

**Chapter 46.72 RCW**  
**TRANSPORTATION OF PASSENGERS IN FOR HIRE VEHICLES**

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*Age of drivers of for hire vehicles: RCW 46.20.045.*

*Taxicab companies, local regulation: Chapter 81.72 RCW.*

**RCW 46.72.001 Finding and intent.** The legislature finds and declares that privately operated for hire transportation service is a vital part of the transportation system within the state. Consequently, the safety, reliability, and stability of privately operated for hire transportation services are matters of statewide importance. The regulation of privately operated for hire transportation services is thus an essential governmental function. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to permit political subdivisions of the state to regulate for hire transportation services without liability under federal antitrust laws. [1996 c 87 s 17.]

**RCW 46.72.010 Definitions.** When used in this chapter:

(1) The term "for hire vehicle" includes all vehicles used for the transportation of passengers for compensation, except auto stages, school buses operating exclusively under a contract to a school district, ride-sharing vehicles under chapter 46.74 RCW, limousine carriers licensed under chapter 46.72A RCW, vehicles used by nonprofit transportation providers for persons who are aging or persons with a disability and their attendants under chapter 81.66 RCW, vehicles used by auto transportation companies licensed under chapter 81.68 RCW, vehicles used to provide courtesy transportation at no charge to and from parking lots, hotels, and rental offices, and vehicles used by charter party carriers of passengers and excursion service carriers licensed under chapter 81.70 RCW;

(2) The term "for hire operator" means and includes any person, concern, or entity engaged in the transportation of passengers for compensation in for hire vehicles. [2020 c 274 s 28; 1996 c 87 s 18; 1991 c 99 s 1; 1979 c 111 s 14; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.010. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 1; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-1. Formerly RCW 81.72.010.]

**Severability—1979 c 111:** See note following RCW 46.74.010.

**RCW 46.72.020 Permit required—Form of application.** No for hire operator shall cause operation of a for hire vehicle upon any highway of this state without first obtaining a permit from the director of licensing, except for those for hire operators regulated by cities or counties in accordance with chapter 81.72 RCW. Application for a permit shall be made on forms provided by the director and shall include (1) the name and address of the owner or owners, and if a corporation, the names and addresses of the principal officers thereof; (2) city, town or locality in which any vehicle will be operated; (3) name and motor number of any vehicle to be operated; (4) the endorsement of a city official authorizing an operator under a law or ordinance requiring a license; and (5) such other information as the director may require. [1992 c 114 s 1; 1979 c 158 s 188; 1967 c 32 s 80; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.020. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 2; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-2; prior: 1915 c 57 s 1; RRS s 6382. Formerly RCW 81.72.020.]

**RCW 46.72.030 Permit fee—Issuance—Display.** Application for a permit shall be forwarded to the director with a fee. Upon receipt of such application and fee, the director shall, if such application be in proper form, issue a permit authorizing the applicant to operate for hire vehicles upon the highways of this state until such owner ceases to do business as such, or until the permit is suspended or revoked. Such permit shall be displayed in a conspicuous place in the principal place of business of the owner. [1992 c 114 s 2; 1967 c 32 s 81; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.030. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 3; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-3; prior: 1933 c 73 s 1, part; 1915 c 57 s 2, part; RRS s 6383, part. Formerly RCW 81.72.030.]

**RCW 46.72.039 Personal vehicles under chapter 48.177 RCW.** RCW 46.72.040 and 46.72.050 do not apply to personal vehicles under chapter 48.177 RCW. [2015 c 236 s 3.]

**RCW 46.72.040 Surety bond.** Before a permit is issued every for hire operator shall be required to deposit and thereafter keep on file with the director a surety bond running to the state of Washington covering each and every for hire vehicle as may be owned or leased by him or her and used in the conduct of his or her business as a for hire operator. Such bond shall be in the sum of one hundred thousand dollars for any recovery for death or personal injury by one person, and three hundred thousand dollars for all persons killed or receiving personal injury by reason of one act of negligence, and twenty-five thousand dollars for damage to property of any person other than the assured, with a good and sufficient surety company licensed to do business in this state as surety and to be approved by the director,

conditioned for the faithful compliance by the principal of said bond with the provisions of this chapter, and to pay all damages which may be sustained by any person injured by reason of any careless negligence or unlawful act on the part of said principal, his or her agents or employees in the conduct of said business or in the operation of any motor propelled vehicle used in transporting passengers for compensation on any public highway of this state. [2010 c 8 s 9089; 1973 c 15 s 1; 1967 c 32 s 82; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.040. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 4; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-4; prior: 1933 c 73 s 1, part; 1915 c 57 s 2, part; RRS s 6383, part. Formerly RCW 81.72.040.]

