

Chapter 48.110 RCW
SERVICE CONTRACTS AND PROTECTION PRODUCT GUARANTEES

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RCW 48.110.010 Finding—Declaration—Purpose. The legislature finds that increasing numbers of businesses are selling service contracts for repair, replacement, and maintenance of motor vehicles, appliances, computers, electronic equipment, and other consumer

products. There are risks that contract obligors will close or otherwise be unable to fulfill their contract obligations that could result in unnecessary and preventable losses to citizens of this state. The legislature declares that it is necessary to establish standards that will safeguard the public from possible losses arising from the conduct or cessation of the business of service contract obligors or the mismanagement of funds paid for service contracts. The purpose of this chapter is to create a legal framework within which service contracts may be sold in this state and to set forth requirements for conducting a service contract business. [2006 c 274 § 1; 1999 c 112 § 1.]

RCW 48.110.015 Exempt from title—Application of chapter. (1)

The following are exempt from this title:

- (a) Warranties;
 - (b) Maintenance agreements;
 - (c) Service contracts:
 - (i) Paid for with separate and additional consideration;
 - (ii) Issued at the point of sale, or within sixty days of the original purchase date of the property; and
 - (iii) On tangible property when the tangible property for which the service contract is sold has a purchase price of fifty dollars or less, exclusive of sales tax; and
 - (d) Agreements whereby a third party contracted by an employer provides mileage reimbursement and incidental maintenance and repairs to the employer's employees for personal vehicles used for business purposes, provided that such agreement does not provide indemnification or repairs for a loss caused by theft, collision, fire, or other peril typically covered in the comprehensive section of an automobile insurance policy.
- (2) This chapter does not apply to:
- (a) Vehicle mechanical breakdown insurance;
 - (b) Service contracts on tangible personal property purchased by persons who are not consumers; and
 - (c) Home heating fuel service contracts offered by home heating energy providers. [2016 c 125 § 1. Prior: 2006 c 274 § 2; 2006 c 36 § 16; 2000 c 208 § 1; 1999 c 112 § 2.]

RCW 48.110.017 Application of chapter. This chapter does not prohibit a service contract provider from covering, in whole or in part, residential water, sewer, plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling systems, utilities, or similar systems, including items intended to be attached to or installed in any real property, with or without coverage of appliances, or from sharing contract revenue with local governments or other third parties for endorsements and marketing services. [2019 c 16 § 1; 2013 c 117 § 2.]

RCW 48.110.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Administrator" means the person who is responsible for the administration of the service contracts, the service contracts plan, or the protection product guarantees.

(2) "Commissioner" means the insurance commissioner of this state.

(3) "Consumer" means an individual who buys any tangible personal property that is primarily for personal, family, or household use.

(4) "Home heating fuel service contract" means a contract or agreement for a separately stated consideration for a specific duration to perform the repair, replacement, or maintenance of a home heating fuel supply system including the fuel tank and all visible pipes, caps, lines, and associated parts or the indemnification for repair, replacement, or maintenance for operational or structural failure due to a defect in materials or workmanship, or normal wear and tear.

(5) "Incidental costs" means expenses specified in the guarantee incurred by the protection product guarantee holder related to damages to other property caused by the failure of the protection product to perform as provided in the guarantee. "Incidental costs" may include, without limitation, insurance policy deductibles, rental vehicle charges, the difference between the actual value of the stolen vehicle at the time of theft and the cost of a replacement vehicle, sales taxes, registration fees, transaction fees, and mechanical inspection fees. Incidental costs may be paid under the provisions of the protection product guarantee in either a fixed amount specified in the protection product guarantee or sales agreement, or by the use of a formula itemizing specific incidental costs incurred by the protection product guarantee holder to be paid.

(6) "Maintenance agreement" means a contract of limited duration that provides for scheduled maintenance only.

(7) "Motor vehicle" means any vehicle subject to registration under chapter 46.16A RCW.

(8) "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, incorporated or unincorporated association, joint stock company, reciprocal insurer, syndicate, or any similar entity or combination of entities acting in concert.

(9) "Premium" means the consideration paid to an insurer for a reimbursement insurance policy.

(10) "Protection product" means any protective chemical, substance, device, or system offered or sold with a guarantee to repair or replace another product or pay incidental costs upon the failure of the product to perform pursuant to the terms of the protection product guarantee. Protection product does not include fuel additives, oil additives, or other chemical products applied to the engine, transmission, or fuel system of a motor vehicle.

(11) "Protection product guarantee" means a written agreement by a protection product guarantee provider to repair or replace another product or pay incidental costs upon the failure of the protection product to perform pursuant to the terms of the protection product guarantee. The reimbursement of incidental costs promised under a protection product guarantee must be tied to the purchase of a physical product that is formulated or designed to make the specified loss or damage from a specific cause less likely to occur.

(12) "Protection product guarantee holder" means a person who is the purchaser or permitted transferee of a protection product guarantee.

(13) "Protection product guarantee provider" means a person who is contractually obligated to the protection product guarantee holder under the terms of the protection product guarantee. Protection

product guarantee provider does not include an authorized insurer providing a reimbursement insurance policy.

(14) "Protection product seller" means the person who sells the protection product to the consumer.

(15) "Provider fee" means the consideration paid by a consumer for a service contract.

(16) "Reimbursement insurance policy" means a policy of insurance that is issued to a service contract provider or a protection product guarantee provider to provide reimbursement to the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider or to pay on behalf of the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider all contractual obligations incurred by the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider under the terms of the insured service contracts or protection product guarantees issued or sold by the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider.

(17) "Road hazard" means a hazard that is encountered while driving a motor vehicle. Road hazards may include but are not limited to potholes, rocks, wood debris, metal parts, glass, plastic, curbs, or composite scraps.

