

Chapter 69.25 RCW
WASHINGTON WHOLESOME EGGS AND EGG PRODUCTS ACT

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RCW 69.25.010 Legislative finding. Eggs and egg products are an important source of the state's total supply of food, and are used in food in various forms. They are consumed throughout the state and the major portion thereof moves in intrastate commerce. It is essential, in the public interest, that the health and welfare of consumers be protected by the adoption of measures prescribed herein for assuring that eggs and egg products distributed to them and used in products consumed by them are wholesome, otherwise not adulterated, and properly labeled and packaged. Lack of effective regulation for the handling or disposition of unwholesome, otherwise adulterated, or improperly labeled or packaged egg products and certain qualities of eggs is injurious to the public welfare and destroys markets for wholesome, unadulterated, and properly labeled and packaged eggs and egg products and results in sundry losses to producers and processors, as well as injury to consumers. Unwholesome, otherwise adulterated, or improperly labeled or packaged products can be sold at lower prices and compete unfairly with the wholesome, unadulterated, and properly labeled and packaged products, to the detriment of consumers and the public generally. It is also essential to protect the health and welfare of consumers, promote food safety, advance animal welfare, and protect against the negative fiscal effects on the state associated with the lack of effective regulation of egg production and sales. It is hereby found that all egg products and the qualities of eggs which are regulated under this chapter are either in intrastate commerce, or substantially affect such commerce, and that regulation by the director, as contemplated by this chapter, is appropriate to protect the health and welfare of consumers. [2019 c 276 s 2; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 2.]

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: "The legislature finds that the purpose of this act is to improve the regulation of egg production and sales in order to protect the health and welfare of consumers, promote food safety, advance animal welfare, and protect against the negative fiscal effects on the state associated with the lack of effective regulation of egg production and sales." [2019 c 276 s 1.]

Construction—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.065.

RCW 69.25.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly otherwise requires.

(1) "Adulterated" applies to any egg or egg product under one or more of the following circumstances:

(a) If it bears or contains any poisonous or deleterious substance that may render it injurious to health; but in case the substance is not an added substance, such article is not considered adulterated under this clause if the quantity of such substance in or on such article does not ordinarily render it injurious to health;

(b) If it bears or contains any added poisonous or added deleterious substance (other than one which is: (i) A pesticide chemical in or on a raw agricultural commodity; (ii) a food additive; or (iii) a color additive) which may, in the judgment of the director, make such article unfit for human food;

(c) If it is, in whole or in part, a raw agricultural commodity and such commodity bears or contains a pesticide chemical that renders it adulterated within the meaning of RCW 15.130.200(2);

(d) If it bears or contains any food additive that renders it adulterated within the meaning of RCW 15.130.200(2);

(e) If it bears or contains any color additive that renders it adulterated within the meaning of RCW 15.130.200(2); however, an article which is not otherwise deemed adulterated under (c), (d), or (e) of this subsection are nevertheless deemed adulterated if use of the pesticide chemical, food additive, or color additive, in or on such article, is prohibited by regulations of the director in official plants;

(f) If it consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, or decomposed substance, or if it is otherwise unfit for human food;

(g) If it consists in whole or in part of any damaged egg or eggs to the extent that the egg meat or white is leaking, or it has been contacted by egg meat or white leaking from other eggs;

(h) If it has been prepared, packaged, or held under insanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with filth, or whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health;

(i) If it is an egg which has been subjected to incubation or the product of any egg which has been subjected to incubation;

(j) If its container is composed, in whole or in part, of any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render the contents injurious to health;

(k) If it has been intentionally subjected to radiation, unless the use of the radiation was in conformity with a regulation or exemption in effect under chapter 15.130 RCW; or

(l) If any valuable constituent has been in whole or in part omitted or abstracted therefrom; or if any substance has been substituted, wholly or in part therefor; or if damage or inferiority has been concealed in any manner; or if any substance has been added thereto or mixed or packed therewith so as to increase its bulk or weight, or reduce its quality or strength, or make it appear better or of greater value than it is.

(2) "Ambient temperature" means the atmospheric temperature surrounding or encircling shell eggs.

