

**Chapter 49.56 RCW**  
**WAGES—PRIORITIES—PREFERENCES**

**Sections**

- 49.56.010 Priority of wages in insolvency.
- 49.56.020 Preference on death of employer.
- 49.56.030 Priority in executions, attachments, etc.
- 49.56.040 Labor claims paramount to claims by state agencies.

*Chattel liens: Chapter 60.08 RCW.*

*Mechanics' and materialmen's liens: Chapter 60.04 RCW.*

**RCW 49.56.010 Priority of wages in insolvency.** In all assignments of property made by any person to trustees or assignees on account of the inability of the person at the time of the assignment to pay his or her debts, or in proceedings in insolvency, the wages of the miners, mechanics, salespersons, servants, clerks, or laborers employed by such persons to the amount of one hundred dollars, each, and for services rendered within sixty days previously, are preferred claims, and must be paid by such trustees or assignees before any other creditor or creditors of the assignor. [2010 c 8 § 12058; Code 1881 § 1972; 1877 p 223 § 34; RRS § 1204.]

**Construction—1877 p 224:** "In construing the provisions of this act, words used in the masculine gender include the feminine and neuter, the singular number includes the plural and the plural the singular; the word person includes a corporation as well as a natural person, and the word writing includes printing." [1877 p 224 § 37.]

**Construction—1877 p 224:** "This act establishes the law of this territory respecting the subject to which it relates and its provisions and all proceedings under it are to be liberally construed with a view to effect its object." [1877 p 224 § 39.]

**Repeal and saving—1877 p 224:** "All acts relating to any kind or class of liens provided for in this act are hereby repealed, but no action or proceeding commenced before this act takes effect, and no right accrued is affected by such repeal but the proceedings therein must conform to the requirements of this act as far as applicable." [1877 p 224 § 38.]

**Effective date—1877 p 224:** "This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and the approval thereof by the governor." (Approved, November 8th, 1877.) [1877 p 224 § 40.]

**RCW 49.56.020 Preference on death of employer.** In case of the death of any employer, the wages of each miner, mechanic, salesperson, clerk, servant, and laborer for services rendered within sixty days next preceding the death of the employer, not exceeding one hundred dollars, rank in priority next after the funeral expenses, expenses of the last sickness, the charges and expenses of administering upon the estate and the allowance to the widow and infant children, and must be

paid before other claims against the estate of the deceased person.  
[2010 c 8 § 12059; Code 1881 § 1973; 1877 p 223 § 35; RRS § 1205.]

**RCW 49.56.030 Priority in executions, attachments, etc.** In cases of executions, attachments, and writs of similar nature issued against any person, except for claims for labor done, any miners, mechanics, salespersons, servants, clerks, and laborers who have claims against the defendant for labor done, may give notice of their claims and the amount thereof, sworn to by the person making the claim to the creditor and the officer executing either of such writs at any time before the actual sale of property levied on, and unless such claim is disputed by the debtor or a creditor, such officer must pay to such person out of the proceeds of the sale, the amount each is entitled to receive for services rendered within sixty days next preceding the levy of the writ, not exceeding one hundred dollars. If any or all the claims so presented and claiming preference under this chapter, are disputed by either the debtor or a creditor, the person presenting the same must commence an action within ten days from the recovery thereof, and must prosecute his or her action with due diligence, or be forever barred from any claim of priority of payment thereof; and the officer shall retain possession of so much of the proceeds of the sale as may be necessary to satisfy such claim, until the determination of such action; and in case judgment be had for the claim or any part thereof, carrying costs, the costs taxable therein shall likewise be a preferred claim with the same rank as the original claim. [2010 c 8 § 12060; Code 1881 § 1974; 1877 p 223 § 36; RRS § 1206.]

**RCW 49.56.040 Labor claims paramount to claims by state agencies.** In distraint or insolvency proceedings affecting the assets of an employer, claims for labor, salaries or wages not to exceed six hundred dollars to each claimant which have been earned within three months before the date of the distraint or commencement of the proceeding shall be paramount and superior to any claim preferred or presented by an agency of the state: PROVIDED, That this section shall not apply to any compensation payable to an employer or to an officer, director, or stockholder of a corporate employer. [1967 ex.s. c 86 § 1.]