(18)(a) "Service contract" means a contract or agreement entered into at any time for consideration over and above the lease or purchase price of the property for any specific duration to perform the repair, replacement, or maintenance of property or the indemnification for repair, replacement, or maintenance for operational or structural failure due to a defect in materials or workmanship or normal wear and tear. Service contracts may provide for the repair, replacement, or maintenance of property for damage resulting from power surges and accidental damage from handling, with or without additional provision for incidental payment of indemnity under limited circumstances, including towing, rental, emergency road services, or other expenses relating to the failure of the product or of a component part thereof.

(b) "Service contract" also includes a contract or agreement sold for separately stated consideration for a specific duration to perform any one or more of the following services:

(i) The repair or replacement of tires and/or wheels damaged as a result of coming into contact with road hazards. However, a contract or agreement meeting the definition under this subsection (18)(b) in which the party obligated to perform is either a tire or wheel manufacturer or a motor vehicle manufacturer is exempt from the requirements of this chapter;

(ii) The removal of dents, dings, or creases on a motor vehicle that can be repaired using the process of paintless dent removal without affecting the existing paint finish and without replacing vehicle body panels, sanding, bonding, or painting;

(iii) The repair of chips or cracks in, or the replacement of, motor vehicle windshields as a result of damage caused by road hazards;

(iv) The replacement of a motor vehicle key or key fob in the event that the key or key fob becomes inoperable or is lost or stolen;

(v) Services provided pursuant to a protection product guarantee; and

(vi) Other services approved by rule of the commissioner that are not inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter.

(c) "Service contract" does not include coverage for:

(i) Repair or replacement due to damage to the interior surfaces or to the exterior paint or finish of a vehicle. However, coverage for these types of damage may be offered in connection with the sale of a protection product as defined in this section; or

(ii) Fuel additives, oil additives, or other chemical products applied to the engine, transmission, or fuel system of a motor vehicle.

(19) "Service contract holder" or "contract holder" means a person who is the purchaser or holder of a service contract.

(20) "Service contract provider" means a person who is contractually obligated to the service contract holder under the terms of the service contract.

(21) "Service contract seller" means the person who sells the service contract to the consumer.

(22) "Warranty" means a warranty made solely by the manufacturer, importer, or seller of property or services without consideration; that is not negotiated or separated from the sale of the product and is incidental to the sale of the product; and that guarantees indemnity for defective parts, mechanical or electrical breakdown, labor, or other remedial measures, such as repair or replacement of the property or repetition of services. [2014 c 82 § 1; 2013 c 117 § 1; 2011 c 171 § 104. Prior: 2010 c 89 § 1; prior: 2006 c 274 § 3; 2006 c 36 § 17; 2000 c 208 § 2; 1999 c 112 § 3.]

Intent—Effective date—2011 c 171: See notes following RCW 4.24.210.

RCW 48.110.030 Registration required—Application—Required information—Grounds for refusal—Annual renewal. (1) A person may not act as, or offer to act as, or hold himself or herself out to be a service contract provider in this state, nor may a service contract be sold to a consumer in this state, unless the service contract provider has a valid registration as a service contract provider issued by the commissioner.

(2) Applicants to be a service contract provider must make an application to the commissioner upon a form to be furnished by the commissioner. The application must include or be accompanied by the following information and documents:

(a) All basic organizational documents of the service contract provider, including any articles of incorporation, articles of association, partnership agreement, trade name certificate, trust agreement, shareholder agreement, bylaws, and other applicable documents, and all amendments to those documents;

(b) The identities of the service contract provider's executive officer or officers directly responsible for the service contract provider's service contract business, and, if more than fifty percent of the service contract provider's gross revenue is derived from the sale of service contracts, the identities of the service contract provider's directors and stockholders having beneficial ownership of ten percent or more of any class of securities;

(c) (i) For service contract providers relying on RCW 48.110.050(2) (a) or (b) or 48.110.075(2) (a) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders, the most recent audited annual financial statements, if available, or the most recent audited financial statements which prove that the applicant has

and maintains a minimum net worth or stockholder's equity of two hundred thousand dollars or more calculated in accordance with RCW 48.110.078 and the ability to pay its debts when debts become due. In lieu of submitting audited financial statements, a service contract provider relying on RCW 48.110.050(2)(a) or 48.110.075(2)(a) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders may comply with the requirements of this subsection (2)(c)(i) by submitting the most recent annual financial statements, if available, or the most recent financial statements of the applicant that are certified as accurate by two or more officers of the applicant; or

(ii) For service contract providers relying on RCW 48.110.050(2)(c) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders, the most recent audited annual financial statements, if available, or the most recent audited financial statements or form 10-K or form 20-F filed with the securities and exchange commission which prove that the applicant has and maintains a net worth or stockholder's equity of one hundred million dollars or more. However, if the service contract provider is relying on its parent company's net worth or stockholder's equity to meet the requirements of RCW 48.110.050(2)(c) and the service contract provider has provided the commissioner with a written guarantee by the parent company in accordance with RCW 48.110.050(2)(c), then the most recent audited annual financial statements, if available, or the most recent audited financial statements or form 10-K or form 20-F filed with the securities and exchange commission of the service contract provider's parent company must be filed and the applicant need not submit its own financial statements or demonstrate a minimum net worth or stockholder's equity; and

(d) An application fee of two hundred fifty dollars, which must be deposited into the general fund.

(3) Each registered service contract provider must appoint the commissioner as the service contract provider's attorney to receive service of legal process issued against the service contract provider in this state upon causes of action arising within this state. Service upon the commissioner as attorney constitutes effective legal service upon the service contract provider.

(a) With the appointment the service contract provider must designate the person to whom the commissioner must forward legal process so served upon him or her.

(b) The appointment is irrevocable, binds any successor in interest or to the assets or liabilities of the service contract provider, and remains in effect for as long as there could be any cause of action against the service contract provider arising out of any of the service contract provider's contracts or obligations in this state.

(c) The service of process must be accomplished and processed in the manner prescribed under RCW 48.02.200.

(4) The commissioner may refuse to issue a registration if the commissioner determines that the service contract provider, or any individual responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the service contract provider under subsection (2)(b) of this section, is not competent, trustworthy, cannot demonstrate a minimum net worth or stockholder's equity and the ability to pay its debts when debts become due in accordance with the applicable requirements of subsection (2)(c) of this section, or has had a license as a service

contract provider or similar license denied or revoked for cause by any state.

