

**RCW 38.52.180 Liability for property damage, bodily injury, death—Immunity—Assumption by state—Indemnification—Immunity from liability for covered volunteers.** (1) There shall be no liability on the part of anyone including any person, partnership, corporation, the state of Washington or any political subdivision thereof who owns or maintains any building or premises which have been designated by a local organization for emergency management as a shelter from destructive operations or attacks by enemies of the United States for any injuries sustained by any person while in or upon said building or premises, as a result of the condition of said building or premises or as a result of any act or omission, or in any way arising from the designation of such premises as a shelter, when such person has entered or gone upon or into said building or premises for the purpose of seeking refuge therein during destructive operations or attacks by enemies of the United States or during tests ordered by lawful authority, except for an act of willful negligence by such owner or occupant or his or her servants, agents, or employees.

(2) All legal liability for damage to property or injury or death to persons (except an emergency worker, regularly enrolled and acting as such), caused by acts done or attempted during or while traveling to or from an emergency or disaster, search and rescue, or training or exercise authorized by the department in preparation for an emergency or disaster or search and rescue, under the color of this chapter in a bona fide attempt to comply therewith, except as provided in subsections (3), (4), and (5) of this section regarding covered volunteer emergency workers, shall be the obligation of the state of Washington. Suits may be instituted and maintained against the state for the enforcement of such liability, or for the indemnification of persons appointed and regularly enrolled as emergency workers while actually engaged in emergency management duties, or as members of any agency of the state or political subdivision thereof, or federally recognized Indian tribe as defined in RCW 43.376.010, engaged in emergency management activity, or their dependents, for damage done to their private property, or for any judgment against them for acts done in good faith in compliance with this chapter: PROVIDED, That the foregoing shall not be construed to result in indemnification in any case of willful misconduct, gross negligence, or bad faith on the part of any agent of emergency management: PROVIDED, That should the United States or any agency thereof, in accordance with any federal statute, rule, or regulation, provide for the payment of damages to property and/or for death or injury as provided for in this section, then and in that event there shall be no liability or obligation whatsoever upon the part of the state of Washington for any such damage, death, or injury for which the United States government assumes liability.

(3) No act or omission by a covered volunteer emergency worker while engaged in a covered activity shall impose any liability for civil damages resulting from such an act or omission upon:

- (a) The covered volunteer emergency worker;
- (b) The supervisor or supervisors of the covered volunteer emergency worker;
- (c) Any facility or their officers or employees;
- (d) The employer of the covered volunteer emergency worker;
- (e) The owner of the property or vehicle where the act or omission may have occurred during the covered activity;
- (f) Any local organization that registered the covered volunteer emergency worker;

- (g) The state or any state or local governmental entity;
  - (h) Federally recognized Indian tribes as defined in RCW 43.376.010; and
  - (i) Any professional or trade association of covered volunteer emergency workers.
- (4) The immunity in subsection (3) of this section applies only when the covered volunteer emergency worker was engaged in a covered activity:
- (a) Within the scope of his or her assigned duties;
  - (b) Under the direction of a local emergency management organization or the department, or a local law enforcement agency for search and rescue; and
  - (c) The act or omission does not constitute gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.
- (5) For purposes of this section:
- (a) "Covered volunteer emergency worker" means an emergency worker as defined in RCW 38.52.010 who (i) is not receiving or expecting compensation as an emergency worker from the state or local government, or (ii) is not a state or local government employee unless on leave without pay status.
  - (b) "Covered activity" means:
    - (i) Providing assistance or transportation authorized by the department during an emergency or disaster or search and rescue as defined in RCW 38.52.010, whether such assistance or transportation is provided at the scene of the emergency or disaster or search and rescue, at an alternative care site, at a hospital, or while in route to or from such sites or between sites; or
    - (ii) Participating in training or exercise authorized by the department in preparation for an emergency or disaster or search and rescue.
  - (6) Any requirement for a license to practice any professional, mechanical, or other skill shall not apply to any authorized emergency worker who shall, in the course of performing his or her duties as such, practice such professional, mechanical, or other skill during an emergency described in this chapter.
  - (7) The provisions of this section shall not affect the right of any person to receive benefits to which he or she would otherwise be entitled under this chapter, or under the workers' compensation law, or under any pension or retirement law, nor the right of any such person to receive any benefits or compensation under any act of congress.
  - (8) Any act or omission by a covered volunteer emergency worker while engaged in a covered activity using an off-road vehicle, nonhighway vehicle, or wheeled all-terrain vehicle does not impose any liability for civil damages resulting from such an act or omission upon the covered volunteer emergency worker or the worker's sponsoring organization. [2024 c 205 s 2; 2017 c 36 s 1; 2016 c 84 s 1; 2011 c 336 s 791; 2007 c 292 s 2; 1987 c 185 s 7; 1984 c 38 s 17; 1974 ex.s. c 171 s 20; 1971 ex.s. c 8 s 2; 1953 c 145 s 1; 1951 c 178 s 11.]

**Intent—Severability—1987 c 185:** See notes following RCW 51.12.130.