

WAC 314-55-5055 Resolution options. (1) A licensee must respond to an administrative violation notice within 20 calendar days from receipt of the notice. The response must be submitted on a form provided by the board. The licensee may:

(a) Accept the recommended penalty identified in the administrative violation notice;

(b) Request a settlement conference in writing;

(c) Request an administrative hearing in writing.

(2) (a) If a licensee does not respond to an administrative violation notice within 20 calendar days of receipt of the notice, recommended penalties including, but not limited to, suspension, monetary penalties, and destruction of inventory may take effect on the 21st day.

(b) If the recommended penalty is monetary and does not include a suspension, inventory destruction, or both, the licensee must pay a 25 percent late fee in addition to the recommended monetary penalty.

(i) The board must receive payment of the monetary penalty and 25 percent late fee no later than 30 days after the administrative violation notice receipt date.

(ii) Payments received more than 30 days after the administrative violation notice receipt date are subject to an additional 25 percent late fee.

(iii) Licensees who do not respond to an administrative violation notice will not be eligible to renew their cannabis license.

(3) Licensees who do not pay monetary penalties for two or more administrative violation notices in a two-year period will not be eligible to renew their cannabis license.

(4) A licensee may request a settlement conference to discuss the board's issuance of an administrative violation notice issued under this chapter. The hearing officer or designee of the board will arrange the date, time, and place of the settlement conference. A settlement agreement provides that the licensee accepts the allegations contained in the administrative violation notice.

(a) The purpose of the settlement conference is to:

(i) Discuss the circumstances associated with the alleged violation(s), including aggravating or mitigating factors;

(ii) Discuss the recommended penalties; and

(iii) Attempt to reach agreement on the appropriate penalty and corrective action plan for the administrative violation notice.

(b) During a settlement conference, a licensee issued an administrative violation notice may request deferral of an administrative violation notice if all of the following criteria are met:

(i) The alleged violation is the first violation in a violation category;

(ii) The licensee has no other violation history in that penalty category within a two-year window; and

(iii) The licensee submits a plan to correct, remedy, or satisfy identified violations as described in the administrative violation notice including, but not limited to, monetary penalties.

(c) If the licensee is not issued any administrative violation notices or any other notice of noncompliance during the year following approval of the deferral of administrative violation, the record of administrative violation notice will not be considered for licensing renewal or penalty escalation.

(d) If the licensee is issued an administrative violation notice or any other notice of noncompliance at any time during the year following approval of the deferral of administrative violation, the re-

cord of the administrative violation notice will remain on the licensee's licensing history, and the original sanction for the deferred violation will be implemented based on the frame established in the settlement agreement, or 10 days from the date of default.

(5) The hearing officer or designee will prepare a settlement agreement. The agreement must:

(a) Include the terms of the agreement regarding an alleged violation or violations by the licensee of chapters 69.50 and 69.51A RCW, any part of chapter 314-55 WAC, and any related penalty or licensing restriction; and

(b) Be in writing and signed by the licensee or the licensee's designee and the hearing officer or designee.

(6) If a settlement agreement is entered between a licensee and a hearing officer or designee of the board at or after a settlement conference, the terms of the settlement agreement must be given substantial weight by the board.

(7) The hearing officer or designee will forward the settlement agreement to the board or designee for final approval. If the board, or designee approves the settlement agreement, a copy of the signed agreement will be sent to the licensee, and will become part of the licensing history, unless otherwise specified in this chapter.

(8) If the board, or designee, does not approve the settlement agreement, the licensee will be notified of the decision in writing. The licensee may:

(a) Renegotiate the settlement agreement with the hearing officer or designee; or

(b) Accept the originally recommended penalty; or

(c) Request a hearing on the administrative issues identified in the administrative violation notice.

(9) Monetary penalty collection. If monetary penalties are assessed as part of an administrative violation, settlement agreement, or both, licensees must submit payment to the board in a time frame established by the board, consistent with subsection (2)(a) and (b) of this section.

(a) If a licensee does not timely submit payment of any monetary fine, the board will begin collection or other appropriate action.

(b) The board will provide a notice of collection action to the licensee. The notice of collection action establishes the licensee as a debtor for purposes of debt collection.

(c) If the licensee does not respond to the notice of collection within 30 days, the board may:

(i) Assess a 25 percent late fee consistent with subsection (2)(a) of this section; and

(ii) Assign the debt to a collection agency.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.342 and 2022 c 16 § 168. WSR 22-14-111, § 314-55-5055, filed 7/6/22, effective 8/6/22. Statutory Authority: RCW 69.50.342, 69.50.345, and 2019 c 394. WSR 20-03-177, § 314-55-5055, filed 1/22/20, effective 2/22/20.]