
SENATE BILL 5412

State of Washington

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By Senators Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Roach, Conway, Hobbs, and Chase

Read first time 01/24/11. Referred to Committee on Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection.

1 AN ACT Relating to whistleblowing in the conveyance workplace;
2 amending RCW 70.87.020; reenacting and amending RCW 70.87.010; and
3 adding a new section to chapter 70.87 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 70.87.020 and 2003 c 143 s 10 are each amended to read
6 as follows:

7 (1) The purpose of this chapter is to provide for safety of life
8 and limb, to promote safety awareness, and to ensure the safe design,
9 mechanical and electrical operation, and inspection of conveyances, and
10 performance of conveyance work, and all such operation, inspection, and
11 conveyance work subject to the provisions of this chapter shall be
12 reasonably safe to persons and property and in conformity with the
13 provisions of this chapter and the applicable statutes of the state of
14 Washington, and all orders, and rules of the department. The use of
15 unsafe and defective conveyances imposes a substantial probability of
16 serious and preventable injury to employees and the public exposed to
17 unsafe conditions. The prevention of these injuries and protection of
18 employees and the public from unsafe conditions is in the best interest
19 of the people of this state. It is the policy of the legislature that

1 employees should be protected from workplace reprisal or retaliatory
2 action for the opposition to or reporting in good faith of practices
3 that may violate the provisions of this chapter and the rules
4 promulgated hereunder, or of the safety, installation, repair, or
5 maintenance policies of their employers. Personnel performing work
6 covered by this chapter must, by documented training or experience or
7 both, be familiar with the operation and safety functions of the
8 components and equipment. Training and experience must include, but
9 not be limited to, recognizing the safety hazards and performing the
10 procedures to which the personnel performing conveyance work covered by
11 this chapter are assigned in conformance with the requirements of this
12 chapter. This chapter establishes the minimum standards for personnel
13 performing conveyance work.

14 (2) This chapter is not intended to prevent the use of systems,
15 methods, or devices of equivalent or superior quality, strength, fire
16 resistance, code effectiveness, durability, and safety to those
17 required by this chapter, provided that there is technical
18 documentation to demonstrate the equivalency of the system, method, or
19 device, as prescribed in this chapter and the rules adopted under this
20 chapter.

21 (3) In any suit for damages allegedly caused by a failure or
22 malfunction of the conveyance, conformity with the rules of the
23 department is prima facie evidence that the conveyance work, operation,
24 and inspection is reasonably safe to persons and property.

25 **Sec. 2.** RCW 70.87.010 and 2009 c 128 s 1 are each reenacted and
26 amended to read as follows:

27 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
28 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

29 (1) "Advisory committee" means the elevator advisory committee as
30 described in this chapter.

31 (2) "Alteration" means any change to equipment, including its
32 parts, components, and/or subsystems, other than maintenance, repair,
33 or replacement.

34 (3) "Automobile parking elevator" means an elevator: (a) Located
35 in either a stationary or horizontally moving hoistway; (b) used
36 exclusively for parking automobiles where, during the parking process,
37 each automobile is moved either under its own power or by means of a

1 power-driven transfer device onto and off the elevator directly into
2 parking spaces or cubicles in line with the elevator; and (c) in which
3 persons are not normally stationed on any level except the receiving
4 level.

5 (4) "Belt manlift" means a power driven endless belt provided with
6 steps or platforms and a hand hold for the transportation of personnel
7 from floor to floor.

8 (5) "Casket lift" means a lift that (a) is installed at a mortuary,
9 (b) is designed exclusively for carrying of caskets, (c) moves in
10 guides in a basically vertical direction, and (d) serves two or more
11 floors or landings.

12 (6) "Conveyance" means an elevator, escalator, dumbwaiter, belt
13 manlift, automobile parking elevator, moving walk, and other elevating
14 devices, as defined in this section.

15 (7) "Conveyance work" means the alteration, construction,
16 dismantling, erection, installation, maintenance, relocation, and
17 wiring of a conveyance.

18 (8) "Department" means the department of labor and industries.

19 (9) "Director" means the director of the department or his or her
20 representative.

21 (10) "Dumbwaiter" means a hoisting and lowering mechanism equipped
22 with a car (a) that moves in guides in a substantially vertical
23 direction, (b) the floor area of which does not exceed nine square
24 feet, (c) the inside height of which does not exceed four feet, (d) the
25 capacity of which does not exceed five hundred pounds, and (e) that is
26 used exclusively for carrying materials.