(3) "At retail" means any transaction in intrastate commerce between a retailer and a consumer.

(4) "Business licensing system" means the mechanism established by chapter 19.02 RCW by which business licenses, endorsed for individual state-issued licenses, are issued and renewed utilizing a

business license application and a business license expiration date common to each renewable license endorsement.

(5) "Cage-free housing system" means an indoor or outdoor controlled environment for egg-laying hens within which:

(a) Hens are free to roam unrestricted except by external walls;

(b) Hens are provided enrichments that allow them to exhibit natural behaviors including, at a minimum, scratch areas, perches, nest boxes, and dust bathing areas; and

(c) Farm employees can provide care while standing somewhere within the hens' usable floor space.

(6) "Candling" means the examination of the interior of eggs by the use of transmitted light used in a partially dark room or place.

(7) "Capable of use as human food" applies to any egg or egg product unless it is denatured, or otherwise identified, as required by regulations prescribed by the director, to deter its use as human food.

(8) "Check" means an egg that has a broken shell or crack in the shell but has its shell membranes intact and contents not leaking.

(9) "Clean and sound shell egg" means any egg whose shell is free of adhering dirt or foreign material and is not cracked or broken.

(10) "Consumer" means any person who purchases eggs or egg products for his or her own family use or consumption; or any restaurant, hotel, boarding house, bakery, or other institution or concern which purchases eggs or egg products for serving to guests or patrons thereof, or for its own use in cooking or baking.

(11) "Container" or "package" includes any box, can, tin, plastic, or other receptacle, wrapper, or cover.

(12) "Department" means the department of agriculture of the state of Washington.

(13) "Director" means the director of the department or his duly authorized representative.

(14) "Dirty egg" means an egg that has a shell that is unbroken and has adhering dirt or foreign material.

(15) "Egg" means the shell egg of the domesticated chicken, turkey, duck, goose, or guinea, or any other specie of fowl.

(16) "Egg handler" or "dealer" means any person who produces, contracts for or obtains possession or control of any eggs or egg products for the purpose of sale to another dealer or retailer, or for processing and sale to a dealer, retailer or consumer. For the purpose of this chapter, "sell" or "sale" includes the following: Offer for sale, expose for sale, have in possession for sale, exchange, barter, trade, or as an inducement for the sale of another product.

(17) "Egg-laying hen" means any female domesticated chicken, turkey, duck, goose, or guinea fowl kept for the purpose of egg production.

(18)(a) "Egg product" means any dried, frozen, or liquid eggs, with or without added ingredients, excepting products which contain eggs only in a relatively small proportion, or historically have not been, in the judgment of the director, considered by consumers as products of the egg food industry, and which may be exempted by the director under such conditions as the director may prescribe to assure that the egg ingredients are not adulterated and are not represented as egg products.

(b) The following products are not included in the definition of "egg product" if they are prepared from eggs or egg products that have been either inspected by the United States department of agriculture or by the department under a cooperative agreement with the United

States department of agriculture: Freeze-dried products, imitation egg products, egg substitutes, dietary foods, dried no-bake custard mixes, eggnog mixes, acidic dressings, noodles, milk and egg dip, cake mixes, French toast, balut and other similar ethnic delicacies, and sandwiches containing eggs or egg products.

(19) "Immediate container" means any consumer package, or any other container in which egg products, not consumer-packaged, are packed.

(20) "Incubator reject" means an egg that has been subjected to incubation and has been removed from incubation during the hatching operations as infertile or otherwise unhatchable.

(21) "Inedible" means eggs of the following descriptions: Black rots, yellow rots, white rots, mixed rots (addled eggs), sour eggs, eggs with green whites, eggs with stuck yolks, moldy eggs, musty eggs, eggs showing blood rings, and eggs containing embryo chicks (at or beyond the blood ring stage).

(22) "Inspection" means the application of such inspection methods and techniques as are deemed necessary by the director to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

(23) "Inspector" means any employee or official of the department authorized to inspect eggs or egg products under the authority of this chapter.

(24) "Intrastate commerce" means any eggs or egg products in intrastate commerce, whether such eggs or egg products are intended for sale, held for sale, offered for sale, sold, stored, transported, or handled in this state in any manner and prepared for eventual distribution in this state, whether at wholesale or retail.