(5) A registration issued under this section is valid, unless surrendered, suspended, or revoked by the commissioner, or not renewed for so long as the service contract provider continues in business in this state and remains in compliance with this chapter. A registration is subject to renewal annually on the first day of July upon application of the service contract provider and payment of a fee of two hundred dollars, which must be deposited into the general fund. If not so renewed, the registration expires on the June 30th next preceding.

(6) A service contract provider must keep current the information required to be disclosed in its registration under this section by reporting all material changes or additions within thirty days after the end of the month in which the change or addition occurs. [2019 c 16 § 2; 2016 c 224 § 1; 2014 c 82 § 2; 2011 c 47 § 16; 2006 c 274 § 4; 2005 c 223 § 33; 1999 c 112 § 4.]

RCW 48.110.033 Application of RCW 48.110.030—Exceptions. (1)

Except for service contract providers or protection product guarantee providers, persons marketing, selling, or offering to sell service contracts or protection products for providers are exempt from the registration requirements of RCW 48.110.030.

(2) The marketing, sale, offering for sale, issuance, making, proposing to make, and administration of service contracts or protection products by service contract providers or protection product guarantee providers and related service contract or protection product sellers, administrators, and other persons complying with this chapter are exempt from the other provisions of this title, except chapters 48.04 and 48.30 RCW and as otherwise provided in this chapter. [2006 c 274 § 19.]

RCW 48.110.040 Filing of annual report—Fee—Investigations—Confidentiality. (1)(a)

Every registered service contract provider must file an annual report for the preceding calendar year with the commissioner on or before March 1st of each year, or within any extension of time the commissioner for good cause may grant. The report must be in the form and contain those matters as the commissioner prescribes and shall be verified by at least two officers of the service contract provider.

(b)(i) A service contract provider relying on RCW 48.110.050(2)(a) or 48.110.075(2)(a) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders may not be required to submit audited financial statements of the service contract provider as part of its annual reports. If requested by the commissioner, a service contract provider relying on those provisions must provide a copy of the most recent annual financial statements of the service contract provider or its parent company certified as accurate by two officers of the service contract provider or its parent company.

(ii) A service contract provider relying on its parent company's net worth to meet the requirements of RCW 48.110.050(2)(c) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders must submit as part of its annual report the most recent

audited financial statements or form 10-K or form 20-F filed with the United States securities and exchange commission of the service contract provider's parent company if requested by the commissioner but need not submit its own audited financial statements.

(2) At the time of filing the report, the service contract provider must pay a filing fee of twenty dollars which shall be deposited into the general fund.

(3) As part of any investigation by the commissioner, the commissioner may require a service contract provider to file monthly financial reports whenever, in the commissioner's discretion, there is a need to more closely monitor the financial activities of the service contract provider. Monthly financial statements must be filed in the commissioner's office no later than the twenty-fifth day of the month following the month for which the financial report is being filed. These monthly financial reports are the internal financial statements of the service contract provider. The monthly financial reports that are filed with the commissioner constitute information that might be damaging to the service contract provider if made available to its competitors, and therefore shall be kept confidential by the commissioner. This information may not be made public or be subject to subpoena, other than by the commissioner and then only for the purpose of enforcement actions taken by the commissioner. [2016 c 224 § 2; 2006 c 274 § 5; 2005 c 223 § 34; 1999 c 112 § 5.]

RCW 48.110.050 Obligations of service contract provider—Limited application. (1) Service contracts shall not be issued, sold, or offered for sale in this state or sold to consumers in this state unless the service contract provider has:

(a) Provided a receipt for, or other written evidence of, the purchase of the service contract to the contract holder; and

(b) Provided a copy of the service contract to the service contract holder within a reasonable period of time from the date of purchase.

(2) In order to either demonstrate its financial responsibility or assure the faithful performance of the service contract provider's obligations to its service contract holders, every service contract provider shall comply with the requirements of one of the following:

(a) Insure all service contracts under a reimbursement insurance policy issued by an insurer holding a certificate of authority from the commissioner or a risk retention group, as defined in 15 U.S.C. Sec. 3901(a)(4), as long as that risk retention group is in full compliance with the federal liability risk retention act of 1986 (15 U.S.C. Sec. 3901 et seq.), is in good standing in its domiciliary jurisdiction, and is properly registered with the commissioner under chapter 48.92 RCW. The insurance required by this subsection must meet the following requirements:

(i) The insurer or risk retention group must, at the time the policy is filed with the commissioner, and continuously thereafter, maintain surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of at least fifteen million dollars and annually file audited financial statements with the commissioner; and

(ii) The commissioner may authorize an insurer or risk retention group that has surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of less than fifteen million dollars, but at least equal to ten million dollars, to issue the insurance required by this subsection if the

insurer or risk retention group demonstrates to the satisfaction of the commissioner that the company maintains a ratio of direct written premiums, wherever written, to surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of not more than three to one;

(b) (i) Maintain a funded reserve account for its obligations under its service contracts issued and outstanding in this state. The reserves shall not be less than forty percent of the gross consideration received, less claims paid, on the sale of the service contract for all in-force contracts. The reserve account shall be subject to examination and review by the commissioner; and

(ii) Place in trust with the commissioner a financial security deposit, having a value of not less than five percent of the gross consideration received, less claims paid, on the sale of the service contract for all service contracts issued and in force, but not less than twenty-five thousand dollars, consisting of one of the following:

(A) A surety bond issued by an insurer holding a certificate of authority from the commissioner;

(B) Securities of the type eligible for deposit by authorized insurers in this state;

(C) Cash;

(D) An irrevocable evergreen letter of credit issued by a qualified financial institution; or

(E) Another form of security prescribed by rule by the commissioner; or

(c) (i) Maintain, or its parent company maintain, a net worth or stockholder's equity of at least one hundred million dollars; and

