

Chapter 7.100 RCW
FORECLOSURE AND ABANDONMENT OF RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY—NUISANCE
ABATEMENT

Sections

- 7.100.010 Applicability of chapter.
- 7.100.020 Notice to mortgage servicer of nuisance.
- 7.100.030 Request by mortgage servicer for determination of abandonment and nuisance.
- 7.100.040 Abatement of nuisance by mortgage servicer.
- 7.100.050 Failure of mortgage servicer to abate nuisance.
- 7.100.060 Notice to grantee of trustee's deed or sheriff's deed of nuisance—Failure to abate.
- 7.100.070 Recovery of costs by county, city, or town—Assessment.
- 7.100.900 Chapter supplemental to other law.

RCW 7.100.010 Applicability of chapter. (1) This chapter applies only to residential real property consisting solely of a single-family residence, a residential condominium unit, or a residential cooperative unit.

(2) For purposes of this chapter:

(a) Property is "abandoned" when there are no signs of occupancy and at least three of the following indications of abandonment are visible from the exterior:

(i) The absence of furnishings and personal items consistent with residential habitation;

(ii) The gas, electric, or water utility services have been disconnected;

(iii) Statements by neighbors, passersby, delivery agents, or government employees that the property is vacant;

(iv) Multiple windows on the property are boarded up or closed off or are smashed through, broken, or unhinged, or multiple window panes are broken and unrepaired;

(v) Doors on the residence are substantially damaged, broken off, unhinged, or conspicuously open;

(vi) The property has been stripped of copper or other materials, or interior fixtures have been removed;

(vii) Law enforcement officials have received at least one report within the immediately preceding six months of trespassing or vandalism or other illegal activities by persons who enter unlawfully on the property;

(viii) The property has been declared unfit for occupancy and ordered to remain vacant and unoccupied pursuant to an order issued by a municipal or county authority or a court of competent jurisdiction;

(ix) Construction was initiated on the property and was discontinued before completion, leaving a building unsuitable for occupancy, and construction has not taken place for at least six months;

(x) Newspapers, circulars, flyers, or mail has accumulated on the property or the United States postal service has discontinued delivery to the property;

(xi) Rubbish, trash, debris, neglected vegetation, or natural overgrowth has accumulated on the property;

(xii) Hazardous, noxious, or unhealthy substances or materials have accumulated on the property;

(xiii) Other credible evidence exists indicating the intent to vacate and abandon the property.

(b) Property is in "mid-foreclosure" when, pursuant to chapter 61.24 RCW, a notice of default or notice of preforeclosure options has been issued or a notice of trustee's sale has been recorded in the office of the county auditor.

(c) Property is a "nuisance" when so determined by a county, city, or town pursuant to its authority under chapter 7.48 RCW or RCW 35.22.280, 35.23.440, 35.27.410, or 36.32.120. [2018 c 306 § 10.]

RCW 7.100.020 Notice to mortgage servicer of nuisance. (1) A county, city, or town may notify a mortgage servicer that a property has been determined to be abandoned, in mid-foreclosure, and a nuisance.

(2) A notice issued pursuant to this section must:

(a) Be accompanied by an affidavit or a declaration made under penalty of perjury by a county, city, or town official that a property is abandoned, in mid-foreclosure, and a nuisance, and the affidavit or declaration must outline at least three indicators of abandonment and be supported with time and date stamped photographs, a finding that the property is a nuisance, and a copy of the notice of default, notice of preforeclosure options, or notice of trustee's sale; and

(b) Be sent to the mortgage servicer by certified mail. [2018 c 306 § 11.]

RCW 7.100.030 Request by mortgage servicer for determination of abandonment and nuisance. (1) A mortgage servicer may contact a county, city, or town regarding a property it believes to be abandoned, and a nuisance and request that a county, city, or town official visit the property and make a determination as to whether the residential real property is abandoned and a nuisance. When making such a request, the mortgage servicer must furnish a copy of a notice of default, notice of preforeclosure options, or notice of trustee's sale applicable to the property.

(2) A county, city, or town shall respond to such a request within fifteen calendar days of receipt and notify the mortgage servicer:

(a) That a county, city, or town official has visited the property and determined that the property is not abandoned, or not a nuisance;

(b) That a county, city, or town official has visited the property and determined that the property is abandoned, in mid-foreclosure, and a nuisance. In this case, the notification shall be accompanied by an affidavit or a declaration made under penalty of perjury by a county, city, or town official that a property is abandoned, mid-foreclosure, and a nuisance, and the affidavit or declaration must outline at least three indicators of abandonment and be supported with time and date stamped photographs, a finding that the property is a nuisance, and a copy of the notice of default or notice of trustee's sale supplied by the mortgage servicer; or

(c) That the county, city, or town does not have adequate resources or is otherwise unable to make the requested determination. [2018 c 306 § 12.]

RCW 7.100.040 Abatement of nuisance by mortgage servicer. (1)

Upon receipt from a county, city, or town of an affidavit or declaration under penalty of perjury that a property is abandoned, in mid-foreclosure, and a nuisance, a mortgage servicer or its designee may enter the property for the purposes of abating the identified nuisance, preserving property, or preventing waste and may take steps to secure the property, including but not limited to:

(a) Installing missing locks on exterior doors. If any locks are changed the mortgage servicer must provide a lock box. Working locks may not be removed or replaced unless all doors are secured and there is no means of entry, and in such cases only one working lock may be removed and replaced;

(b) Replacing or boarding broken or missing windows;

(c) Winterizing, including draining pipes and disconnecting or turning on utilities;

(d) Eliminating building code or other code violations;

(e) Securing exterior pools and spas;

(f) Performing routine yard maintenance on the exterior of the residence; and

(g) Performing pest and insect control services.

