

**RCW 49.60.240 Complaint investigated—Procedure—Conference, conciliation—Agreement, findings—Rules.**

(1) (a) Except as provided for in (c) of this subsection, after the filing of any complaint, the chairperson of the commission shall refer it to the appropriate section of the commission's staff for prompt review and evaluation of the complaint. If the facts as stated in the complaint do not constitute an unfair practice under this chapter, a finding of no reasonable cause may be made without further investigation. If the facts as stated could constitute an unfair practice under this chapter, a full investigation and ascertainment of the facts shall be conducted.

(b) If the complainant has limitations related to language proficiency or cognitive or other disability, as part of the review and evaluation under (a) of this subsection, the commission's staff must contact the complainant directly and make appropriate inquiry of the complainant as to the facts of the complaint.

(c) After the filing of a complaint alleging an unfair practice in a real estate transaction pursuant to RCW 49.60.222 through 49.60.225, the chairperson of the commission shall refer it to the appropriate section of the commission's staff for prompt investigation and ascertainment of the facts alleged in the complaint.

(2) The investigation shall be limited to the alleged facts contained in the complaint. The results of the investigation shall be reduced to written findings of fact, and a finding shall be made that there is or that there is not reasonable cause for believing that an unfair practice has been or is being committed. A copy of the findings shall be provided to the complainant and to the person named in such complaint, hereinafter referred to as the respondent.

(3) If the finding is made that there is reasonable cause for believing that an unfair practice has been or is being committed, the commission's staff shall immediately endeavor to eliminate the unfair practice by conference, conciliation, and persuasion.

If an agreement is reached for the elimination of such unfair practice as a result of such conference, conciliation, and persuasion, the agreement shall be reduced to writing and signed by the respondent, and an order shall be entered by the commission setting forth the terms of said agreement. No order shall be entered by the commission at this stage of the proceedings except upon such written agreement, except that during the period beginning with the filing of complaints alleging an unfair practice with respect to real estate transactions pursuant to RCW 49.60.222 through 49.60.225, and ending with the filing of a finding of reasonable cause or a dismissal by the commission, the commission staff shall, to the extent feasible, engage in conciliation with respect to such complaint. Any conciliation agreement arising out of conciliation efforts by the commission shall be an agreement between the respondent and the complainant and shall be subject to the approval of the commission. Each conciliation agreement shall be made public unless the complainant and respondent otherwise agree and the commission determines that disclosure is not required to further the purposes of this chapter.

If no such agreement can be reached, a finding to that effect shall be made and reduced to writing, with a copy thereof provided to the complainant and the respondent.

(4) The commission may adopt rules, including procedural time requirements, for processing complaints alleging an unfair practice with respect to real estate transactions pursuant to RCW 49.60.222

through 49.60.225 and which may be consistent with the federal fair housing amendments act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 3601 et seq.), but which in no case shall exceed or be more restrictive than the requirements or standards of such act. [2010 c 85 § 1; 1995 c 259 § 5. Prior: 1993 c 510 § 22; 1993 c 69 § 12; 1985 c 185 § 22; 1981 c 259 § 1; 1957 c 37 § 17; 1955 c 270 § 16; prior: 1949 c 183 § 8, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 7614-27, part.]

**Effective date—1995 c 259:** See note following RCW 49.60.010.

**Severability—1993 c 510:** See note following RCW 49.60.010.

**Severability—1993 c 69:** See note following RCW 49.60.030.

*RCW 49.60.240 through 49.60.280 applicable to complaints concerning unlawful use of refueling services for individuals with disabilities: RCW 49.60.360.*