

**Chapter 84.16 RCW**  
**ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION OF PRIVATE CAR COMPANIES**

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**RCW 84.16.010 Definitions.** For the purposes of this chapter and unless otherwise required by the context:

(1) The term "department" without other designation means the department of revenue of the state of Washington.

(2) The term "private car company" or "company" shall mean and include any person, copartnership, association, company or corporation owning, controlling, operating or managing stock cars, furniture cars, refrigerator cars, fruit cars, poultry cars, tank cars or any other kind of cars, used for transportation of property, by or upon railroad lines running in, into or through the state of Washington when such railroad lines are not owned or leased by such person, copartnership, association, company or corporation; or owning, controlling, operating or managing sleeping cars, parlor cars, buffet cars, tourist cars or any other kind of cars, used for transportation of persons by or upon railroads on lines running in, into or through the state of Washington, when such railroad lines are not owned or leased by such person, copartnership, association, company or corporation and upon which an extra charge in addition to the railroad transportation fare is made.

(3) The term "operating property" shall mean and include all rolling stock and car equipment owned by any private car company, or held by it as occupant, lessee or otherwise, including its franchises used and reasonably necessary in carrying on the business of such company; and in the case of rolling stock and car equipment used partly within and partly without the state, shall mean and include a proportion of such rolling stock and car equipment to be determined as in this chapter provided; and all such property shall, for the purposes of this chapter be deemed personal property. [1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 173; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.010. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 1; RRS s 11172-1; prior: 1907 c 36 s 1.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.020 Annual statement of private car companies.** Every private car company shall annually on or before the first day of May, make and file with the department of revenue in such form and upon such blanks as the department of revenue may provide and furnish, a statement, for the year ending December thirty-first next preceding, under the oath of the president, secretary, treasurer, superintendent or chief officer of such company, containing the following facts:

(1) The name of the company, the nature of the business conducted by the company, and under the laws of what state or country organized; the location of its principal office; the name and post office address of its president, secretary, auditor, treasurer, superintendent and general manager; the name and post office address of the chief officer or managing agent or attorney-in-fact in Washington.

(2) The total number of cars of every class used in transacting business on all lines of railroad, within the state and outside the state; together with the original cost and the fair average value per car of all cars of each of such classes.

(3) The total number of miles of railroad main track over which such cars were used within this state and within each county in this state.

(4) The total number of car miles made by all cars on each of the several lines of railroad in this state, and the total number of car miles made by all cars on all railroads within and without the state during the year.

(5) A statement in detail of the entire gross receipts and net earnings of the company during the year within the state and of the entire system, from all sources.

(6) Such other facts or information as the department of revenue may require in the form of return prescribed by it.

The department of revenue shall have power to prescribe directions, rules and regulations to be followed in making the report required herein. [1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 174; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.020. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 2; RRS s 11172-2; prior: 1907 c 36 s 2.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.030 Annual statement of railroad companies.** The president or other officer of every railroad company whose lines run in, into or through this state, shall, on or before the first day of April in each year, furnish to the department of revenue a statement, verified by the affidavit of the officer making the same, showing as to every private car company respectively, the name of the company, the class of car and the total number of miles made by each class of cars, and the total number of miles made by all cars on its lines, branches, sidings, spurs or warehouse tracks, within this state during the year ending on the thirty-first day of December next preceding. [1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 175; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.030. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 3; RRS s 11172-3.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.032 Access to books and records.** The department of revenue shall have access to all books, papers, documents, statements, and accounts on file or of record in any of the departments of the state; and shall have the power, by summons signed by director and served in a like manner as a subpoena issued from courts of record, to compel witnesses to appear and give evidence and to produce books and papers. The director or any employee officially designated by the director is authorized to administer oaths to witnesses. The attendance of any witness may be compelled by attachment issued out of any superior court upon application to said court by the department, upon a proper showing that such witness has been duly served with a summons and has refused to appear before the said department. In case of the refusal of a witness to produce books, papers, documents, or accounts or to give evidence on matters material to the hearing, the department may institute proceedings in the proper superior court to compel such witness to testify, or to produce such books or papers and to punish him or her for the refusal. All summons and process issued by the department shall be served by the sheriff of the proper county and such service certified by him or her to the department of revenue without any compensation therefor. Persons appearing before the department in obedience to a summons, shall, in the discretion of the department, receive the same compensation as witnesses in the superior court. The records, books, accounts, and papers of each company shall be subject to visitation, investigation, or examination by the department, or any employee thereof officially designated by the director. All real and/or personal property of any company shall be subject to visitation, investigation, examination, and/or listing at any and all times by the department, or any person employed by the department. [2013 c 23 s 347; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 176; 1973 c 95 s 10; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.032. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 4; RRS s 11172-4; prior: 1907 c 36 s 6. Formerly RCW 84.16.060.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.034 Depositions may be taken, when.** The department of revenue in any matter material to the valuation, assessment or taxation of the property of any company, may cause the deposition of witnesses residing without the state or absent therefrom, to be taken upon notice to the company interested in like manner as the deposition of witnesses are taken in civil actions in the superior court. [1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 177; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.034. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 5; RRS s 11172-5. Formerly RCW 84.16.070.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.036 Default valuation by department of revenue—Penalty—Estoppel.** (1) If any company shall fail to comply with the provisions of RCW 84.16.020, the department shall add to the value of

