

Chapter 70.114A RCW
TEMPORARY WORKER HOUSING—HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION

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RCW 70.114A.010 Findings—Intent. The legislature finds that there is an inadequate supply of temporary and permanent housing for migrant and seasonal workers in this state. The legislature also finds that unclear, complex regulations related to the development, construction, and permitting of worker housing inhibit the development of this much needed housing. The legislature further finds that as a result, many workers are forced to obtain housing that is unsafe and unsanitary.

Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to encourage the development of temporary and permanent housing for workers that is safe and sanitary by: Establishing a clear and concise set of regulations for temporary housing; establishing a streamlined permitting and administrative process that will be locally administered and encourage the development of such housing; and by providing technical assistance to organizations or individuals interested in the development of worker housing. [1995 c 220 § 1.]

RCW 70.114A.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Agricultural employee" means any person who renders personal services to, or under the direction of, an agricultural employer in connection with the employer's agricultural activity.

(2) "Agricultural employer" means any person engaged in agricultural activity, including the growing, producing, or harvesting of farm or nursery products, or engaged in the forestation or reforestation of lands, which includes but is not limited to the planting, transplanting, tubing, precommercial thinning, and thinning of trees and seedlings, the clearing, piling, and disposal of brush and slash, the harvest of Christmas trees, and other related activities.

(3) "Department" means the department of health.

- (4) " Dwelling unit " means a shelter, building, or portion of a building, that may include cooking and eating facilities, that is:
- (a) Provided and designated by the operator as either a sleeping area, living area, or both, for occupants; and
 - (b) Physically separated from other sleeping and common-use areas.
- (5) " Enforcement " and " enforcement actions " include the authority to levy and collect fines.
- (6) " Facility " means a sleeping place, drinking water, toilet, sewage disposal, food handling installation, or other installations required for compliance with this chapter.
- (7) " Occupant " means a temporary worker or a person who resides with a temporary worker at the housing site.
- (8) " Operator " means a person holding legal title to the land on which temporary worker housing is located. However, if the legal title and the right to possession are in different persons, " operator " means a person having the lawful control or supervision over the temporary worker housing under a lease or other arrangement.
- (9) " Temporary worker " means an agricultural employee employed intermittently and not residing year-round at the same site.
- (10) " Temporary worker housing " means a place, area, or piece of land where sleeping places or housing sites are provided by an agricultural employer for his or her agricultural employees or by another person, including a temporary worker housing operator, who is providing such accommodations for employees, for temporary, seasonal occupancy. [1999 c 374 § 6; 1995 c 220 § 2.]

RCW 70.114A.030 Application of chapter. Chapter 220, Laws of 1995, applies to temporary worker housing that consists of five or more dwelling units, or any combination of dwelling units, dormitories, or spaces that house ten or more occupants. [1995 c 220 § 3.]

RCW 70.114A.040 Responsibilities of department. The department is designated the single state agency responsible for encouraging the development of additional temporary worker housing, and shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the various state and local agencies to assure a seamless, nonduplicative system for the development and operation of temporary worker housing. [1995 c 220 § 4.]

RCW 70.114A.045 Housing operation standards—Departments' agreement—Enforcement. By December 1, 1999, the department and the department of labor and industries shall jointly establish a formal agreement that identifies the roles of each of the two agencies with respect to the enforcement of temporary worker housing operation standards.

The agreement shall, to the extent feasible, provide for inspection and enforcement actions by a single agency, and shall include measures to avoid multiple citations for the same violation. [1999 c 374 § 3.]

RCW 70.114A.050 Housing on rural worksites. Temporary worker housing located on a rural worksite, and used for workers employed on the worksite, shall be considered a permitted use at the rural worksite for the purposes of zoning or other land use review processes, subject only to height, setback, and road access requirements of the underlying zone. [1995 c 220 § 5.]

RCW 70.114A.060 Inspection of housing. The secretary of the department or authorized representative may inspect housing covered by chapter 220, Laws of 1995, to enforce temporary worker housing rules adopted by the state board of health prior to July 25, 1999, or the department, or when the secretary or representative has reasonable cause to believe that a violation of temporary worker housing rules adopted by the state board of health prior to July 25, 1999, or the department is occurring or is being maintained. If the buildings or premises are occupied as a residence, a reasonable effort shall be made to obtain permission from the resident. If the premises or building is unoccupied, a reasonable effort shall be made to locate the owner or other person having charge or control of the building or premises and request entry. If consent for entry is not obtained, for whatever reason, the secretary or representative shall have recourse to every remedy provided by law to secure entry. [1999 c 374 § 7; 1995 c 220 § 6.]