(2) The mortgage servicer or its designee must make a record of entry by means of dated and time-stamped photographs showing the manner of entry and personal items visible within the residence upon entry.

(3) Neither the mortgage servicer nor its designee may remove personal items from the property unless the items are hazardous or perishable, and in case of such removal must inventory the items removed.

(4) Prior to each entry, a mortgage servicer or its designee must ensure that a notice is posted on the front door that includes the following:

(a) A statement that, pursuant to RCW 7.28.230, until foreclosure and sale is complete the property owner or occupant authorized by the owner has the right to possession;

(b) A statement that the property owner or occupant authorized by the owner has the right to request that any locks installed by the mortgage servicer or its designee be removed within twenty-four hours and replaced with new locks accessible by the property owner or occupant authorized by the owner only;

(c) A toll-free, twenty-four hour number that the property owner or occupant authorized by the owner may call in order to gain timely entry, which entry must be provided no later than the next business day; and

(d) The phone number of the statewide foreclosure hotline recommended by the housing finance commission and the statewide civil legal aid hotline, together with a statement that the property owner may have the right to participate in foreclosure mediation pursuant to RCW 61.24.163.

(5) Records of entry onto property pursuant to this section must be maintained by the mortgage servicer or its designee for at least four years from the date of entry.

(6) If, upon entry, the property is found to be occupied, the mortgage servicer or its designee must leave the property immediately, notify the county, city, or town, and thereafter neither the mortgage servicer nor its designee may enter the property regardless of whether the property constitutes a nuisance or complies with local code enforcement standards.

(7) In the event a mortgage servicer is contacted by the borrower and notified that the property is not abandoned, the mortgage servicer must so notify the county, city, or town and thereafter neither the mortgage servicer nor its designee may enter the property regardless of whether the property constitutes a nuisance or complies with local code enforcement standards.

(8) A county, city, or town is not liable for any damages caused by any act or omission of the mortgage servicer or its designee. [2018 c 306 § 13.]

RCW 7.100.050 Failure of mortgage servicer to abate nuisance.

Except in circumstances governed by RCW 7.100.040 (6) and (7), if a mortgage servicer receives notice from a county, city, or town pursuant to RCW 7.100.020 or 7.100.030(2)(b) that a property is abandoned, in mid-foreclosure, and a nuisance, and the mortgage servicer does not abate the nuisance within the time prescribed by local ordinance, a county, city, or town may exercise its authority under chapter 7.48 RCW, RCW 35.22.280, 35.23.440, 35.27.410, 36.32.120, or any other applicable law to abate the nuisance and recover associated costs as set forth in RCW 7.100.070. [2018 c 306 § 14.]

RCW 7.100.060 Notice to grantee of trustee's deed or sheriff's deed of nuisance—Failure to abate. (1) When a property has been the subject of foreclosure, a county, city or town may notify the grantee of the trustee's deed or sheriff's deed, via certified mail, that a property is a nuisance. Upon receipt of such a notice, the grantee of the trustee's deed or sheriff's deed shall respond within fifteen calendar days and provide one of the following responses:

(a) That the grantee of the trustee's deed or sheriff's deed will abate the nuisance within the time prescribed by local ordinance; or

(b) That the grantee of the trustee's deed or sheriff's deed does not have adequate resources to abate the nuisance within the time limits required by local ordinance.

(2) If the grantee of the trustee's deed or sheriff's deed is notified and does not abate the nuisance within the time prescribed by local ordinance, a county, city, or town may exercise its authority under chapter 7.48 RCW, RCW 35.22.280, 35.23.440, 35.27.410, 36.32.120, or any other applicable law to abate the nuisance and recover associated costs as set forth in RCW 7.100.070. [2018 c 306 § 15.]

RCW 7.100.070 Recovery of costs by county, city, or town—Assessment. Except in circumstances governed by RCW 7.100.040 (6) and (7), if, after issuance of a notice pursuant to RCW 7.100.020, 7.100.030(2)(b), or 7.100.060, a nuisance has not been abated within the time prescribed by local ordinance and the county, city, or town has exercised its authority under chapter 7.48 RCW, RCW 35.22.280, 35.23.440, 35.27.410, 36.32.120, or any other applicable law to abate the nuisance, the county, city, or town may recover its costs by levying an assessment on the real property on which the nuisance is situated to reimburse the county, city, or town for the costs of abatement, excluding any associated fines or penalties. This

assessment constitutes a lien against the property, and is binding upon successors in title only from the date the lien is recorded in the county in which the real property is located. This assessment is of equal rank with state, county, and municipal taxes and is assessed against the real property upon which cost was incurred unless such amount is previously paid. [2018 c 306 § 16.]

RCW 7.100.900 Chapter supplemental to other law. The authority provided pursuant to this chapter is in addition to, and not in limitation of, any other authority provided by law. [2018 c 306 § 17.]