

RCW 79.100.030 Authority of authorized public entity—Owner retains primary responsibility—Limitation on civil liability. (1) An authorized public entity has the authority, subject to the processes and limitations of this chapter, to store, strip, use, auction, sell, salvage, scrap, or dispose of an abandoned or derelict vessel found on or above aquatic lands within the jurisdiction of the authorized public entity. A vessel disposal must be done in an environmentally sound manner and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, including the state solid waste disposal provisions provided for in chapter 70A.205 RCW. Scuttling or sinking of a vessel is only permissible after obtaining the express permission of the owner or owners of the aquatic lands below where the scuttling or sinking would occur, and obtaining all necessary state and federal permits or licenses.

(2) The primary responsibility to remove a derelict or abandoned vessel belongs to the owner, operator, or lessee of the moorage facility or the aquatic lands where the vessel is located. If the authorized public entity with the primary responsibility is unwilling or unable to exercise the authority granted by this section, it may request the department to assume the authorized public entity's authority for a particular vessel. The department may at its discretion assume the authorized public entity's authority for a particular vessel after being requested to do so. For vessels not at a moorage facility, an authorized public entity with jurisdiction over the aquatic lands where the vessel is located may, at its discretion, request to assume primary responsibility for that particular vessel from the owner of the aquatic lands where the vessel is located.

(3) The authority granted by this chapter is permissive, and no authorized public entity has a duty to exercise the authority. No liability attaches to an authorized public entity that chooses not to exercise this authority. An authorized public entity, in the good faith performance of the actions authorized under this chapter, is not liable for civil damages resulting from any act or omission in the performance of the actions other than acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. Any person whose assistance has been requested by an authorized public entity, who has entered into a written agreement pursuant to RCW 79.100.070, and who, in good faith, renders assistance or advice with respect to activities conducted by an authorized public entity pursuant to this chapter, is not liable for civil damages resulting from any act or omission in the rendering of the assistance or advice, other than acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. [2021 c 65 § 88; 2011 c 247 § 4; 2002 c 286 § 4.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.