(25) "Leaker" means an egg that has a crack or break in the shell and shell membranes to the extent that the egg contents are exposed or are exuding or free to exude through the shell.

(26) "Loss" means an egg that is unfit for human food because it is smashed or broken so that its contents are leaking; or overheated, frozen, or contaminated; or an incubator reject; or because it contains a bloody white, large meat spots, a large quantity of blood, or other foreign material.

(27) "Misbranded" applies to egg products that are not labeled and packaged in accordance with the requirements prescribed by regulations of the director under RCW 69.25.100.

(28) "Official certificate" means any certificate prescribed by regulations of the director for issuance by an inspector or other person performing official functions under this chapter.

(29) "Official device" means any device prescribed or authorized by the director for use in applying any official mark.

(30) "Official inspection legend" means any symbol prescribed by regulations of the director showing that egg products were inspected in accordance with this chapter.

(31) "Official mark" means the official inspection legend or any other symbol prescribed by regulations of the director to identify the status of any article under this chapter.

(32) "Official plant" means any plant which is licensed under the provisions of this chapter, at which inspection of the processing of egg products is maintained by the United States department of agriculture or by the state under cooperative agreements with the United States department of agriculture or by the state.

(33) "Official standards" means the standards of quality, grades, and weight classes for eggs, adopted under the provisions of this chapter.

(34) "Pasteurize" means the subjecting of each particle of egg products to heat or other treatments to destroy harmful, viable microorganisms by such processes as may be prescribed by regulations of the director.

(35) "Person" means any natural person, firm, partnership, exchange, association, trustee, receiver, corporation, and any member, officer, or employee thereof, or assignee for the benefit of creditors.

(36) "Pesticide chemical," "food additive," "color additive," and "raw agricultural commodity" have the same meaning for purposes of this chapter as defined in chapter 15.130 RCW.

(37) "Plant" means any place of business where egg products are processed.

(38) "Processing" means manufacturing egg products, including breaking eggs or filtering, mixing, blending, pasteurizing, stabilizing, cooling, freezing, drying, or packaging egg products.

(39) "Restricted egg" means any check, dirty egg, incubator reject, inedible, leaker, or loss.

(40) "Retailer" means any person in intrastate commerce who sells eggs or egg products to a consumer.

(41) "Shipping container" means any container used in packaging a product packed in an immediate container.

(42) "Usable floor space" means the total square footage of floor space provided to each egg-laying hen, calculated by dividing the total square footage of floor space in an enclosure by the number of hens in that enclosure. "Usable floor space" includes ground space and elevated level or nearly level platforms to accommodate egg flow upon which hens can roost, but does not include perches or ramps. [2019 c 276 s 3. Prior: 2013 c 144 s 44; prior: 2011 c 306 s 1; 1995 c 374 s 25; 1982 c 182 s 42; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 3.]

Reviser's note: The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.010.

Construction—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.065.

Effective date—2011 c 306: "This act takes effect August 1, 2012." [2011 c 306 s 7.]

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

RCW 69.25.030 Purpose—Certain federal rules adopted by reference—Hearing, notice by director—Adoption of rules by director. The purpose of this chapter is to promote uniformity of state legislation and regulations with the federal egg products inspection act, 21 U.S.C. sec. 1031, et seq., and regulations adopted thereunder. In accord with such declared purpose, any regulations adopted under the federal egg products inspection act relating to eggs and egg products, as defined in RCW 69.25.020 (15) and (18), in effect on July 1, 1975, are hereby deemed to have been adopted under the provisions hereof. Further, to promote such uniformity, any regulations adopted hereafter under the provisions of the federal egg products inspection act relating to eggs and egg products, as defined in RCW 69.25.020

(15) and (18), and published in the federal register, shall be deemed to have been adopted under the provisions of this chapter in accord with chapter 34.05 RCW, as now or hereafter amended. The director may, however, within thirty days of the publication of the adoption of any such regulation under the federal egg products inspection act, give public notice that a hearing will be held to determine if such regulations shall not be applicable under the provisions of this chapter. Such hearing shall be in accord with the requirements of chapter 34.05 RCW, as now or hereafter amended.