such company, as a penalty for such failure, five percent for every thirty days or fraction thereof, not to exceed ten percent, that the company fails to comply.

(2) If any company, or its officer or agent, shall refuse or neglect to make any report required by this chapter, or by the department of revenue, or shall refuse or neglect to permit an inspection and examination of its records, books, accounts, papers or property requested by the department of revenue, or shall refuse or neglect to appear before the department in obedience to a summons, the department shall inform itself the best it may of the matters to be known, in order to discharge its duties with respect to valuation and assessment of the property of such company; and the department shall add to the value so ascertained twenty-five percent as a penalty for the failure or refusal of such company to make its report and such company shall be estopped to question or impeach the assessment of the department of revenue in any hearing or proceeding thereafter. Such penalty shall be in lieu of the penalty provided for in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The department shall waive or cancel the penalty imposed under subsection (1) of this section for good cause shown.

(4) The department shall waive or cancel the penalty imposed under subsection (1) of this section when the circumstances under which the failure to materially comply with the provisions of RCW 84.16.020 do not qualify for waiver or cancellation under subsection (3) of this section if:

(a) The company fully complies with the reporting provisions of RCW 84.16.020 within thirty days of the due date; and

(b) The company has timely complied with the provisions of RCW 84.16.020 for the previous two calendar years. The requirement that a company has timely complied with the provisions of RCW 84.16.020 for the previous two calendar years is waived for any calendar year in which the company was not required to comply with the provisions of RCW 84.16.020. [2007 c 111 s 202; 1984 c 132 s 3; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 178; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.036. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 6; RRS s 11172-6; prior: 1907 c 36 ss 5, 6. Formerly RCW 84.16.080.]

**Application—2007 c 111 ss 201 and 202:** See note following RCW 84.12.260.

**Part headings not law—2007 c 111:** See note following RCW 82.16.120.

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.040 Annual assessment—Sources of information.** The department of revenue must annually make an assessment of the operating property of each private car company. Between the first day of May and the first day of July of each year the department must prepare an initial assessment roll upon which the department must enter and assess the true and fair value of all the operating property of each of such companies as of the first day of January of the year in which the assessment is made. The department must finalize the assessment roll by the twentieth day of August of each year. For the purpose of determining the true and fair value of such property the

department of revenue may take into consideration any information or knowledge obtained by the department from an examination and inspection of such property, or of the books, records, and accounts of such companies, the statements filed as required by this chapter, the reports, statements, or returns of such companies filed in the office of any board, office, or commission of this state or any county thereof, the earnings and earning power of such companies, the franchises owned or used by such companies, the true and fair valuation of any and all property of such companies, whether operating property or nonoperating property, and whether situated within or without the state, and any other facts, evidences, or information that may be obtainable bearing upon the value of the operating property. However, in no event may any statement or report required from any company by this chapter be conclusive upon the department of revenue in determining the amount, character, and true and fair value of the operating property of such company. [2017 c 323 s 531; 2001 c 187 s 9; 1997 c 3 s 119 (Referendum Bill No. 47, approved November 4, 1997); 1994 c 301 s 26; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 179; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.040. Prior: 1939 c 206 s 22; 1933 c 146 s 7; RRS s 11172-7; prior: 1907 c 36 s 7.]