(ii) Upon request, provide the commissioner with a copy of the service contract provider's or, if using the net worth or stockholder's equity of its parent company to satisfy the one hundred million dollar requirement, the service contract provider's parent company's most recent form 10-K or form 20-F filed with the securities and exchange commission within the last calendar year, or if the company does not file with the securities and exchange commission, a copy of the service contract provider's or, if using the net worth or stockholder's equity of its parent company to satisfy the one hundred million dollar requirement, the service contract provider's parent company's most recent audited financial statements, which shows a net worth of the service contract provider or its parent company of at least one hundred million dollars. If the service contract provider's parent company's form 10-K, form 20-F, or audited financial statements are filed with the commissioner to meet the service contract provider's financial stability requirement, then the parent company shall agree to guarantee the obligations of the service contract provider relating to service contracts sold by the service contract provider in this state. A copy of the guarantee shall be filed with the commissioner. The guarantee shall be irrevocable as long as there is in force in this state any contract or any obligation arising from service contracts guaranteed, unless the parent company has made arrangements approved by the commissioner to satisfy its obligations under the guarantee.

(3) Service contracts shall require the service contract provider to permit the service contract holder to return the service contract within twenty days of the date the service contract was mailed to the service contract holder or within ten days of delivery if the service contract is delivered to the service contract holder at the time of sale, or within a longer time period permitted under the service contract. Upon return of the service contract to the service contract

provider within the applicable period, if no claim has been made under the service contract prior to the return to the service contract provider, the service contract is void and the service contract provider shall refund to the service contract holder, or credit the account of the service contract holder with the full purchase price of the service contract. The right to void the service contract provided in this subsection is not transferable and shall apply only to the original service contract purchaser. A ten percent penalty per month shall be added to a refund of the purchase price that is not paid or credited within thirty days after return of the service contract to the service contract provider.

(4) This section does not apply to service contracts on motor vehicles or to protection product guarantees. [2016 c 224 § 3; 2006 c 274 § 6; 1999 c 112 § 6.]

**RCW 48.110.055 Protection product guarantee providers—
Obligations—Application—Required information—Grounds for refusal—
Annual renewal.** (1) This section applies to protection product guarantee providers.

(2) A person must not act as, or offer to act as, or hold himself or herself out to be a protection product guarantee provider in this state, nor may a protection product be sold to a consumer in this state, unless the protection product guarantee provider has:

(a) A valid registration as a protection product guarantee provider issued by the commissioner; and

(b) Either demonstrated its financial responsibility or assured the faithful performance of the protection product guarantee provider's obligations to its protection product guarantee holders by insuring all protection product guarantees under a reimbursement insurance policy issued by an insurer holding a certificate of authority from the commissioner or a risk retention group, as defined in 15 U.S.C. Sec. 3901(a)(4), as long as that risk retention group is in full compliance with the federal liability risk retention act of 1986 (15 U.S.C. Sec. 3901 et seq.), is in good standing in its domiciliary jurisdiction, and properly registered with the commissioner under chapter 48.92 RCW. The insurance required by this subsection must meet the following requirements:

(i) The insurer or risk retention group must, at the time the policy is filed with the commissioner, and continuously thereafter, maintain surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of at least fifteen million dollars and annually file audited financial statements with the commissioner; and

(ii) The commissioner may authorize an insurer or risk retention group that has surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of less than fifteen million dollars, but at least equal to ten million dollars, to issue the insurance required by this subsection if the insurer or risk retention group demonstrates to the satisfaction of the commissioner that the company maintains a ratio of direct written premiums, wherever written, to surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of not more than three to one.

(3) Applicants to be a protection product guarantee provider must make an application to the commissioner upon a form to be furnished by the commissioner. The application must include or be accompanied by the following information and documents:

(a) The names of the protection product guarantee provider's executive officer or officers directly responsible for the protection product guarantee provider's protection product guarantee business and their biographical affidavits on a form prescribed by the commissioner;

(b) The name, address, and telephone number of any administrators designated by the protection product guarantee provider to be responsible for the administration of protection product guarantees in this state;

(c) A copy of the protection product guarantee reimbursement insurance policy or policies;

(d) A copy of each protection product guarantee the protection product guarantee provider proposes to use in this state;

(e) The most recent annual financial statements, if available, or the most recent financial statements certified as accurate by two or more officers of the applicant which prove that the applicant has and maintains a minimum net worth or stockholder's equity of two hundred thousand dollars or more calculated in accordance with RCW 48.110.078 and the ability to pay its debts when debts become due; and

(f) A nonrefundable application fee of two hundred fifty dollars.

(4) Each registered protection product guarantee provider must appoint the commissioner as the protection product guarantee provider's attorney to receive service of legal process issued against the protection product guarantee provider in this state upon causes of action arising within this state. Service upon the commissioner as attorney constitutes effective legal service upon the protection product guarantee provider.

(a) With the appointment the protection product guarantee provider must designate the person to whom the commissioner must forward legal process so served upon him or her.

(b) The appointment is irrevocable, binds any successor in interest or to the assets or liabilities of the protection product guarantee provider, and remains in effect for as long as there could be any cause of action against the protection product guarantee provider arising out of any of the protection product guarantee provider's contracts or obligations in this state.

(c) The service of process must be accomplished and processed in the manner prescribed under RCW 48.02.200.

(5) The commissioner may refuse to issue a registration if the commissioner determines that the protection product guarantee provider, or any individual responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the protection product guarantee provider under subsection (3)(a) of this section, is not competent, trustworthy, cannot demonstrate a minimum net worth or stockholder's equity in accordance with the applicable requirements of subsection (3)(e) of this section and the ability to pay its debts when debts become due, or has had a license as a protection product guarantee provider or similar license denied or revoked for cause by any state.

(6) A registration issued under this section is valid, unless surrendered, suspended, or revoked by the commissioner, or not renewed for so long as the protection product guarantee provider continues in business in this state and remains in compliance with this chapter. A registration is subject to renewal annually on the first day of July upon application of the protection product guarantee provider and payment of a fee of two hundred fifty dollars. If not so renewed, the registration expires on the June 30th next preceding.

