

**Chapter 81.68 RCW**  
**AUTO TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES**

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*Auto stages, licensing, etc.: Title 46 RCW.*

*Certificate required for carrier service provided pursuant to state agency contract or department of transportation grant: RCW 81.70.220.*

*Highway user tax structure: Chapter 46.85 RCW.*

*Mileage fees: RCW 81.24.100.*

*Penalty for carrying passengers without license: RCW 46.16A.530.*

*Seating capacity fees: RCW 46.17.340.*

**RCW 81.68.010 Definitions.** The definitions set forth in this section apply throughout this chapter, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(1) "Corporation" means a corporation, company, association, or joint stock association.

(2) "Person" means an individual, firm, or a copartnership.

(3) "Auto transportation company" means every corporation or person, their lessees, trustees, receivers, or trustees appointed by any court whatsoever, owning, controlling, operating, or managing any motor-propelled vehicle used in the business of transporting persons and their baggage on the vehicles of auto transportation companies carrying passengers, for compensation over any public highway in this state between fixed termini or over a regular route, and not operating exclusively within the incorporated limits of any city or town.

(4) "Public highway" means every street, road, or highway in this state.

(5) The words "between fixed termini or over a regular route" mean the termini or route between or over which any auto transportation company usually or ordinarily operates any motor-propelled vehicle, even though there may be departure from the termini or route, whether the departures are periodic or irregular. Whether or not any motor-propelled vehicle is operated by any auto transportation

company "between fixed termini or over a regular route" within the meaning of this section is a question of fact, and the finding of the commission thereon is final and is not subject to review. [2007 c 234 s 46; 1989 c 163 s 1; 1984 c 166 s 1; 1979 c 111 s 16; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 121 s 1; 1969 ex.s. c 210 s 10; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.010. Prior: 1935 c 120 s 1; 1921 c 111 s 1; RRS s 6387.]

**Severability—1979 c 111:** See note following RCW 46.74.010.

**RCW 81.68.015 Application of chapter restricted.** This chapter does not apply to corporations or persons, their lessees, trustees, receivers, or trustees appointed by any court whatsoever insofar as they own, control, operate, or manage taxicabs, hotel buses, school buses, or any other carrier that does not come within the term "auto transportation company" as defined in RCW 81.68.010.

This chapter does not apply to persons operating motor vehicles when operated wholly within the limits of incorporated cities or towns, and for a distance not exceeding three road miles beyond the corporate limits of the city or town in Washington in which the original starting point of the vehicle is located, and which operation either alone or in conjunction with another vehicle or vehicles is not a part of any journey beyond the three-mile limit.

This chapter does not apply to commuter ride sharing or ride sharing for persons with special transportation needs in accordance with RCW 46.74.010, so long as the ride-sharing operation does not compete with or infringe upon comparable service actually being provided before the initiation of the ride-sharing operation by an existing auto transportation company certificated under this chapter.

This chapter does not apply to a service carrying passengers for compensation over any public highway in this state between fixed termini or over a regular route if the commission finds, with or without a hearing, that the service does not serve an essential transportation purpose, is solely for recreation, and would not adversely affect the operations of the holder of a certificate under this chapter, and that exemption from this chapter is otherwise in the public interest. Companies providing these services must, however, obtain a permit under chapter 81.70 RCW.

This chapter does not apply to a service carrying passengers for compensation over any public highway in this state between fixed termini or over a regular route if the commission finds, with or without a hearing, that the service is provided pursuant to a contract with a state agency, or funded by a grant issued by the department of transportation, and that exemption from this chapter is otherwise in the public interest. Companies providing these services must, however, obtain a permit under chapter 81.70 RCW. [2009 c 557 s 1; 2007 c 234 s 47; 1989 c 163 s 2; 1984 c 166 s 2.]