RCW 70.114A.065 Licensing, operation, and inspection—Rules. The department and the department of labor and industries shall adopt joint rules for the licensing, operation, and inspection of temporary worker housing, and the enforcement thereof. These rules shall establish standards that are as effective as the standards developed under the Washington industrial safety and health act, chapter 49.17 RCW. [1999 c 374 § 1.]

RCW 70.114A.070 Technical assistance. The department of commerce shall contract with private, nonprofit corporations to provide technical assistance to any private individual or nonprofit organization wishing to construct temporary or permanent worker housing. The assistance may include information on state and local application and approval procedures, information or assistance in applying for federal, state, or local financial assistance, including tax incentives, information on cost-effective housing designs, or any other assistance the department of commerce may deem helpful in obtaining the active participation of private individuals or groups in constructing or operating temporary or permanent worker housing. [2023 c 470 § 2114; 1995 c 220 § 7.]

Explanatory statement—2023 c 470: See note following RCW 10.99.030.

RCW 70.114A.081 Temporary worker building code—Rules—Guidelines—Exceptions—Enforcement—Variations. (1) The department shall adopt by rule a temporary worker building code in conformance with the temporary worker housing standards developed under the Washington

industrial safety and health act, chapter 49.17 RCW, and the following guidelines:

(a) The temporary worker building code shall provide construction standards for shelter and associated facilities that are safe, secure, and capable of withstanding the stresses and loads associated with their designated use, and to which they are likely to be subjected by the elements;

(b) The temporary worker building code shall permit and facilitate designs and formats that allow for maximum affordability, consistent with the provision of decent, safe, and sanitary housing;

(c) In developing the temporary worker building code the department of health shall consider:

(i) The need for dormitory type housing for groups of unrelated individuals; and

(ii) The need for housing to accommodate families;

(d) The temporary worker building code shall incorporate the opportunity for the use of construction alternatives and the use of new technologies that meet the performance standards required by law;

(e) The temporary worker building code shall include standards for heating and insulation appropriate to the type of structure and length and season of occupancy;

(f) The temporary worker building code shall include standards for temporary worker housing that are to be used only during periods when no auxiliary heat is required; and

(g) The temporary worker building code shall provide that persons operating temporary worker housing consisting of four or fewer dwelling units or combinations of dwelling units, dormitories, or spaces that house nine or fewer occupants may elect to comply with the provisions of the temporary worker building code, and that unless the election is made, such housing is subject to the codes adopted under RCW 19.27.031.

(2) In adopting the temporary worker building code, the department shall make exceptions to the codes listed in RCW 19.27.031 and chapter 19.27A RCW, in keeping with the guidelines set forth in this section. The initial temporary worker building code adopted by the department shall be substantially equivalent with the temporary worker building code developed by the state building code council as directed by section 8, chapter 220, Laws of 1995.

(3) The temporary worker building code authorized and required by this section shall be enforced by the department.

The department shall have the authority to allow minor variations from the temporary worker building code that do not compromise the health or safety of workers. Procedures for requesting variations and guidelines for granting such requests shall be included in the rules adopted under this section. [1999 c 374 § 8; 1998 c 37 § 2.]

RCW 70.114A.100 Rules—Compliance with federal act. Any rules adopted under chapter 220, Laws of 1995, pertaining to an employer who is subject to the migrant and seasonal agricultural worker protection act (96 Stat. 2583; 29 U.S.C. Sec. 1801 et seq.), must comply with the housing provisions of that federal act. [1995 c 220 § 10.]

RCW 70.114A.110 Cherry harvest temporary labor camps—Rule making—Definition—Conditions for occupation—Application. (1) The

department and the department of labor and industries are directed to engage in joint rule making to establish standards for cherry harvest temporary labor camps. These standards may include some variation from standards that are necessary for longer occupancies, provided they are as effective as the standards adopted under the Washington industrial safety and health act, chapter 49.17 RCW. As used in this section "cherry harvest temporary labor camp" means a place where housing and related facilities are provided to agricultural employees by agricultural employers for their use while employed for the harvest of cherries. The housing and facilities may be occupied by agricultural employees for a period not to exceed one week before the commencement through one week following the conclusion of the cherry crop harvest within the state.

(2) Facilities licensed under rules adopted under this section may not be used to provide housing for agricultural employees who are nonimmigrant aliens admitted to the United States for agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature under section 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a) of the immigration and nationality act (8 U.S.C. Sec. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a)).

(3) This section has no application to temporary worker housing constructed in conformance with codes listed in RCW 19.27.031 or 70.114A.081. [2002 c 23 § 1; 1999 c 374 § 5.]

RCW 70.114A.901 Effective date—1995 c 220. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [May 3, 1995]. [1995 c 220 § 14.]