

**Chapter 15.09 RCW**  
**HORTICULTURAL PEST AND DISEASE BOARD**

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**RCW 15.09.010 Purpose.** The purpose of this chapter is to enable counties to more effectively control and prevent the spread of horticultural pests and diseases. [1969 c 113 § 1.]

**RCW 15.09.020 Creation of board.** Either upon receiving a petition filed by twenty-five landowners within the county or on its own motion, the board of county commissioners in order to achieve the purposes of this chapter may, following a hearing, create a horticultural pest and disease board. [1969 c 113 § 2.]

**RCW 15.09.030 Members—Appointment—Terms.** Each horticultural pest and disease board shall be comprised of five voting members, four of whom shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners and one of whom shall be appointed by the director. In addition, the chief county extension agent, or a county extension agent appointed by the chief agent, shall be a nonvoting member of the board.

Of the four members appointed by the board of county commissioners, one of such members shall have at least a practical knowledge of horticultural pests and diseases, and the other members shall be residents of the county, shall own land within the county and shall be engaged in the primary and commercial production of a horticultural product or products. Such appointed members shall serve a term of two years and shall serve without salary. If no such qualified candidate resides in the county, a nonresident that owns property in the county and is engaged in the primary and commercial production of a horticultural product or products may be appointed as a member of the horticultural pest and disease board. [2009 c 96 § 1; 1988 c 254 § 7; 1969 c 113 § 3.]

**RCW 15.09.040 Meeting—Quorum—Officers.** Within thirty days after the appointed seats on the horticultural pest and disease board have been filled, the board shall conduct its first meeting. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and shall be necessary for any action taken by the board. The board shall elect from its members a chair and such other officers as may be necessary. [2010 c 8 § 6017; 1969 c 113 § 4.]

**RCW 15.09.050 Powers and duties.** Each horticultural pest and disease board shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To receive complaints concerning the infection of horticultural pests and diseases on any parcel of land within the county;

(2) To inspect or cause to be inspected any parcel of land within the county for the purpose of ascertaining the presence of horticultural pests and diseases as provided by RCW 15.09.070;

(3) To order any landowner to control and prevent the spread of horticultural pests and diseases from his or her property, as provided by RCW 15.09.080;

(4) To control and prevent the spread of horticultural pests and diseases on any property within the county as provided by RCW 15.09.080, and to charge the owner for the expense of such work in accordance with RCW 15.09.080 and 15.09.090;

(5) To employ such persons and purchase such goods and machinery as the board of county commissioners may provide;

(6) To adopt, following a hearing, such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the administration of this chapter. [2010 c 8 § 6018; 1969 c 113 § 5.]

**RCW 15.09.055 Contracts and agreements.** The horticultural pest and disease board may enter into contracts and agreements with federal, state, and local government agencies, Indian tribes, and any other organization to perform any duties pursuant to the identification, detection, control, or eradication of horticultural pests and diseases. [2000 c 144 § 35.]

**RCW 15.09.060 Owner's duty to control pests and diseases.** Each owner of land containing any plant or plants shall perform or cause to be performed such acts as may be necessary to control and to prevent the spread of horticultural pests and diseases, as such pests and diseases are defined under RCW 15.08.010, as now or hereafter amended, or as such pests and diseases are defined by the director of the department of agriculture in accordance with the purpose of this chapter and with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW. The word "owner" as used in this section shall mean the possessor or possessors of any form of legal or equitable title to land and entitlement to possession. For purposes of liability under this chapter, the owners of land shall be jointly and severally liable. [1969 c 113 § 6.]

**RCW 15.09.070 Right of entry—Search warrant.** Any authorized agent or employee of the county horticultural pest and disease board may enter upon any property for the purpose of administering this chapter and any power exercisable pursuant thereto, including the taking of specimens, general inspection, and the performance of such acts as are necessary for controlling and preventing the spreading of horticultural pests and diseases. Such entry may be without the consent of the owner, and no action for trespass or damages shall lie so long as such entry and any activities connected therewith are undertaken and prosecuted with reasonable care.

Should any such employee or authorized agent of the county horticultural pest and disease board be denied access to such property where such access was sought to carry out the purpose and provisions of this chapter, the said board may apply to any court of competent jurisdiction for a search warrant authorizing access to such property for said purpose. The court may upon such application issue the search warrant for the purpose requested. [1969 c 113 § 7.]

**RCW 15.09.080 Failure to control horticultural pests and diseases—Remedies.** (1) Whenever the horticultural pest and disease control board finds that an owner of land has failed to control and prevent the spread of horticultural pests and diseases on his or her land, as is his or her duty under RCW 15.09.060, it shall provide such person with written notice, which notice shall identify the pests and diseases found to be present and shall order prompt control or disinfection action to be taken within a specified and reasonable time period.

(2) If the person to whom the notice is directed fails to take action in accordance with this notice, then the board shall perform or cause to be performed such measures as are necessary to control and prevent the spread of the pests and diseases on such property and the expense of this work shall be charged to such person. Any action that the board determines requires the destruction of infested plants, absent the consent of the owner, shall be subject to the provisions of subsection (3) of this section.