(7) A protection product guarantee provider must keep current the information required to be disclosed in its registration under this section by reporting all material changes or additions within thirty days after the end of the month in which the change or addition occurs. [2019 c 16 § 3; 2016 c 224 § 4; 2011 c 47 § 17; 2006 c 274 § 17.]

RCW 48.110.060 Reimbursement insurance policies insuring service contracts or protection product guarantees.

(1) Reimbursement insurance policies insuring service contracts or protection product guarantees issued, sold, or offered for sale in this state or issued or sold to consumers in this state shall state that the insurer that issued the reimbursement insurance policy shall reimburse or pay on behalf of the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider all sums the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider is legally obligated to pay, including but not limited to the refund of the full purchase price of the service contract to the service contract holder or shall provide the service which the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider is legally obligated to perform according to the service contract provider's or protection product guarantee provider's contractual obligations under the service contracts or protection product guarantees issued or sold by the service contract provider or the protection product guarantee provider.

(2) The reimbursement insurance policy shall fully insure the obligations of the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider, rather than partially insure, or insure only in the event of service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider default.

(3) The reimbursement insurance policy shall state that the service contract holder or protection product guarantee holder is entitled to apply directly to the reimbursement insurance company for payment or performance due. [2006 c 274 § 7; 1999 c 112 § 7.]

RCW 48.110.070 Service contracts—Form—Required contents—Limited application.

(1) Service contracts marketed, sold, offered for sale, issued, made, proposed to be made, or administered in this state or sold to residents of this state shall be written, printed, or typed in clear, understandable language that is easy to read, and disclose the requirements set forth in this section, as applicable.

(2) Service contracts insured under a reimbursement insurance policy under RCW 48.110.050(2)(a) and 48.110.060 shall not be issued, sold, or offered for sale in this state or sold to residents of this state unless the service contract conspicuously contains a statement in substantially the following form: "Obligations of the service contract provider under this service contract are insured under a service contract reimbursement insurance policy." The service contract shall also conspicuously state the name and address of the issuer of the reimbursement insurance policy and state that the service contract holder is entitled to apply directly to the reimbursement insurance company.

(3) Service contracts not insured under a reimbursement insurance policy under RCW 48.110.050(2)(a) and 48.110.060 shall contain a statement in substantially the following form: "Obligations of the

service contract provider under this contract are backed by the full faith and credit of the service contract provider."

(4) Service contracts shall state the name and address of the service contract provider and shall identify any administrator if different from the service contract provider, the service contract seller, and the service contract holder to the extent that the name of the service contract holder has been furnished by the service contract holder. The identities of such parties are not required to be preprinted on the service contract and may be added to the service contract at the time of sale.

(5) Service contracts shall state the purchase price of the service contract and the terms under which the service contract is sold. The purchase price is not required to be preprinted on the service contract and may be negotiated at the time of sale.

(6) Service contracts shall state the procedure to obtain service or to file a claim, including but not limited to the procedures for obtaining prior approval for repair work, the toll-free telephone number if prior approval is necessary for service, and the procedure for obtaining emergency repairs performed outside of normal business hours or provide for twenty-four-hour telephone assistance.

(7) Service contracts shall state the existence of any deductible amount, if applicable.

(8) Service contracts shall specify the merchandise, parts, and services to be provided and any limitations, exceptions, or exclusions.

(9) Service contracts shall state any restrictions governing the transferability of the service contract, if applicable.

(10) Service contracts shall state the terms, restrictions, or conditions governing cancellation of the service contract prior to the termination or expiration date of the service contract by either the service contract provider or by the service contract holder, which rights can be no more restrictive than provided in RCW 48.110.050(3). The service contract provider of the service contract shall mail a written notice to the service contract holder at the last known address of the service contract holder contained in the records of the service contract provider at least twenty-one days prior to cancellation by the service contract provider. The notice shall state the effective date of the cancellation and the true and actual reason for the cancellation.

(11) Service contracts shall set forth the obligations and duties of the service contract holder, including but not limited to the duty to protect against any further damage and any requirement to follow owner's manual instructions.

(12) Service contracts shall state whether or not the service contract provides for or excludes consequential damages or preexisting conditions.

(13) Service contracts shall state any exclusions of coverage.

(14) Service contracts shall not contain a provision which requires that any civil action brought in connection with the service contract must be brought in the courts of a jurisdiction other than this state. Service contracts that authorize binding arbitration to resolve claims or disputes must allow for arbitration proceedings to be held at a location in closest proximity to the service contract holder's permanent residence.

This section does not apply to service contracts on motor vehicles or to protection product guarantees. [2006 c 274 § 8; 1999 c 112 § 8.]

RCW 48.110.073 Service contract forms—Motor vehicles—Reliance on reimbursement insurance policy. (1) If the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider is using [the] reimbursement insurance policy to satisfy the requirements of RCW 48.110.050(2)(a), 48.110.055(2)(b), or 48.110.075(2)(a), then the reimbursement insurance policy shall be filed with and approved by the commissioner in accordance with and pursuant to the requirements of chapter 48.18 RCW.

(2) All service contracts forms covering motor vehicles must be filed with and approved by the commissioner prior to the service contract forms being used, issued, delivered, sold, or marketed in this state or to residents of this state.

(3) All service contracts forms covering motor vehicles being used, issued, delivered, sold, or marketed in this state or to residents of this state by motor vehicle manufacturers or import distributors or wholly owned subsidiaries thereof must be filed with the commissioner for approval within sixty days after the motor vehicle manufacturer or import distributor or wholly owned subsidiary thereof begins using the service contracts forms.

(4) The commissioner shall disapprove any motor vehicle service contract form if:

(a) The form is in any respect in violation of, or does not comply with, this chapter or any applicable order or regulation of the commissioner issued under this chapter;

(b) The form contains or incorporates by reference any inconsistent, ambiguous, or misleading clauses, or exceptions and conditions;

(c) The form has any title, heading, or other indication of its provisions that is misleading; or

(d) The purchase of the contract is being solicited by deceptive advertising. [2006 c 274 § 20.]