The director, in addition to the foregoing, may adopt any rule and regulation necessary to carry out the purpose and provisions of this chapter. [2025 c 58 s 2038; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 4.]

Explanatory note—2025 c 58: See note following RCW 1.16.050.

RCW 69.25.040 Application of administrative procedure act. The adoption, amendment, modification, or revocation of any rules or regulations under the provisions of this chapter, or the holding of a hearing in regard to a license issued or which may be issued or denied under the provisions of this chapter, shall be subject to the applicable provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW, the administrative procedure act, as now or hereafter amended. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 5.]

RCW 69.25.050 Egg handler's or dealer's license and number—Branch license—Application, fee, posting required, procedure. (1) (a) No person may act as an egg handler or dealer without first obtaining an annual license and permanent dealer's number from the department. (b) Application for an egg dealer license and renewal or egg dealer branch license must be made through the business licensing system as provided under chapter 19.02 RCW and expires on the business license expiration date. The annual egg dealer license fee is thirty dollars and the annual egg dealer branch license fee is fifteen dollars. A copy of the business license issued under chapter 19.02 RCW must be posted at each location where the licensee operates. The application must include the full name of the applicant for the license, the location of each facility the applicant intends to operate, and, if applicable, documentation of compliance with RCW 69.25.065 or 69.25.103.

(2) If an applicant is an individual, receiver, trustee, firm, partnership, association or corporation, the full name of each member of the firm or partnership or the names of the officers of the association or corporation must be given on the application. The application must further state the principal business address of the applicant in the state and elsewhere and the name of a person domiciled in this state authorized to receive and accept service of summons of legal notices of all kinds for the applicant and any other necessary information prescribed by the director.

(3) The applicant must be issued a license or renewal under this section upon the approval of the application and compliance with the provisions of this chapter, including the applicable rules adopted by the department.

(4) The license and permanent egg handler or dealer's number is nontransferable. [2013 c 144 s 45; 2011 c 306 s 2; 1995 c 374 s 26; 1982 c 182 s 43; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 6.]

Effective date—2011 c 306: See note following RCW 69.25.020.

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

Business license—Expiration date: RCW 19.02.090.

Business licensing system

definition: RCW 69.25.020.

to include additional licenses: RCW 19.02.110.

RCW 69.25.060 Egg handler's or dealer's license—Late renewal fee. If the application for the renewal of an egg handler's or dealer's license is not filed before the business license expiration date, the business license delinquency fee must be assessed under chapter 19.02 RCW and must be paid by the applicant before the renewal license is issued. [2013 c 144 s 46; 1982 c 182 s 44; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 7.]

Business license

delinquency fee—Rate—Disposition: RCW 19.02.085.

expiration date: RCW 19.02.090.

RCW 69.25.065 Egg handler's or dealer's license—Renewal applications—Commercial egg layer operation requirements—Proof. (1) All new and renewal applications submitted under RCW 69.25.050 before January 1, 2024, must include proof that all eggs and egg products provided in intrastate commerce by the applicant are produced by commercial egg layer operations:

(a) With a current certification under the 2010 version of the united egg producers animal husbandry guidelines for United States egg laying flocks for conventional cage systems or cage-free housing systems or a subsequent version of the guidelines recognized by the department in rule; or

(b) Operated in strict compliance with any standards, adopted by the department in rule, that are equivalent to or more stringent than the standards identified in (a) of this subsection.

(2) All new and renewal applications submitted under RCW 69.25.050 before January 1, 2017, must, in addition to complying with subsection (1) of this section, include proof that all eggs and egg products provided in intrastate commerce by the applicant are produced by commercial egg layer operations whose housing facilities, if built between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2016, are either:

(a) Approved under, or convertible to, the American humane association facility system plan for enriched colony housing in effect on January 1, 2011, or a subsequent version of the plan recognized by the department in rule and, in addition, are convertible to the standards identified in RCW 69.25.107; or

(b) Operated in strict compliance with any standards, adopted by the department in rule, that are equivalent to or more stringent than the standards identified in (a) of this subsection.