**Tax preference performance statement exemption—Automatic expiration date exemption—2017 c 323:** See note following RCW 82.04.040.

**Contingent effective date—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.70.010.

**Application—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.40.020.

**Application—Severability—Part headings not law—Referral to electorate—1997 c 3:** See notes following RCW 84.40.030.

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.050 Basis of valuation—Apportionment of system value to state.** The department of revenue may, in determining the true and fair value of the operating property to be placed on the assessment roll value the entire property as a unit. If the company owns, leases, operates or uses property partly within and partly without the state, the department of revenue may determine the value of the operating property within this state by the proportion that the value of such property bears to the value of the entire operating property of the company, both within and without this state. In determining the operating property which is located within this state the department of revenue may consider and base such determination on the proportion which the number of car miles of the various classes of cars made in this state bears to the total number of car miles made by the same cars within and without this state, or to the total number of car miles made by all cars of the various classes within and without this state. If the value of the operating property of the company cannot be fairly determined in such manner the department of revenue may use any other reasonable and fair method to determine the value of the operating property of the company within this state. [2001 c 187 s

10; 1997 c 3 s 120 (Referendum Bill No. 47, approved November 4, 1997); 1994 c 301 s 27; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 180; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.050. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 8; RRS s 11172-8; prior: 1907 c 36 s 7.]

**Contingent effective date—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.70.010.

**Application—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.40.020.

**Application—Severability—Part headings not law—Referral to electorate—1997 c 3:** See notes following RCW 84.40.030.

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.090 Assessment roll—Notice of valuation.** Upon the assessment roll must be placed after the name of each company a general description of the operating property of the company, which is considered sufficient if described in the language of RCW 84.16.010(3) or otherwise, following which must be entered the true and fair value of the operating property as determined by the department of revenue. No assessment is invalid by a mistake in the name of the company assessed, by omission of the name of the owner or by the entry of a name other than that of the true owner. When the department of revenue has prepared the initial assessment roll and entered thereon the true and fair value of the operating property of the company, as required, the department must notify the company by mail of the valuation determined by it and entered upon the roll; and thereupon such valuation must become the true and fair value of the operating property of the company, subject to revision or correction by the department of revenue as hereinafter provided; and must be the valuation upon which, after equalization by the department of revenue as hereinafter provided, the taxes of such company are based and computed. [2017 c 323 s 532; 2001 c 187 s 11; 1997 c 3 s 121 (Referendum Bill No. 47, approved November 4, 1997); 1994 c 301 s 28; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 181; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.090. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 9; RRS s 11172-9; prior: 1907 c 36 s 4.]

**Tax preference performance statement exemption—Automatic expiration date exemption—2017 c 323:** See note following RCW 82.04.040.

