

RCW 62A.3-530 Collection agencies—Checks dishonored by nonacceptance or nonpayment; liability for interest; rate; collection costs and attorneys' fees; satisfaction of claim. (1) If a check as defined in RCW 62A.3-104 is dishonored by nonacceptance or nonpayment and the check is assigned or written to a collection agency as defined in RCW 19.16.100, the collection agency may collect a reasonable handling fee for each instrument. If the collection agency or its agent provides a notice of dishonor in the form provided in RCW 62A.3-540 to the drawer and the check amount plus the reasonable handling fee are not paid within thirty-three days after providing the notice of dishonor, then, unless the instrument otherwise provides, the drawer of the instrument is liable for payment of interest at the rate of twelve percent per annum from the date of dishonor, and a cost of collection of forty dollars or the face amount of the check, whichever is less, payable to the collection agency. In addition, in the event of court action on the check and after notice and the expiration of the thirty-three days, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, and three times the face amount of the check or three hundred dollars, whichever is less, as part of the damages payable to the collection agency. This section does not apply to an instrument that is dishonored by reason of a justifiable stop payment order.

(2) Subsequent to the commencement of an action on the check under subsection (1) of this section but prior to the hearing, the defendant may tender to the plaintiff as satisfaction of the claim, an amount of money equal to the face amount of the check, a reasonable handling fee, accrued interest, collection costs equal to the face amount of the check not to exceed forty dollars, and the incurred court costs, service costs, and statutory attorneys' fees.

(3) Nothing in this section precludes the right to commence action in a court under chapter 12.40 RCW for small claims. [2005 c 277 § 3.]

Intent—2005 c 277: "The legislature has directed the financial literacy public-private partnership to complete certain tasks to support efforts to increase the level of financial literacy in the common schools. In order to promote a greater understanding by students of the consequences of a dishonored check, the legislature intends to extend by one year the date by which the financial literacy public-private partnership must identify strategies to increase the financial literacy of public school students in Washington." [2005 c 277 § 1.]