

RCW 42.52.410 Filing complaint—Whistleblower protection—Penalty for reprisal or retaliation. (1) A person may, personally or by his or her attorney, make, sign, and file with the appropriate ethics board a complaint on a form provided by the appropriate ethics board. The complaint shall state the name of the person alleged to have violated this chapter or rules adopted under it and the particulars thereof, and contain such other information as may be required by the appropriate ethics board.

(2) If it has reason to believe that any person has been engaged or is engaging in a violation of this chapter or rules adopted under it, an ethics board may issue a complaint.

(3) (a) A state employee who files a complaint with the appropriate ethics board shall be afforded the protection afforded to a whistleblower under RCW 42.40.050 and 49.60.210(2), subject to the limitations of RCW 42.40.035 and 42.40.910. An agency, manager, or supervisor may not retaliate against a state employee who, after making a reasonable attempt to ascertain the correctness of the information furnished, files a complaint with the appropriate ethics board.

(b) A state employee may not be denied the protections in chapter 42.40 RCW even if the ethics board denies an investigation of the complaint.

(4) If a determination is made that a reprisal or retaliatory action has been taken against the state employee, the retaliator may be subject to a civil penalty of up to five thousand dollars. [2013 c 190 § 2; 1994 c 154 § 211.]

Finding—2013 c 190: "The legislature finds that ensuring public trust in government is a priority. The public expects its elected officials and state employees to adhere to the highest ethical standards during their service, and this includes a commitment to full and independent investigations, with proper penalties, in cases where the ethics in public service act is violated." [2013 c 190 § 1.]