

RCW 48.31.115 Immunity from suit and liability—Persons entitled to protection. (1) The persons entitled to protection under this section are:

(a) The commissioner and any other receiver or administrative supervisor responsible for conducting a delinquency proceeding under this chapter, including present and former commissioners, administrative supervisors, and receivers; and

(b) The commissioner's employees, meaning all present and former special deputies and assistant special deputies and special receivers and special administrative supervisors appointed by the commissioner and all persons whom the commissioner, special deputies, or assistant special deputies have employed to assist in a delinquency proceeding under this chapter. Attorneys, accountants, auditors, and other professional persons or firms who are retained as independent contractors, and their employees, are not considered employees of the commissioner for purposes of this section.

(2) The commissioner and the commissioner's employees are immune from suit and liability, both personally and in their official capacities, for a claim for damage to or loss of property or personal injury or other civil liability caused by or resulting from an alleged act or omission of the commissioner or an employee arising out of or by reason of his or her duties or employment. However, nothing in this subsection may be construed to hold the commissioner or an employee immune from suit or liability for any damage, loss, injury, or liability caused by the intentional or willful and wanton misconduct of the commissioner or an employee.

(3) If a legal action is commenced against the commissioner or an employee, whether against him or her personally or in his or her official capacity, alleging property damage, property loss, personal injury, or other civil liability caused by or resulting from an alleged act or omission of the commissioner or an employee arising out of or by reason of his or her duties or employment, the commissioner and any employee shall be indemnified from the assets of the insurer for all expenses, attorneys' fees, judgments, settlements, decrees, or amounts due and owing or paid in satisfaction of or incurred in the defense of the legal action unless it is determined upon a final adjudication on the merits that the alleged act or omission of the commissioner or employee giving rise to the claim did not arise out of or by reason of his or her duties or employment, or was caused by intentional or willful and wanton misconduct.

(a) Attorneys' fees and related expenses incurred in defending a legal action for which immunity or indemnity is available under this section shall be paid from the assets of the insurer, as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of such action upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the commissioner or employee to repay the attorneys' fees and expenses if it is ultimately determined upon a final adjudication on the merits and that the commissioner or employee is not entitled to immunity or indemnity under this section.

(b) Any indemnification under this section is an administrative expense of the insurer.

(c) In the event of an actual or threatened litigation against the commissioner or an employee for which immunity or indemnity may be available under this section, a reasonable amount of funds that in the judgment of the commissioner may be needed to provide immunity or indemnity shall be segregated and reserved from the assets of the

insurer as security for the payment of indemnity until all applicable statutes of limitation have run or all actual or threatened actions against the commissioner or an employee have been completely and finally resolved, and all obligations of the insurer and the commissioner under this section have been satisfied.

(d) In lieu of segregation and reserving of funds, the commissioner may obtain a surety bond or make other arrangements that will enable the commissioner to secure fully the payment of all obligations under this section.

(4) If a legal action against an employee for which indemnity may be available under this section is settled before final adjudication on the merits, the insurer shall pay the settlement amount on behalf of the employee, or indemnify the employee for the settlement amount, unless the commissioner determines:

(a) That the claim did not arise out of or by reason of the employee's duties or employment; or

(b) That the claim was caused by the intentional or willful and wanton misconduct of the employee.

(5) In a legal action in which the commissioner is a defendant, that portion of a settlement relating to the alleged act or omission of the commissioner is subject to the approval of the court before which the delinquency proceeding is pending. The court may not approve that portion of the settlement if it determines:

(a) That the claim did not arise out of or by reason of the commissioner's duties or employment; or

(b) That the claim was caused by the intentional or willful and wanton misconduct of the commissioner.

(6) Nothing in this section removes or limits an immunity, indemnity, benefit of law, right, or defense otherwise available to the commissioner, an employee, or any other person, not an employee under subsection (1)(b) of this section, who is employed by or in the office of the commissioner or otherwise employed by the state. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 25 s 19; 2005 c 432 s 2; 1993 c 462 s 60.]

Severability—Implementation—1993 c 462: See RCW 48.31B.901 and 48.31B.902.