

WAC 220-440-230 Commercial crop or livestock damage claim—Dispute resolution. For claims where the owner has met all claim eligibility criteria and procedures, but ultimately rejects the written settlement offer (order) for crop or livestock loss and/or value assessment, the provisions of this section shall apply:

Informal resolution:

(1) If the owner rejects the property loss or value assessment and would like to discuss a negotiated settlement, he or she can request a meeting by notifying the department in writing within 10 days of receiving the settlement offer or claim denial (order).

(2) A department representative and the owner or designee(s) will meet and attempt to come to mutual resolution.

(3) A livestock appeals committee may be established with a minimum of six citizen members appointed by the director, and a representative from the department of fish and wildlife to review and recommend a settlement if requested by the claimant or the department. The citizen members must represent a variety of interests including at least: Three statewide organizations representing the interests of livestock owners; two representing wildlife advocates; and one at large.

(4) Monetary compensation or noncash compensation, mutually agreed upon by both the department and owner, shall be binding and constitute full and final payment for claim.

(5) If parties cannot agree upon damages, or the owner wishes to appeal the claim denial or the department's settlement offer (order), the owner may request an adjudicative proceeding consistent with chapter 34.05 RCW within 60 days of receiving a copy of the department's decision.

(6) The request must comply with the following:

(a) The request must be in writing, and the signed document may be mailed or submitted by fax or email;

(b) It must clearly identify the order being contested (or attach a copy of the order);

(c) It must state the grounds on which the order is being contested and include the specific facts of the order that are relevant to the appeal; and

(d) The request must identify the relief being requested from the proceeding (e.g., modifying specific provisions of the order).

(7) The proceeding may only result in the reversal or modification of an order when the preponderance of evidence shows:

(a) The order was not authorized by law or rule;

(b) A fact stated in the order is not supported by substantial evidence;

(c) The award amount offered is inconsistent with applicable procedures; or

(d) Material evidence was made available by the owner at the time of the damage assessment, but was not considered in the order.

(8) The burden of proof is on the appellant (owner) to show that he or she is eligible for a claim and that the damage assessment is reliable (see RCW 77.36.130 (3)).

(9) Findings of the hearings officer are subject to the annual funding appropriated by the legislature and to the limit found in RCW 77.36.130 and payment rules (WAC 220-440-150 and 220-440-180(9)) of the commission.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.020, 77.04.055, 77.12.020, 77.36.080, 77.36.100, and 77.36.130. WSR 24-22-007 (Order 24-09), s 220-440-230, filed 10/23/24, effective 11/23/24. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.020, 77.04.055, and 77.12.047. WSR 17-05-112 (Order 17-04), amended and recodified as § 220-440-230, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.055, 77.12.047, 77.12.240, chapter 77.36 RCW, and 2013 c 329. WSR 13-22-056 (Order 13-282), § 232-36-400, filed 11/4/13, effective 12/5/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.020, 77.04.055, and 77.36.120. WSR 13-05-003 (Order 13-19), § 232-36-400, filed 2/6/13, effective 3/9/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.020, and 77.04.055. WSR 10-13-182 (Order 10-156), § 232-36-400, filed 6/23/10, effective 7/24/10.]