(3) In the event the owner of land fails to control and prevent the spread of horticultural pests and diseases as required by RCW 15.09.060, and the county horticultural pest and disease board determines that actions it has taken to control and prevent the spread of such pests or diseases has not been effective or the county horticultural pest and disease board determines that no reasonable measures other than removal of the plants will control and prevent the spread of such pests or diseases, the county horticultural pest and disease board may petition the superior court of the county in which the property is situated for an order directing the owner to show cause why the plants should not be removed at the owner's expense and for an order authorizing removal of said infected plants. The petition shall state: (a) The legal description of the property on which the plants are located; (b) the name and place of residence, if known, of the owners of said property; (c) that the county horticultural pest and disease board has, through its officers or agents, inspected said property and that the plants thereon, or some of them, are infested with a horticultural pest or disease as defined by RCW 15.08.010; (d) the dates of all notices and orders delivered to the owners pursuant to this section; (e) that the owner has failed to control and prevent

the spread of said horticultural pest or disease; and (f) that the county horticultural pest and disease board has determined that the measures taken by it have not controlled or prevented the spread of the pest or disease or that no reasonable measure can be taken that will control and prevent the spread of such pest or disease except removal of the plants. The petition shall request an order directing the owner to appear and show cause why the plants on said property shall not be removed at the expense of the owner, to be collected as provided in this chapter. The order to show cause shall direct the owner to appear on a date certain and show cause, if any, why the plants on the property described in the petition should not be removed at the owner's expense. The order to show cause and petition shall be served on the owner not less than five days before the hearing date specified in the order in the same manner as a summons and complaint. In the event the owner fails to appear or fails to show by competent evidence that the horticultural pest or disease has been controlled, then the court shall authorize the county horticultural pest and disease board to remove the plants at the owner's expense, to be collected as provided by this chapter. If the procedure provided herein is followed, no action for damages for removal of the plants shall lie against the county horticultural pest and disease board, its officers or agents, or the county in which it is situated. [2010 c 8 § 6019; 1991 c 257 § 1; 1982 c 153 § 4; 1969 c 113 § 8.]

**Severability—Effective date—1982 c 153:** See notes following RCW 17.24.210.

**RCW 15.09.090 Hearing on liability of owner for costs or charges—Review.** Any person upon request and pursuant to the rules and regulations of the horticultural pest and disease board shall be entitled to a hearing before the board on any charge or cost for which such person is alleged to be liable under subsection (2) of RCW 15.09.080. Any determination or final action by the board shall be subject to judicial review by a proceeding in the superior court of the county where the property is situated and to any damages suffered on account of disinfection work wrongfully undertaken, but no stay or injunction shall lie to delay any such disinfection work subsequent to notice given pursuant to RCW 15.09.080. [1969 c 113 § 9.]

**RCW 15.09.100 Payment of expenses and costs—Penalty—Collection.** Any amount charged to the owner of land in accordance with the provisions of RCW 15.09.080 and 15.09.090 shall be paid by such owner within sixty days of the date in which he or she was billed for such amount. If payment is not made within such sixty day period, the amount of such charge, together with a ten percent penalty surcharge, shall, for purposes of collection, become a tax lien under RCW 84.60.010, as now or hereafter amended, and shall be promptly collected as such by the county treasurer: PROVIDED, That where good cause is shown the board may extend for an additional two months the time period during which payment shall be made. [2010 c 8 § 6020; 1969 c 113 § 10.]

**RCW 15.09.110 Refund of charges paid.** In regard to any charge made pursuant to RCW 15.09.080, if either the horticultural pest and disease board or the superior court on judicial review disallows such charge, then any amount paid on such charge, together with any interest or penalty, shall be promptly refunded by the county from the county's current expense fund or from any other county funds available. In addition, the county shall pay six percent simple annual interest on such amount refunded. [1969 c 113 § 11.]

**RCW 15.09.120 Disposition of moneys collected.** Any moneys collected under this chapter shall be placed in the county current expense fund together with any taxes collected pursuant to the provisions of RCW 15.08.260, as now or hereafter amended. [1969 c 113 § 12.]

**RCW 15.09.131 Operating budget—Source of funds.** Funding of the operating budget of a horticultural pest and disease board may be derived from any or all of the following:

(1) Moneys from the county general fund or other general revenues, as appropriated by the board of county commissioners or other county legislative authority;

(2) A horticultural tax, as authorized in RCW 15.08.260, levied by the county board of commissioners or other county legislative authority; or

(3) An assessment against all lands. [2000 c 144 § 33.]

**RCW 15.09.135 Assessment—Public hearing—Rate—County review—Lien.** (1) Prior to the levying of an assessment authorized in RCW 15.09.131, the horticultural pest and disease board shall hold a public hearing at which it will gather information to serve as a basis for classification and then classify the lands into suitable classification, including but not limited to orchard lands, range lands, dry lands, nonuse lands, forestlands, or federal lands.

(2) The board shall develop and forward to the county board of commissioners or other county legislative authority, as a proposed level of assessment for each class, an amount that seems just. The assessment rate shall be either uniform per acre in its respective class, a flat rate per parcel, or a flat rate per parcel rate plus a uniform rate per acre: PROVIDED, That if no benefits are found to accrue to a class of land, a zero assessment may be levied.

(3) The county board of commissioners or other county legislative authority, upon receipt of the proposed levels of assessment from the horticultural pest and disease board, after a hearing, shall accept or modify by resolution, or refer back to the horticultural pest and disease board for its reconsideration, all or any portion of the proposed levels of assessment.

(4) The amount of the assessment constitutes a lien against the property. The assessments shall be subject to the same provisions as those for property tax collections, as provided in RCW 84.56.020, and shall be collected by the county treasurer under the authority in RCW 84.56.035. [2000 c 144 § 34.]

**RCW 15.09.140 Abolishment of board.** Upon receipt of a petition signed by twenty-five landowners within the county or on its own motion, the board of county commissioners may abolish the pest and disease board following a hearing and a finding that the purposes of this chapter would not be sufficiently served by the continued existence of such board. [1969 c 113 § 14.]

**RCW 15.09.900 Chapter cumulative.** The effects of the provisions of this chapter on the provisions of chapter 15.08 RCW shall be cumulative. [1969 c 113 § 15.]