**RCW 46.72.050 Liability coverage—Right of action saved.** In lieu of the surety bond as provided in this chapter, there may be deposited and kept on file and in force with the director a public liability insurance policy covering each and every motor vehicle operated or intended to be so operated, executed by an insurance company licensed and authorized to write such insurance policies in the state of Washington, assuring the applicant for a permit against property damage and personal liability to the public, with the premiums paid and payment noted thereon. Said policy of insurance shall provide a minimum coverage equal and identical to the coverage required by the aforesaid surety bond, specified under the provisions of RCW 46.72.040. No provisions of this chapter shall be construed to limit the right of any injured person to any private right of action against a for hire operator as herein defined. [1973 c 15 s 2; 1967 c 32 s 83; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.050. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 5; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-5. Formerly RCW 81.72.050.]

**RCW 46.72.060 Right of action—Limitation of recovery.** Every person having a cause of action for damages against any person, firm, or corporation receiving a permit under the provisions of this chapter, for injury, damages, or wrongful death caused by any careless, negligent, or unlawful act of any such person, firm, or corporation or his or her or its agents or employees in conducting or carrying on said business or in operating any motor propelled vehicle for the carrying and transporting of passengers on any public street, road, or highway shall have a cause of action against the principal and surety upon the bond or the insurance company and the insured for all damages sustained, and in any such action the full amount of damages sustained may be recovered against the principal, but the recovery against the surety shall be limited to the amount of the bond. [2010 c 161 s 1137; 2010 c 8 s 9090, 1961 c 12 s 46.72.060. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 6; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-6; prior: 1929 c 27 s 1; 1927 c 161 s 1; 1915 c 57 s 3; RRS s 6384. Formerly RCW 81.72.060.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2010 c 8 s 9090 and by 2010 c 161 s 1137, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

**RCW 46.72.070 Certificate—Fee.** The director shall approve and file all bonds and policies of insurance. The director shall, upon receipt of fees and after approving the bond or policy, furnish the owner with an appropriate certificate which must be carried in a conspicuous place in the vehicle at all times during for hire operation. A for hire operator shall secure a certificate for each for hire vehicle operated and pay therefor a fee for each vehicle so registered. Such permit or certificate shall expire on June 30th of each year, and may be annually renewed upon payment of a fee. [1992 c 114 s 3; 1967 c 32 s 84; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.070. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 7; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-7. Formerly RCW 81.72.070.]

**RCW 46.72.080 Substitution of security—New certificate.** In the event the owner substitutes a policy or bond after a for hire certificate has been issued, a new certificate shall be issued to the owner. The owner shall submit the substituted bond or policy to the director for approval, together with a fee. If the director approves the substituted policy or bond, a new certificate shall be issued. In the event any certificate has been lost, destroyed or stolen, a duplicate thereof may be obtained by filing an affidavit of loss and paying a fee. [1992 c 114 s 4; 1967 c 32 s 85; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.080. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 8; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-8. Formerly RCW 81.72.080.]

**RCW 46.72.100 Unprofessional conduct—Bond/insurance policy—Penalty.** (1) In addition to the unprofessional conduct specified in RCW 18.235.130, the director may take disciplinary action if he or she has good reason to believe that one of the following is true of the operator or the applicant for a permit or certificate: (a) He or she is guilty of committing two or more offenses for which mandatory revocation of driver's license is provided by law; (b) he or she has been convicted of vehicular homicide or vehicular assault; (c) he or she is intemperate or addicted to the use of narcotics.

(2) Any for hire operator who operates a for hire vehicle without first having filed a bond or insurance policy and having received a for hire permit and a for hire certificate as required by this chapter is guilty of a gross misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punished by imprisonment in jail for a period not exceeding ninety days or a fine of not exceeding five hundred dollars, or both fine and imprisonment. [2003 c 53 s 250; 2002 c 86 s 293; 1983 c 164 s 8; 1967 c 32 s 86; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.100. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 9; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-9; prior: 1915 c 57 s 4; RRS s 6385. Formerly RCW 81.72.100.]

