

WAC 480-54-070 Complaint. (1) Whenever the commission shall find, after hearing had upon complaint by a licensee or by a utility, that the rates, terms, or conditions demanded, exacted, charged, or collected by any owner in connection with attachments to its facilities are not fair, just, and reasonable, or by an owner that the rates or charges are insufficient to yield a reasonable compensation for the attachment, the commission will determine the fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient rates, terms, and conditions thereafter to be observed and in force and fix the same by final order entered within three hundred sixty days after the filing of the complaint. The commission will enter an initial order resolving a complaint filed in conformance with this rule within six months of the date the complaint is filed. The commission may extend this deadline for good cause. In determining and fixing the rates, terms, and conditions, the commission will consider the interest of the customers of the licensee or utility, as well as the interest of the customers of the owner. Except as provided in this rule, the commission's procedural rules, chapter 480-07 WAC, govern complaints filed pursuant to this rule.

(2) A utility or licensee may file a formal complaint pursuant to this rule if:

(a) An owner has denied access to its facilities;

(b) An owner fails to negotiate in good faith the rates, terms, and conditions of an attachment agreement; or

(c) The utility or licensee disputes the rates, terms, or conditions in an attachment agreement, the owner's performance under the agreement, or the owner's obligations under the agreement or other applicable law.

(3) An owner may file a formal complaint pursuant to this rule if:

(a) Another utility or licensee is unlawfully making or maintaining attachments to or in the owner's facilities;

(b) Another utility or licensee fails to negotiate in good faith the rates, terms, and conditions of an attachment agreement; or

(c) The owner disputes the rates, terms, or conditions in an attachment agreement, the occupant's performance under the agreement, or the occupant's obligations under the agreement or other applicable law.

(4) The execution of an attachment agreement does not preclude any challenge to the lawfulness or reasonableness of the rates, terms, or conditions in that agreement, provided that one of the following circumstances exists:

(a) The parties made good faith efforts to negotiate the disputed rates, terms, or conditions prior to executing the agreement but were unable to resolve the dispute despite those efforts, and such challenge is brought within six months from the agreement execution date; or

(b) The party challenging the rate, term, or condition was reasonably unaware of the other party's interpretation of that rate, term, or condition when the agreement was executed.

(5) A complaint authorized under this section must contain the following:

(a) A statement, including specific facts, demonstrating that the complainant engaged or reasonably attempted to engage in good faith, executive-level negotiations to resolve the disputed issues raised in the complaint and that the parties failed to resolve those issues despite those efforts; such negotiations must include the exchange of reasonably relevant information necessary to resolve the dispute in-

cluding, but not limited to, the information required to calculate rates in compliance with WAC 480-54-060;

(b) Identification of all actions, rates, terms, and conditions alleged to be unjust, unfair, unreasonable, insufficient, or otherwise contrary to applicable law;

(c) Sufficient data or other factual information and legal argument to support the allegations to the extent that the complainant possesses such factual information; and

(d) A copy of the attachment agreement, if any, between the parties.

(6) The commission will issue a notice of prehearing conference within five business days after the complaint is filed. The party complained against must answer the complaint within ten business days from the date the commission serves the complaint. The answer must respond to each allegation in the complaint with sufficient data or other factual information and legal argument to support that response to the extent the respondent possesses such factual information.

(7) A licensee or utility has the burden to prove its right to attach to or in the owner's facilities and that any attachment requirement, term, or condition an owner imposes or seeks to impose that the licensee or utility challenges violates any provision of chapter 80.54 RCW, this chapter, or other applicable law. An owner bears the burden to prove that the attachment rates it charges or proposes to charge are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient or that the owner's denial of access to its facilities is lawful and reasonable.

(8) If the commission determines that a rate, term, or condition complained of is not fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient, the commission may prescribe a rate, term, or condition that is fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient. The commission may require the inclusion of that rate, term, or condition in an attachment agreement and to the extent authorized by applicable law, may order a refund or payment of the difference between any rate the commission prescribes and the rate that was previously charged during the time the owner was charging the rate after the effective date of this rule.

(9) If the commission determines that an owner has unlawfully or unreasonably denied or delayed access to a facility, the commission may order the owner to provide access to that facility within a reasonable time frame and in accordance with fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient rates, terms, and conditions.

(10) Nothing in this section precludes an owner or occupant from bringing any other complaint that is otherwise authorized under applicable law.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040, 80.04.160, 80.54.020, and 80.54.060. WSR 15-21-090 (Docket U-140621, General Order R-582), § 480-54-070, filed 10/21/15, effective 1/1/16.]