RCW 48.110.075 Service contracts on motor vehicles—Obligations of provider—Contract requirements. (1) This section applies to service contracts on motor vehicles.

(2) Service contracts shall not be issued, sold, or offered for sale in this state or sold to consumers in this state unless:

(a) The service contract provider has either demonstrated its financial responsibility or assured the faithful performance of the service contract provider's obligations to its service contract holders by insuring all service contracts under a reimbursement insurance policy issued by an insurer holding a certificate of authority from the commissioner or a risk retention group, as defined in 15 U.S.C. Sec. 3901(a)(4), as long as that risk retention group is in full compliance with the federal liability risk retention act of 1986 (15 U.S.C. Sec. 3901 et seq.), is in good standing in its domiciliary jurisdiction, and properly registered with the commissioner under chapter 48.92 RCW. The insurance required by this subsection must meet the following requirements:

(i) The insurer or risk retention group must, at the time the policy is filed with the commissioner, and continuously thereafter, maintain surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of at least fifteen million dollars and annually file audited financial statements with the commissioner; and

(ii) The commissioner may authorize an insurer or risk retention group that has surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of less than fifteen million dollars, but at least equal to ten million dollars, to issue the insurance required by this subsection if the insurer or risk retention group demonstrates to the satisfaction of the commissioner that the company maintains a ratio of direct written premiums, wherever written, to surplus as to policyholders and paid-in capital of not more than three to one;

(b) The service contract conspicuously states that the obligations of the provider to the service contract holder are guaranteed under the reimbursement insurance policy, the name and address of the issuer of the reimbursement insurance policy, the applicable policy number, and the means by which a service contract holder may file a claim under the policy;

(c) The service contract conspicuously and unambiguously states the name and address of the service contract provider and identifies any administrator if different from the service contract provider, the service contract seller, and the service contract holder. The identity of the service contract seller and the service contract holder are not required to be preprinted on the service contract and may be added to the service contract at the time of sale;

(d) The service contract states the purchase price of the service contract and the terms under which the service contract is sold. The purchase price is not required to be preprinted on the service contract and may be negotiated at the time of sale;

(e) The contract contains a conspicuous statement that has been initialed by the service contract holder and discloses:

(i) Any material conditions that the service contract holder must meet to maintain coverage under the contract including, but not limited to, any maintenance schedule to which the service contract holder must adhere, any requirement placed on the service contract holder for documenting repair or maintenance work, any duty to protect against any further damage, and any procedure to which the service contract holder must adhere for filing claims;

(ii) The work and parts covered by the contract;

(iii) Any time or mileage limitations;

(iv) That the implied warranty of merchantability on the motor vehicle is not waived if the contract has been purchased within ninety days of the purchase date of the motor vehicle from a provider or service contract seller who also sold the motor vehicle covered by the contract;

(v) Any exclusions of coverage; and

(vi) The contract holder's right to return the contract for a refund, which right can be no more restrictive than provided for in subsection (4) of this section;

(f) The service contract states the procedure to obtain service or to file a claim, including but not limited to the procedures for obtaining prior approval for repair work, the toll-free telephone number if prior approval is necessary for service, and the procedure for obtaining emergency repairs performed outside of normal business hours or for obtaining twenty-four-hour telephone assistance;

(g) The service contract states the existence of any deductible amount, if applicable;

(h) The service contract states any restrictions governing the transferability of the service contract, if applicable; and

(i) The service contract states whether or not the service contract provides for or excludes consequential damages or preexisting conditions.

(3) Service contracts shall not contain a provision which requires that any civil action brought in connection with the service contract must be brought in the courts of a jurisdiction other than this state. Service contracts that authorize binding arbitration to resolve claims or disputes must allow for arbitration proceedings to be held at a location in closest proximity to the service contract holder's permanent residence.

(4) (a) At a minimum, every provider shall permit the service contract holder to return the contract within thirty days of its purchase if no claim has been made under the contract, and shall refund to the holder the full purchase price of the contract unless the service contract holder returns the contract ten or more days after its purchase, in which case the provider may charge a cancellation fee not exceeding twenty-five dollars.

(b) If no claim has been made and a contract holder returns the contract after thirty days, the provider shall refund the purchase price pro rata based upon either elapsed time or mileage computed from the date the contract was purchased and the mileage on that date, less a cancellation fee not exceeding twenty-five dollars.

(c) A ten percent penalty shall be added to any refund that is not paid within thirty days of return of the contract to the provider.

(d) If a contract holder returns the contract under this subsection, the contract is void from the beginning and the parties are in the same position as if no contract had been issued.

(e) If a service contract holder returns the contract in accordance with this section, the insurer issuing the reimbursement insurance policy covering the contract shall refund to the provider the full premium by the provider for the contract if canceled within thirty days or a pro rata refund if canceled after thirty days.

(5) A service contract provider shall not deny a claim for coverage based upon the service contract holder's failure to properly maintain the vehicle, unless the failure to maintain the vehicle involved the failed part or parts.

(6) A contract provider has only sixty days from the date of the sale of the service contract to the holder to determine whether or not the vehicle qualifies under the provider's program for that vehicle. After sixty days the vehicle qualifies for the service contract that was issued and the service contract provider may not cancel the contract and is fully obligated under the terms of the contract sold to the service contract holder. [2006 c 274 § 18.]

RCW 48.110.078 Calculation of minimum net worth or stockholder's equity—Accounting principles. (1) A service contract provider relying on RCW 48.110.050(2)(a) or 48.110.075(2)(a) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders shall calculate the minimum net worth or stockholder's equity required by this chapter in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as set forth by the financial accounting standards board. A service contract provider must follow generally accepted accounting principles, as set forth by the financial accounting standards board, in regard to either unearned service contract fees or expected service contract claims, or both, when determining its net worth. A service

contract provider relying on RCW 48.110.050(2) (a) or 48.110.075(2) (a) may elect to use statutory accounting principles in lieu of generally accepted accounting principles if it so chooses.