**RCW 81.68.020 Compliance with chapter required.** A corporation or person, their lessees, trustees, or receivers or trustees appointed by any court whatsoever, may not engage in the business of operating as a common carrier any motor-propelled vehicle for the transportation of persons and their baggage on the vehicles of auto transportation companies carrying passengers, between fixed termini or over a regular route for compensation on any public highway in this state, except in

accordance with this chapter. [2007 c 234 s 48; 1989 c 163 s 3; 1984 c 166 s 3; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.020. Prior: 1927 c 166 s 1; 1921 c 111 s 2; RRS s 6388.]

**RCW 81.68.030 Regulation by commission.** The commission is vested with power and authority, and it is its duty to supervise and regulate every auto transportation company in this state as provided in this section. Under this authority, it shall for each auto transportation company:

(1) Fix, alter, and amend just, fair, reasonable, and sufficient rates, fares, charges, classifications, rules, and regulations;

(2) Regulate the accounts, service, and safety of operations;

(3) Require the filing of annual and other reports and of other data;

(4) Supervise and regulate the companies in all other matters affecting the relationship between such companies and the traveling and shipping public;

(5) By general order or otherwise, prescribe rules and regulations in conformity with this chapter, applicable to any and all such companies, and within such limits make orders.

The commission may, at any time, by its order duly entered after notice to the holder of any certificate under this chapter, and an opportunity for a hearing, at which it shall be proven that the holder willfully violates or refuses to observe any of the commission's proper orders, rules, or regulations, suspend, revoke, alter, or amend any certificate issued under the provisions of this chapter, but the holder of the certificate has all the rights of rehearing, review, and appeal as to the order of the commission as is provided for in chapter 34.05 RCW. [2007 c 234 s 96; 2005 c 121 s 2; 1989 c 163 s 4; 1984 c 166 s 4; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.030. Prior: 1921 c 111 s 3; RRS s 6389.]

**RCW 81.68.040 Certificate of convenience and necessity.** An auto transportation company shall not operate for the transportation of persons and their baggage for compensation between fixed termini or over a regular route in this state, without first having obtained from the commission under this chapter a certificate declaring that public convenience and necessity require such operation. Any right, privilege, certificate held, owned, or obtained by an auto transportation company may be sold, assigned, leased, transferred, or inherited as other property, only if authorized by the commission. The commission may, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing, when the applicant requests a certificate to operate in a territory already served by a certificate holder under this chapter, only when the existing auto transportation company or companies serving such territory will not provide the same to the satisfaction of the commission, or when the existing auto transportation company does not object, and in all other cases with or without hearing, issue the certificate as prayed for; or for good cause shown, may refuse to issue same, or issue it for the partial exercise only of the privilege sought, and may attach to the exercise of the rights granted by the certificate to such terms and conditions as, in its judgment, the public convenience and necessity may require. [2007 c 234 s 49; 2005 c 121 s 3; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.040. Prior: 1921 c 111 s 4; RRS s 6390.]

**RCW 81.68.046 Temporary certificates—Waiver of provisions during state of emergency.** The commission may, with or without a hearing, issue temporary certificates to engage in the business of operating an auto transportation company, but only after it finds that the issuance of the temporary certificate is consistent with the public interest. The temporary certificate may be issued for a period up to one hundred eighty days. The commission may prescribe rules and impose terms and conditions as in its judgment are reasonable and necessary in carrying out this chapter. The commission may by rule, prescribe a fee for an application for the temporary certificate. The commission shall not issue a temporary certificate to operate in a territory: (1) For which a certificate has been issued, unless the existing certificate holder, upon twenty days' notice, does not object to the issuance of the certificate or is not providing service; or (2) for which an application is pending unless the filing for a temporary certificate is made by the applicant or the applicant does not object to the issuance of the certificate.

During a state of emergency declared under RCW 43.06.010(12), the governor may waive or suspend the operation or enforcement of this section or any portion of this section or under any administrative rule, and issue any orders to facilitate the operation of state or local government or to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian population. [2008 c 181 s 415; 2005 c 121 s 8.]

