materials are required to be disclosed pursuant to issuance of a search warrant.

(12) The attorney general's authority to investigate a possible violation of this section and commence a legal action in response to a violation of this section shall not be construed or implied to deny, abrogate, limit, or impair any person's right to bring a private right of action in response to a violation of this section pursuant to (a) RCW 7.48.200 and 7.48.210, to seek damages, abatement, or any other remedy available for a public nuisance, or (b) chapter 19.86 RCW, to seek damages, equitable relief, or any other remedy available under the consumer protection act.

(13) To prevail in an action under this section, the party seeking relief is not required to demonstrate that the firearm industry member acted with the purpose to engage in a public nuisance or otherwise cause harm to the public.

(14) Nothing in this section shall be construed or implied to deny, abrogate, limit, or impair in any way any of the following:

(a) The right of the attorney general to pursue a legal action under any other law, including chapter 19.86 RCW; or

(b) An obligation or requirement placed on a firearm industry member by any other law.

(15) Nothing in this section shall be construed or implied to deny, abrogate, limit, or impair any statutory or common law right, remedy, or prohibition otherwise available to any party, including the attorney general. [2023 c 163 s 2.]

**Findings—Intent—2023 c 163:** "(1) The legislature finds that the irresponsible, dangerous, and unlawful business practices by firearms industry members contributes to the illegal use of firearms and not only constitutes a public nuisance as declared in chapter 7.48 RCW, but that the effects of that nuisance exacerbate the public health crisis of gun violence in this state. The Washington state medical association, the Washington health alliance, and the voters of

Washington, most recently through approval of Initiative 1639 in 2016, have all noted that crisis.

(2) The legislature further finds that public nuisance was established in state law by Washington's territorial legislature in 1875 and has been interpreted by the state supreme court for more than 100 years to enjoin the operation of illegal businesses as nuisance by individuals suffering special injury. Since at least 1895, public nuisance has included manufacturing and storing gunpowder and other highly explosive substances.

(3) Firearm industry members profit from the sale, manufacture, distribution, importing, and marketing of lethal products that are frequently used to threaten, injure, and kill people in Washington, and which cause enormous harms to individuals' and communities' health, safety, and well-being, as well as economic opportunity and vitality. While manufacturers have incorporated features and technology resulting in more deadly and destructive firearms, and products designed to be used with and for firearms, some actors in the firearm industry have implemented irresponsible and dangerous sales, distribution, importing, and marketing practices, including contributing to the development of an illegal secondary market for these increasingly dangerous products. Such practices lead to grave public harms and also provide an unfair business advantage to irresponsible firearm industry members over more responsible competitors who take reasonable precautions to protect others' lives and well-being.

(4) The federal protection of lawful commerce in arms act (PLCAA) recognizes the ability of states to enact and enforce statutes regulating the sale and marketing of firearms and related products, and expressly provides that causes of action may proceed where there are violations of such statutes.

(5) The legislature intends to ensure a level playing field for responsible firearm industry members, to incentivize firearm industry members to establish and implement safe and responsible business practices, and to ensure that the attorney general and members of the public in Washington who are harmed by a firearm industry member's violation of law may bring legal action to seek appropriate justice and fair remedies for those harms in court." [2023 c 163 s 1.]

**Short title—2023 c 163:** "This act is known as the firearm industry responsibility and gun violence victims' access to justice act." [2023 c 163 s 3.]

**RCW 7.48.905 Severability—1979 c 122.** If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected. [1979 c 122 s 4.]