(2) A service contract provider relying on RCW 48.110.050(2) (b) or (c) to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to service contract holders shall calculate the minimum net worth or stockholder's equity required by this chapter in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as set forth by the financial accounting standards board but must exclude from its assets all intangible assets including, but not limited to, goodwill, franchises, customer lists, patents or trademarks, and receivables from or advances to officers, directors, employees, salesmen [salespersons], and affiliated companies when calculating net worth or stockholder's equity. However, a service contract provider relying on RCW 48.110.050(2) (b) or (c) may include receivables from affiliated companies if the affiliated company provides a written irrevocable guarantee to assure repayment of all receivables to the service contract provider and the guaranteeing organization has a net worth or stockholder's equity in excess of one hundred million dollars and submits a statement from a certified public accountant attesting that the net worth or stockholder's equity of the guaranteeing organization meets or exceeds the requirements of this subsection.

(3) A protection product guarantee provider that has elected to assure the faithful performance of its obligations to its protection product guarantee holders by insuring all protection product guarantees under a reimbursement insurance policy in accordance with RCW 48.110.055(2) (b) shall calculate the minimum net worth or stockholder's equity required by this chapter in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as set forth by the financial accounting standards board. A protection product guarantee provider will follow generally accepted accounting principles, as set forth by the financial accounting standards board, in regard to either unearned protection product guarantee contract fees or expected protection product guarantee contract claims, or both, when determining net worth. A protection product guarantee provider may elect to use statutory accounting principles in lieu of generally accepted accounting principles. [2019 c 16 § 6.]

RCW 48.110.080 Name of service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider—Use of legal name—False or misleading statements—Restrictions on requirement to purchase service contract.

(1) A service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider shall not use in its name the words insurance, casualty, guaranty, surety, mutual, or any other words descriptive of the insurance, casualty, guaranty, or surety business; or a name deceptively similar to the name or description of any insurance or surety corporation, or to the name of any other service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider. This subsection does not apply to a company that was using any of the prohibited language in its name prior to January 1, 1999. However, a company using the prohibited language in its name shall conspicuously disclose in its service contracts or protection product guarantees the following statement: "This agreement is not an insurance contract."

(2) Every service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider shall conduct its business in its own legal name, unless the commissioner has approved the use of another name.

(3) A service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider or their representatives shall not in their service contracts or protection product guarantees or literature make, permit, or cause to be made any false or misleading statement, or deliberately omit any material statement that would be considered misleading if omitted.

(4) A person, such as a bank, savings and loan association, lending institution, manufacturer, or seller shall not require the purchase of a service contract or protection product as a condition of a loan or a condition for the sale of any property. [2006 c 274 § 9; 1999 c 112 § 9.]

RCW 48.110.090 Recordkeeping of service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider—Requirements—Duration—Form.

(1) The service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider shall keep accurate accounts, books, and records concerning transactions regulated under this chapter.

(2) The service contract provider's or protection product guarantee provider's accounts, books, and records shall include the following:

(a) Copies of each type of service contract or protection product guarantees offered, issued, or sold;

(b) The name and address of each service contract holder or protection product guarantee holder, to the extent that the name and address have been furnished by the service contract holder or protection product guarantee holder;

(c) A list of the locations where the service contracts or protection products are marketed, sold, or offered for sale; and

(d) Written claim files that contain at least the dates, amounts, and descriptions of claims related to the service contracts or protection products.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider shall retain all records required to be maintained by subsection (1) of this section for at least six years after the specified coverage has expired.

(4) The records required under this chapter may be, but are not required to be, maintained on a computer disk or other recordkeeping technology. If the records are maintained in other than hard copy, the records shall be capable of duplication to legible hard copy.

(5) A service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider discontinuing business in this state shall maintain its records until it furnishes the commissioner satisfactory proof that it has discharged all obligations to service contract holders or protection product guarantee holders in this state. [2006 c 274 § 10; 1999 c 112 § 10.]

RCW 48.110.100 Termination of reimbursement insurance policy.

As applicable, an insurer that issued a reimbursement insurance policy shall not terminate the policy until a notice of termination in accordance with RCW 48.18.290 has been given to the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider and has been

delivered to the commissioner. The termination of a reimbursement insurance policy does not reduce the issuer's responsibility for service contracts issued by service contract providers or protection product guarantees issued by protection product guarantee providers prior to the effective date of the termination. [2006 c 274 § 11; 1999 c 112 § 11.]

RCW 48.110.110 Service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider—Agent of insurer which issued reimbursement insurance policy. (1) Service contract providers or protection product guarantee providers are considered to be the agent of the insurer which issued the reimbursement insurance policy for purposes of obligating the insurer to service contract holders or protection product guarantee holders in accordance with the service contract or protection product guarantee holders and this chapter. Payment of the provider fee by the consumer to the service contract seller, service contract provider, or administrator or payment of consideration for the protection product to the protection product seller constitutes payment by the consumer to the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider and to the insurer which issued the reimbursement insurance policy. In cases where a service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider is acting as an administrator and enlists other service contract providers or protection product guarantee providers, the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider acting as the administrator shall notify the insurer of the existence and identities of the other service contract providers or protection product guarantee providers.

(2) This chapter does not prevent or limit the right of an insurer which issued a reimbursement insurance policy to seek indemnification or subrogation against a service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider if the issuer pays or is obligated to pay the service contract holder or protection product guarantee holder sums that the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider was obligated to pay under the provisions of the service contract or protection product guarantee. [2006 c 274 § 12; 1999 c 112 § 12.]

RCW 48.110.120 Commissioner may conduct investigations. (1) The commissioner may conduct investigations of service contract providers or protection product guarantee providers, administrators, service contract sellers or protection product sellers, insurers, and other persons to enforce this chapter and protect service contract holders or protection product guarantee holders in this state. Upon request of the commissioner, the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider shall make all accounts, books, and records concerning service contracts or protection products offered, issued, or sold by the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider available to the commissioner which are necessary to enable the commissioner to determine compliance or noncompliance with this chapter.

