

RCW 35.92.020 Authority to acquire and operate sewerage and solid waste handling systems, plants, sites, or facilities—Classification of services and facilities for rates—Assistance for low-income persons.

(1) A city or town may construct, condemn and purchase, purchase, acquire, add to, alter, maintain, and operate systems, plants, sites, or other facilities of sewerage as defined in RCW 35.67.010, or solid waste handling as defined by RCW 70A.205.015. A city or town shall have full authority to manage, regulate, operate, control, and, except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, to fix the price of service and facilities of those systems, plants, sites, or other facilities within and without the limits of the city or town.

(2) Subject to subsection (3) of this section, the rates charged shall be uniform for the same class of customers or service and facilities. In classifying customers served or service and facilities furnished by a system or systems of sewerage, the legislative authority of the city or town may in its discretion consider any or all of the following factors:

(a) The difference in cost of service and facilities to customers;

(b) The location of customers within and without the city or town;

(c) The difference in cost of maintenance, operation, repair, and replacement of the parts of the system;

(d) The different character of the service and facilities furnished to customers;

(e) The quantity and quality of the sewage delivered and the time of its delivery;

(f) Capital contributions made to the systems, plants, sites, or other facilities, including but not limited to, assessments;

(g) The public benefit nonprofit corporation status, as defined in RCW 24.03A.245, of the land user; and

(h) Any other factors that present a reasonable difference as a ground for distinction.

(3) The rate a city or town may charge under this section for storm or surface water sewer systems or the portion of the rate allocable to the storm or surface water sewer system of combined sanitary sewage and storm or surface water sewer systems shall be reduced by a minimum of ten percent for any new or remodeled commercial building that utilizes a permissive rainwater harvesting system. Rainwater harvesting systems shall be properly sized to utilize the available roof surface of the building. The jurisdiction shall consider rate reductions in excess of ten percent dependent upon the amount of rainwater harvested.

(4) Rates or charges for on-site inspection and maintenance services may not be imposed under this chapter on the development, construction, or reconstruction of property.

(5) A city or town may provide assistance to aid low-income persons in connection with services provided under this chapter.

(6) Under this chapter, after July 1, 1998, any requirements for pumping the septic tank of an on-site sewage system should be based, among other things, on actual measurement of accumulation of sludge and scum by a trained inspector, trained owner's agent, or trained owner. Training must occur in a program approved by the state board of health or by a local health officer.

(7) Before adopting on-site inspection and maintenance utility services, or incorporating residences into an on-site inspection and maintenance or sewer utility under this chapter, notification must be provided, prior to the applicable public hearing, to all residences within the proposed service area that have on-site systems permitted by the local health officer. The notice must clearly state that the residence is within the proposed service area and must provide information on estimated rates or charges that may be imposed for the service.

(8) A city or town shall not provide on-site sewage system inspection, pumping services, or other maintenance or repair services under this section using city or town employees unless the on-site system is connected by a publicly owned collection system to the city or town's sewerage system, and the on-site system represents the first step in the sewage disposal process. Nothing in this section shall affect the authority of state or local health officers to carry out their responsibilities under any other applicable law. [2021 c 176 § 5213; 2020 c 20 § 1014; 2003 c 394 § 2; 1997 c 447 § 9; 1995 c 124 § 5; 1989 c 399 § 6; 1985 c 445 § 5; 1965 c 7 § 35.92.020. Prior: 1959 c 90 § 7; 1957 c 288 § 3; 1957 c 209 § 3; prior: 1947 c 214 § 1, part; 1933 c 163 § 1, part; 1931 c 53 § 1, part; 1923 c 173 § 1, part; 1913 c 45 § 1, part; 1909 c 150 § 1, part; 1899 c 128 § 1, part; 1897 c 112 § 1, part; 1893 c 8 § 1, part; 1890 p 520 § 1, part; Rem. Supp. 1947 § 9488, part. Formerly RCW 80.40.020.]

Effective date—2021 c 176: See note following RCW 24.03A.005.

Finding—Purpose—1997 c 447: See note following RCW 70.05.074.