**Rules of court:** *Bail in criminal traffic offense cases—Mandatory appearance—CrRLJ 3.2.*

**Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53:** See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

**Effective dates—2002 c 86:** See note following RCW 18.08.340.

**Part headings not law—Severability—2002 c 86:** See RCW 18.235.902 and 18.235.903.

**RCW 46.72.110 Fees to highway safety fund.** All fees received by the director under the provisions of this chapter must be transmitted by him or her, together with a proper identifying report, to the state treasurer to be deposited by the state treasurer in the highway safety fund. Appropriations from the highway safety fund will support expenses incurred in carrying out the licensing and regulatory activities of this chapter. [2011 c 298 s 27; 2010 c 8 s 9091; 1967 c 32 s 87; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.110. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 10; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-10. Formerly RCW 81.72.110.]

**Purpose—Intent—Agency transfer—Contracting—Effective date—2011 c 298:** See notes following RCW 19.02.020.

**RCW 46.72.120 Rules.** The director is empowered to make and enforce such rules and regulations, including the setting of fees, as may be consistent with and necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter. [1992 c 114 s 5; 1967 c 32 s 88; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.120. Prior: 1947 c 253 s 11; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6386-11. Formerly RCW 81.72.120.]

**RCW 46.72.130 Nonresident taxicabs—Permit—Fee—Compliance.** No operator of a taxicab licensed or possessing a permit in another state to transport passengers for hire, and principally engaged as a for hire operator in another state, shall cause the operation of a taxicab upon any highway of this state without first obtaining an annual permit from the director upon an application accompanied with an annual fee for each taxicab. The issuance of a permit shall be further conditioned upon compliance with this chapter. [1992 c 114 s 6; 1967 c 32 s 89; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.130. Prior: 1953 c 12 s 1; 1951 c 219 s 1. Formerly RCW 81.72.130.]

**RCW 46.72.140 Nonresident taxicabs—Permit required for entry.** All law enforcement officers shall refuse every taxicab entry into this state which does not have a certificate from the director on the vehicle. [1967 c 32 s 90; 1961 c 12 s 46.72.140. Prior: 1951 c 219 s 2. Formerly RCW 81.72.140.]

**RCW 46.72.150 Nonresident taxicabs—Reciprocity.** RCW 46.72.130 and 46.72.140 shall be inoperative to operators of taxicabs residing and licensed in any state which allows Washington operators of taxicabs to use such state's highways free from such regulations. [1961 c 12 s 46.72.150. Prior: 1951 c 219 s 3. Formerly RCW 81.72.150.]

**RCW 46.72.160 Local regulation.** Cities, counties, and port districts may license, control, and regulate all for hire vehicles operating within their respective jurisdictions. The power to regulate includes:

(1) Regulating entry into the business of providing for hire vehicle transportation services;

(2) Requiring a license to be purchased as a condition of operating a for hire vehicle and the right to revoke, cancel, or refuse to reissue a license for failure to comply with regulatory requirements;

(3) Controlling the rates charged for providing for hire vehicle transportation service and the manner in which rates are calculated and collected;

(4) Regulating the routes and operations of for hire vehicles, including restricting access to airports;

(5) Establishing safety and equipment requirements; and

(6) Any other requirements adopted to ensure safe and reliable for hire vehicle transportation service. [1996 c 87 s 19.]

**RCW 46.72.170 Joint regulation.** The department, a city, county, or port district may enter into cooperative agreements with any other city, town, county, or port district for the joint regulation of for hire vehicles. Cooperative agreements may provide for, but are not limited to, the granting, revocation, and suspension of joint for hire vehicle licenses. [1996 c 87 s 20.]

**RCW 46.72.180 Uniform regulation of business and professions act.** The uniform regulation of business and professions act, chapter 18.235 RCW, governs unlicensed practice, the issuance and denial of licenses, and the discipline of licensees under this chapter. [2002 c 86 s 294.]

**Effective dates—2002 c 86:** See note following RCW 18.08.340.

**Part headings not law—Severability—2002 c 86:** See RCW 18.235.902 and 18.235.903.