27 (11) "Elevator" means a hoisting or lowering machine equipped with
28 a car or platform that moves in guides and serves two or more floors or
29 landings of a building or structure;

30 (a) "Passenger elevator" means an elevator (i) on which passengers
31 are permitted to ride and (ii) that may be used to carry freight or
32 materials when the load carried does not exceed the capacity of the
33 elevator;

34 (b) "Freight elevator" means an elevator (i) used primarily for
35 carrying freight and (ii) on which only the operator, the persons
36 necessary for loading and unloading, and other employees approved by
37 the department are permitted to ride;

1 (c) "Sidewalk elevator" means a freight elevator that: (i)
2 Operates between a sidewalk or other area outside the building and
3 floor levels inside the building below the outside area, (ii) does not
4 have a landing opening into the building at its upper limit of travel,
5 and (iii) is not used to carry automobiles;

6 (d) "Hand elevator" means an elevator utilizing manual energy to
7 move the car;

8 (e) "Inclined elevator" means an elevator that travels at an angle
9 of inclination of seventy degrees or less from the horizontal;

10 (f) "Multideck elevator" means an elevator having two or more
11 compartments located one immediately above the other;

12 (g) "Observation elevator" means an elevator designed to permit
13 exterior viewing by passengers while the car is traveling;

14 (h) "Power elevator" means an elevator utilizing energy other than
15 gravitational or manual to move the car;

16 (i) "Electric elevator" means an elevator where the energy is
17 applied by means of an electric driving machine;

18 (j) "Hydraulic elevator" means an elevator where the energy is
19 applied by means of a liquid under pressure in a cylinder equipped with
20 a plunger or piston;

21 (k) "Direct-plunger hydraulic elevator" means a hydraulic elevator
22 having a plunger or cylinder directly attached to the car frame or
23 platform;

24 (l) "Electro-hydraulic elevator" means a direct-plunger elevator
25 where liquid is pumped under pressure directly into the cylinder by a
26 pump driven by an electric motor;

27 (m) "Maintained-pressure hydraulic elevator" means a direct-plunger
28 elevator where liquid under pressure is available at all times for
29 transfer into the cylinder;

30 (n) "Roped hydraulic elevator" means a hydraulic elevator having
31 its plunger or piston connected to the car with wire ropes or
32 indirectly coupled to the car by means of wire ropes and sheaves;

33 (o) "Rack and pinion elevator" means a power elevator, with or
34 without a counterweight, that is supported, raised, and lowered by a
35 motor or motors that drive a pinion or pinions on a stationary rack
36 mounted in the hoistway;

37 (p) "Screw column elevator" means a power elevator having an

1 uncounterweighted car that is supported, raised, and lowered by means
2 of a screw thread;

3 (q) "Rooftop elevator" means a power passenger or freight elevator
4 that operates between a landing at roof level and one landing below and
5 opens onto the exterior roof level of a building through a horizontal
6 opening;

7 (r) "Special purpose personnel elevator" means an elevator that is
8 limited in size, capacity, and speed, and permanently installed in
9 structures such as grain elevators, radio antenna, bridge towers,
10 underground facilities, dams, power plants, and similar structures to
11 provide vertical transportation of authorized personnel and their tools
12 and equipment only;

13 (s) "Workmen's construction elevator" means an elevator that is not
14 part of the permanent structure of a building and is used to raise and
15 lower workers and other persons connected with, or related to, the
16 building project;

17 (t) "Boat launching elevator" means a conveyance that serves a boat
18 launching structure and a beach or water surface and is used for the
19 carrying or handling of boats in which people ride;

20 (u) "Limited-use/limited-application elevator" means a power
21 passenger elevator where the use and application is limited by size,
22 capacity, speed, and rise, intended principally to provide vertical
23 transportation for people with physical disabilities.

24 (12) "Elevator contractor" means any person, firm, or company that
25 possesses an elevator contractor license in accordance with this
26 chapter and who is engaged in the business of performing conveyance
27 work covered by this chapter.

28 (13) "Elevator contractor license" means a license that is issued
29 to an elevator contractor who has met the qualification requirements
30 established in RCW 70.87.240.

31 (14) "Elevator helper/apprentice" means a person who works under
32 the general direction of a licensed elevator mechanic. A license is
33 not required to be an elevator helper/apprentice.

34 (15) "Elevator mechanic" means any person who possesses an elevator
35 mechanic license in accordance with this chapter and who is engaged in
36 performing conveyance work covered by this chapter.

37 (16) "Elevator mechanic license" means a license that is issued to

1 a person who has met the qualification requirements established in RCW
2 70.87.240.

3 (17) "Escalator" means a power-driven, inclined, continuous
4 stairway used for raising and lowering passengers.

5 (18) "Existing installations" means an installation defined as an
6 "installation, existing" in this chapter or in rules adopted under this
7 chapter.

8 (19) "Inspector" means an elevator inspector of the department or
9 an elevator inspector of a municipality having in effect an elevator
10 ordinance pursuant to RCW 70.87.200.

11 (20) "License" means a written license, duly issued by the
12 department, authorizing a person, firm, or company to carry on the
13 business of performing conveyance work or to perform conveyance work
14 covered by this chapter.

15 (21) "Licensee" means the elevator mechanic or elevator contractor.

16 (22) "Maintenance" means a process of routine examination,
17 lubrication, cleaning, servicing, and adjustment of parts, components,
18 and/or subsystems for the purpose of ensuring performance in accordance
19 with this chapter. "Maintenance" includes repair and replacement, but
20 not alteration.