(2) The commissioner may take actions under RCW 48.02.080 or 48.04.050 which are necessary or appropriate to enforce this chapter and the commissioner's rules and orders, and to protect service

contract holders or protection product guarantee holders in this state. [2006 c 274 § 13; 1999 c 112 § 13.]

RCW 48.110.130 Denial, suspension, or revocation of registration—Immediate suspension without notice or hearing—Fine.

(1) The commissioner may, subject to chapter 48.04 RCW, deny, suspend, or revoke the registration of a service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider if the commissioner finds that the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider:

(a) Has violated this chapter or the commissioner's rules and orders;

(b) Has refused to be investigated or to produce its accounts, records, and files for investigation, or if any of its officers have refused to give information with respect to its affairs or refused to perform any other legal obligation as to an investigation, when required by the commissioner;

(c) Has, without just cause, refused to pay proper claims or perform services arising under its contracts or has, without just cause, caused service contract holders or protection product guarantee holders to accept less than the amount due them or caused service contract holders or protection product guarantee holders to employ attorneys or bring suit against the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider to secure full payment or settlement of claims;

(d) Is affiliated with or under the same general management or interlocking directorate or ownership as another service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider which unlawfully transacts business in this state without having a registration;

(e) At any time fails to meet any qualification for which issuance of the registration could have been refused had such failure then existed and been known to the commissioner;

(f) Has been convicted of, or has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, a felony;

(g) Is under suspension or revocation in another state with respect to its service contract business or protection product business;

(h) Has made a material misstatement in its application for registration;

(i) Has obtained or attempted to obtain a registration through misrepresentation or fraud;

(j) Has, in the transaction of business under its registration, used fraudulent, coercive, or dishonest practices;

(k) Has failed to pay any judgment rendered against it in this state regarding a service contract or protection product guarantee within sixty days after the judgment has become final; or

(l) Has failed to respond promptly to any inquiry from the insurance commissioner relative to service contract or protection product business. A lack of response within fifteen business days from receipt of an inquiry is untimely. A response must be in writing, unless otherwise indicated in the inquiry.

(2) (a) The commissioner may, without advance notice or hearing thereon, immediately suspend the registration of a service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider if the commissioner finds that any of the following circumstances exist:

(i) The provider either does not maintain the minimum net worth required by this chapter or cannot pay its debts when debts become due, or both;

(ii) A proceeding for receivership, conservatorship, rehabilitation, or other delinquency proceeding regarding the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider has been commenced in any state; or

(iii) The business practices of the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider otherwise pose an imminent threat to the public health, safety, or welfare of the residents of this state.

(b) However, nothing in this subsection shall in any way be construed to limit the authority of the commissioner to take action against a service contract provider or a protection product guarantee provider granted by this chapter.

(3) If the commissioner finds that grounds exist for the suspension or revocation of a registration issued under this chapter, the commissioner may, in lieu of suspension or revocation, impose a fine upon the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider in an amount not more than two thousand dollars per violation. [2019 c 16 § 4; 2006 c 274 § 14; 1999 c 112 § 14.]

RCW 48.110.140 Application of consumer protection act. The legislature finds that the practices covered by this chapter are matters vitally affecting the public interest for the purpose of applying the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. Violations of this chapter are not reasonable in relation to the development and preservation of business. A violation of this chapter is an unfair or deceptive act or practice in the conduct of trade or commerce and an unfair method of competition, as specifically contemplated by RCW 19.86.020, and is a violation of the consumer protection act, chapter 19.86 RCW. Any service contract holder or protection product guarantee holder injured as a result of a violation of a provision of this chapter shall be entitled to maintain an action pursuant to chapter 19.86 RCW against the service contract provider or protection product guarantee provider and the insurer issuing the applicable service contract or protection product guarantee reimbursement insurance policy and shall be entitled to all of the rights and remedies afforded by that chapter. [2006 c 274 § 15; 1999 c 112 § 15.]

RCW 48.110.150 Rules. The commissioner may adopt rules to implement and administer this chapter. [1999 c 112 § 16.]

RCW 48.110.900 Date of application to service contracts. This chapter applies to all service contracts, other than on motor vehicles, sold or offered for sale ninety or more days after July 25, 1999. This chapter applies to all service contracts on motor vehicles and protection products sold or offered for sale after September 30, 2006. [2006 c 274 § 16; 1999 c 112 § 17.]

RCW 48.110.902 Application of chapter to motor vehicle manufacturers or import distributors. (1) RCW 48.110.030 (2) (a) and (b), (3), and (4), 48.110.040, 48.110.060, 48.110.100, 48.110.110,

48.110.075 (2)(a) and (b) and (4)(e), and 48.110.073 (1) and (2) do not apply to motor vehicle service contracts issued by a motor vehicle manufacturer or import distributor covering vehicles manufactured or imported by the motor vehicle manufacturer or import distributor.

(2) RCW 48.110.030(2)(c) does not apply to a publicly traded motor vehicle manufacturer or import distributor.

(3) RCW 48.110.030 (2)(a) through (c), (3), and (4), 48.110.040, and 48.110.073(2) do not apply to wholly owned subsidiaries of motor vehicle manufacturers or import distributors. For purposes of this subsection, a company is considered a wholly owned subsidiary as long as it is ultimately owned, directly or indirectly, one hundred percent by single or multiple motor vehicle manufacturers or import distributors.

(4) The adoption of chapter 274, Laws of 2006 does not imply that a vehicle protection product warranty was insurance prior to October 1, 2006.

(5) For purposes of this section, "motor vehicle service contract" includes a contract or agreement sold for separately stated consideration for a specific duration to perform any of the services set forth in RCW 48.110.020(18)(b). [2019 c 16 § 5; 2016 c 224 § 5; 2006 c 274 § 21.]

RCW 48.110.904 Effective date—2006 c 274. This act takes effect October 1, 2006. [2006 c 274 § 24.]