**Part headings not law—2008 c 181:** See note following RCW 43.06.220.

**RCW 81.68.050 Filing fees.** Any application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity or amendment thereof, or application to sell, lease, mortgage, or transfer a certificate of public convenience and necessity or any interest therein, shall be accompanied by such filing fees as the commission may prescribe by rule: PROVIDED, That such fee shall not exceed two hundred dollars. [1973 c 115 s 5; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.050. Prior: 1955 c 125 s 9; prior: 1937 c 158 s 2, part; RRS s 10417-1, part.]

**RCW 81.68.060 Liability and property damage insurance—Surety bond.** In granting certificates to operate any auto transportation company, for transporting for compensation persons and their baggage on the vehicles of auto transportation companies carrying passengers, the commission shall require the owner or operator to first procure liability and property damage insurance from a company licensed to make liability insurance in the state of Washington or a surety bond of a company licensed to write surety bonds in the state of Washington on each motor-propelled vehicle used or to be used in transporting persons for compensation, in an amount of no less than one hundred thousand dollars for any recovery for personal injury by one person, no less than three hundred thousand dollars for any vehicle having a capacity of sixteen passengers or less, no less than five hundred thousand dollars for any vehicle having a capacity of seventeen passengers or more for all persons receiving personal injury by reason of at least one act of negligence, and no less than fifty thousand dollars for damage to property of any person other than the insured. The commission shall fix the amount of the insurance policy or

policies or security deposit by giving due consideration to the character and amount of traffic, the number of persons affected, and the degree of danger that the proposed operation involves. The liability and property damage insurance or surety bond must be maintained in force on the motor-propelled vehicle while in use, and each policy for liability or property damage insurance or surety bond required by this section must be filed with the commission and kept in full force and effect. Failure to file and maintain the required insurance is cause for the revocation of the certificate. [2007 c 234 s 50; 1989 c 163 s 5; 1984 c 166 s 6; 1977 ex.s. c 298 s 1; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.060. Prior: 1921 c 111 s 5; RRS s 6391.]

**RCW 81.68.065 Self-insurers exempt as to insurance or bond.** Any auto transportation company authorized to transport persons for compensation on the highways and engaging in interstate, or interstate and intrastate, operations within the state of Washington which is or becomes qualified as a self-insurer with the federal motor carrier safety administration of the United States department of transportation under the United States interstate commerce act applicable to self insurance by motor carriers, is exempt, so long as such qualification remains effective, from all provisions of law relating to the carrying or filing of insurance policies or bonds in connection with such operations.

The commission may require auto transportation companies to prove the existence and continuation of such qualification with the federal motor carrier safety administration by affidavit in any form the commission prescribes. [2007 c 234 s 51; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.065. Prior: (i) 1949 c 127 s 1; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 6386-5a. (ii) 1949 c 127 s 2; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 6386-5b.]

**RCW 81.68.080 Penalty.** Every officer, agent, or employee of any corporation, and every other person who violates or fails to comply with, or who procures, aids, or abets in the violation of any provisions of this chapter, or who fails to obey, observe, or comply with any order, decision, rule or regulation, direction, demand, or requirement, or any part of provision thereof, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. [2007 c 234 s 52; 2003 c 53 s 398; 1979 ex.s. c 136 s 106; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.080. Prior: 1921 c 111 s 7; RRS s 6393.]

**Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53:** See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

**Effective date—Severability—1979 ex.s. c 136:** See notes following RCW 46.63.010.

**RCW 81.68.090 Scope of chapter.** This chapter applies to persons and motor vehicles engaged in interstate or foreign commerce to the full extent permitted by the Constitution and laws of the United States. [2007 c 234 s 53; 1961 c 14 s 81.68.090. Prior: 1921 c 111 s 8; RRS s 6394.]

**RCW 81.68.100 Federal authority and registration for compensatory services.** It is unlawful for any motor carrier to perform a transportation service for compensation upon the public highways of this state without first having secured appropriate federal authority from the United States department of transportation, if such authority is required, and without first having registered with the commission either directly or through a federally authorized uniform registration program. [2007 c 234 s 45.]