21 (23) "Material hoist" means a hoist that is not a part of a
22 permanent structure used to raise or lower materials during
23 construction, alteration, or demolition. It is not applicable to the
24 temporary use of permanently installed personnel elevators as material
25 hoists.

26 (24) "Material lift" means a lift that (a) is permanently
27 installed, (b) is comprised of a car or platform that moves in guides,
28 (c) serves two or more floors or landings, (d) travels in a vertical or
29 inclined position, (e) is an isolated, self-contained lift, (f) is not
30 part of a conveying system, and (g) is installed in a commercial or
31 industrial area not accessible to the general public or intended to be
32 operated by the general public.

33 (25) "Moving walk" means a passenger carrying device (a) on which
34 passengers stand or walk and (b) on which the passenger carrying
35 surface remains parallel to its direction of motion.

36 (26) "One-man capacity manlift" means a single passenger, hand-
37 powered counterweighted device, or electric-powered device, that
38 travels vertically in guides and serves two or more landings.

1 (27) "Owner" means any person having title to or control of a
2 conveyance, as guardian, trustee, lessee, or otherwise.

3 (28) "Permit" means a permit issued by the department: (a) To
4 perform conveyance work, other than maintenance; or (b) to operate a
5 conveyance.

6 (29) "Person" means this state, a political subdivision, any public
7 or private corporation, any firm, or any other entity as well as an
8 individual.

9 (30) "Personnel hoist" means a hoist that is not a part of a
10 permanent structure, is installed inside or outside buildings during
11 construction, alteration, or demolition, and used to raise or lower
12 workers and other persons connected with, or related to, the building
13 project. The hoist may also be used for transportation of materials.

14 (31) "Platform" means a rigid surface that is maintained in a
15 horizontal position at all times when in use, and upon which passengers
16 stand or a load is carried.

17 (32) "Private residence conveyance" means a conveyance installed in
18 or on the premises of a single-family dwelling and operated for
19 transporting persons or property from one elevation to another.

20 (33) "Public agency" means a county, incorporated city or town,
21 municipal corporation, state agency, institution of higher education,
22 political subdivision, or other public agency and includes any
23 department, bureau, office, board, commission or institution of such
24 public entities.

25 (34) "Repair" means the reconditioning or renewal of parts,
26 components, and/or subsystems necessary to keep equipment in compliance
27 with this chapter.

28 (35) "Replacement" means the substitution of a device, component,
29 and/or subsystem in its entirety with a unit that is basically the same
30 as the original for the purpose of ensuring performance in accordance
31 with this chapter.

32 (36) "Single-occupancy farm conveyance" means a hand-powered
33 counterweighted single-occupancy conveyance that travels vertically in
34 a grain elevator and is located on a farm that does not accept
35 commercial grain.

36 (37) "Stairway chair lift" means a lift that travels in a basically
37 inclined direction and is designed for use by individuals with
38 disabilities.

1 (38) "Wheelchair lift" means a lift that travels in a vertical or
2 inclined direction and is designed for use by individuals with
3 disabilities.

4 (39) "Employee" means any person employed by an elevator
5 contractor.

6 (40) "Whistleblower" means any employee who in good faith reports
7 practices or opposes practices that may violate the provisions of this
8 chapter or the rules promulgated hereunder, or of the safety,
9 installation, repair, or maintenance policies of his or her employer.
10 The term also means (a) an employee who is believed to have reported
11 such practices but who, in fact, has not reported such practices or (b)
12 an employee who has assisted in the reporting of practices or has
13 provided testimony or information in connection with the reporting of
14 practices.

15 (41) "Workplace reprisal or retaliatory action" includes, but is
16 not limited to, actions, such as: Denial of adequate time to perform
17 duties; undesirable work assignments; reducing the hours of employment;
18 reduction in compensation; letters of reprimand or unsatisfactory
19 performance evaluations; demotion; denial of employment; dismissal from
20 employment; a supervisor or superior encouraging coworkers to behave in
21 a hostile manner toward the whistleblower; and any other action that is
22 inconsistent compared to actions taken before the employee engaged in
23 conduct protected by this chapter, or compared to other employees who
24 have not engaged in conduct protected by this chapter. The protections
25 provided to whistleblowers under this chapter do not prevent an
26 elevator contractor from directing or terminating, suspending, or
27 disciplining a whistleblower when such action is not motivated in part
28 by an intent to retaliate for whistleblowing activity.

29 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 70.87 RCW
30 to read as follows:

31 (1) An employee who is a whistleblower and who as a result of being
32 a whistleblower has been subjected to workplace reprisal or retaliatory
33 action has the remedies provided under chapter 49.60 RCW.

34 (2) The identity of a whistleblower who reports, in good faith, to
35 the department or to a political subdivision that regulates
36 conveyances, practices that may violate the provisions of this chapter
37 or the rules promulgated hereunder must remain confidential. The

1 provisions of RCW 4.24.500 through 4.24.520, providing certain
2 protections to persons who communicate to government agencies, apply to
3 such reports.

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