**Contingent effective date—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.70.010.

**Application—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.40.020.

**Application—Severability—Part headings not law—Referral to electorate—1997 c 3:** See notes following RCW 84.40.030.

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.100 Hearings, time and place of.** Every company assessed under the provisions of this chapter shall be entitled on its own motion to a hearing and to present evidence before the department of revenue, within the ten working days following the hearing request period, relating to the value of the operating property of such company and to the value of the other taxable property in the counties in which the operating property of such company is situate. Upon request in writing for such hearing, which must be presented to the department of revenue within the first ten working days of July following the making of the assessment, the department shall appoint a time and place therefor, within the respective periods aforesaid, the hearing to be conducted in such manner as the department shall direct. Hearings provided for in this section may be held at such times and in such places throughout the state as the department may deem proper or necessary and may be adjourned from time to time and from place to place. [1994 c 124 s 15; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 182; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.100. Prior: 1939 c 206 s 23; 1933 c 146 s 10; RRS s 11172-10.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.110 Apportionment of value to counties by department of revenue.** Upon determination by the department of revenue of the true and fair value of the property appearing on such rolls the department shall apportion such value to the respective counties entitled thereto as hereinafter provided, and shall determine the equalized or assessed valuation of such property in such counties by applying to such actual apportioned value the same ratio as the ratio of assessed to actual value of the general property of the respective counties: PROVIDED, That, whenever the amount of the true and fair value of the operating property of any company otherwise apportionable to any county shall be less than two hundred fifty dollars, such amount need not be apportioned to such county but may be added to the amount apportioned to an adjacent county. [2001 c 187 s 12; 1997 c 3 s 122 (Referendum Bill No. 47, approved November 4, 1997); 1994 c 301 s 29; 1967 ex.s. c 26 s 18; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.110. Prior: 1939 c 206 s 24; 1933 c 146 s 11; RRS s 11172-11.]

**Contingent effective date—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.70.010.

**Application—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.40.020.

**Application—Severability—Part headings not law—Referral to electorate—1997 c 3:** See notes following RCW 84.40.030.

**Effective date—1967 ex.s. c 26:** See note following RCW 82.01.050.

**RCW 84.16.120 Basis of apportionment.** The true and fair value of the property of each company as fixed and determined by the department of revenue as herein provided shall be apportioned to the respective counties in the following manner:

(1) If all the operating property of the company is situated entirely within a county and none of such property is located within, extends into, or through or is operated into or through any other county, the entire value thereof shall be apportioned to the county within which such property is situated, located, and operated.

(2) If the operating property of any company is situated or located within, extends into or is operated into or through more than one county, the value thereof shall be apportioned to the respective counties into or through which its cars are operated in the proportion that the length of main line track of the respective railroads moving such cars in such counties bears to the total length of main line track of such respective railroads in this state.

(3) If the property of any company is of such character that it will not be reasonable, feasible or fair to apportion the value as hereinabove provided, the value thereof shall be apportioned between the respective counties into or through which such property extends or is operated or in which the same is located in such manner as may be reasonable, feasible and fair. [2001 c 187 s 13; 1997 c 3 s 123 (Referendum Bill No. 47, approved November 4, 1997); 1994 c 301 s 30; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.120. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 12; RRS s 11172-12; prior: 1907 c 36 s 7.]

**Contingent effective date—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.70.010.

**Application—2001 c 187:** See note following RCW 84.40.020.

**Application—Severability—Part headings not law—Referral to electorate—1997 c 3:** See notes following RCW 84.40.030.

**RCW 84.16.130 Certification to county assessors—Apportionment to taxing districts—Entry upon tax rolls.** When the department of revenue shall have determined the equalized or assessed value of the operating property of each company in the respective counties as hereinabove provided, the department of revenue shall certify such equalized or assessed value to the county assessor of the proper county; and the county assessor shall apportion and distribute such assessed or equalized valuation to and between the several taxing districts of the county entitled to a proportionate value thereof in the manner prescribed in RCW 84.16.120 for apportionment of values between counties. The county assessor shall enter such assessment upon the personal property tax rolls of the county, together with the values so apportioned, and the same shall be and constitute the assessed valuation of the operating company in such county for that year, upon which taxes shall be levied and collected the same as on general property of the county. [1994 c 301 s 31; 1975 1st ex.s. c 278 s 183; 1961 c 15 s 84.16.130. Prior: 1939 c 206 s 25; 1933 c 146 s 13; RRS s 11172-13.]

**Construction—Severability—1975 1st ex.s. c 278:** See notes following RCW 11.08.160.

**RCW 84.16.140 Assessment of nonoperating property.** All property of any company not assessed as operating property under the provisions



of this chapter shall be assessed by the assessor of the county wherein the same may be located or situate the same as the general property of the county. [1961 c 15 s 84.16.140. Prior: 1933 c 146 s 14; RRS s 11172-14.]