

RCW 19.05.070 Labor and industries—Compliance with employer administrative duties. (1) Covered employers shall comply with employer administrative duties provided under this chapter.

(2) If a complainant files a complaint with the department alleging any administrative violation, the department shall investigate the complaint and:

(a) If the complaint is filed before January 1, 2030, offer technical assistance to the employer to bring them into compliance. Civil penalties may not be assessed before January 1, 2030;

(b) If the complaint is filed on or after January 1, 2030, educate the employer on how to come into compliance and, if necessary and as provided in this section, enforce penalties for willful violations.

(3) The department may not investigate any alleged violation of rights that occurred more than three years before the date that the complainant filed the complaint.

(4) (a) If the department finds an employer administrative violation, the department must first provide an educational letter outlining the violations and provide 90 days for the employer to remedy the violations. The employer may ask for an extension for good cause. The department may extend the period by providing written notice to the employee and the employer, specifying the duration of the extension. If the employer fails to remedy the violation within 90 days, the department may issue a citation and notice of assessment with a civil penalty.

(b) Except as provided otherwise in this chapter, the maximum penalty for a first-time willful violation is \$100 and \$250 for a second willful violation. For the purposes of this section, "willful" means a knowing and intentional action that is neither accidental nor the result of a bona fide dispute. For each subsequent willful violation, the employer is subject to a maximum penalty amount of \$500 for each violation.

(c) The department may not assess a civil penalty if the employer reasonably relied on: (i) A rule related to any of the requirements of this chapter; (ii) a written order, ruling, approval, opinion, advice, determination, or interpretation of the director of the department; or (iii) an interpretive or administrative policy issued by the department and filed pursuant to chapter 34.05 RCW. In accordance with the department's retention schedule obligations under chapter 40.14 RCW, the department shall maintain a complete and accurate record of all written orders, rulings, approvals, opinions, advice, determinations, and interpretations for purposes of determining whether an employer is immune from civil penalties under (b) of this subsection.

(5) The department may, at any time, waive or reduce a civil penalty assessed under this section if the director of the department determines that the employer has taken corrective action to resolve the violation.

(6) The department shall deposit all civil penalties paid under this section in the supplemental pension fund established under RCW 51.44.033. [2024 c 327 s 7.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2024 c 327: See note following RCW 19.05.020.