(3) All new and renewal applications submitted under RCW 69.25.050 between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2023, must, in addition to complying with subsection (1) of this section, include proof that all eggs and egg products provided in intrastate commerce by the applicant are produced by commercial egg layer operations whose housing facilities, if built on or after January 1, 2012, are either:

(a) Approved under the American humane association facility system plan and audit protocol for enriched colony housing in effect on January 1, 2011, or a subsequent version of the plan recognized by the department in rule and, in addition, are operated to the standards identified in RCW 69.25.107; or

(b) Operated in strict compliance with any standards, adopted by the department in rule, that are equivalent to or more stringent than the standards identified in (a) of this subsection.

(4) All new and renewal applications submitted under RCW 69.25.050 on or after January 1, 2024, must include proof that all eggs and egg products provided in intrastate commerce by the applicant are produced by commercial egg layer operations that are either:

(a) Housing egg-laying hens with at a minimum the amount of usable floor space per hen required by the 2017 edition of the united egg producers' Animal Husbandry Guidelines for United States Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing, or a subsequent version of the plan recognized by the department in rule as providing equal or more usable floor space per egg-laying hen and, in addition, are operated to the standards identified in RCW 69.25.107; or

(b) Operated in strict compliance with any standards, adopted by the department in rule, that are equivalent to or more stringent than the standards identified in (a) of this subsection.

(5) The following are exempt from the requirements of subsections (2) and (3) of this section:

(a) Applicants with fewer than three thousand laying chickens; and

(b) Commercial egg layer operations when producing eggs or egg products from turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, or other species of fowl other than domestic chickens. [2019 c 276 s 4; 2011 c 306 s 3.]

Construction—2019 c 276: "The provisions of this act are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other laws protecting animal welfare. This act shall not be construed to limit any other state laws or regulations protecting the welfare of animals or to prevent a local governing body from adopting and enforcing its own animal welfare laws and regulations." [2019 c 276 s 9.]

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.010.

Effective date—2011 c 306: See note following RCW 69.25.020.

RCW 69.25.070 Egg handler's or dealer's license—Denial, suspension, revocation, or conditional issuance. The department shall deny, suspend, or revoke a license or a conditional license if it determines that an applicant or licensee has committed any of the following acts:

(1) That the applicant or licensee is violating or has violated any of the provisions of this chapter or rules and regulations adopted thereunder.

(2) That the application contains any materially false or misleading statement or involves any misrepresentation by any officer, agent, or employee of the applicant.

(3) That the applicant or licensee has concealed or withheld any facts regarding any violation of this chapter by any officer, agent, or employee of the applicant or licensee. [2019 c 276 s 5; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 8.]

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.010.

Construction—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.065.

RCW 69.25.080 Continuous inspection at processing plants—Exemptions—Condemnation and destruction of adulterated eggs and egg products—Reprocessing—Appeal—Inspections of egg handlers. (1) For the purpose of preventing the entry into or movement in intrastate commerce of any egg product which is capable of use as human food and is misbranded or adulterated, the director shall, whenever processing operations are being conducted, unless under inspection by the United States department of agriculture, cause continuous inspection to be made, in accordance with the regulations promulgated under this chapter, of the processing of egg products, in each plant processing egg products for commerce, unless exempted under RCW 69.25.170. Without restricting the application of the preceding sentence to other kinds of establishments within its provisions, any food manufacturing establishment, institution, or restaurant which uses any eggs that do not meet the requirements of RCW 69.25.170(1)(a) in the preparation of any articles for human food, shall be deemed to be a plant processing egg products, with respect to such operations.

(2) The director, at any time, shall cause such retention, segregation, and reinspection as he or she deems necessary of eggs and egg products capable of use as human food in each official plant.

(3) Eggs and egg products found to be adulterated at official plants shall be condemned, and if no appeal be taken from such determination or condemnation, such articles shall be destroyed for human food purposes under the supervision of an inspector: PROVIDED, That articles which may by reprocessing be made not adulterated need not be condemned and destroyed if so reprocessed under the supervision of an inspector and thereafter found to be not adulterated. If an appeal be taken from such determination, the eggs or egg products shall be appropriately marked and segregated pending completion of an appeal inspection, which appeal shall be at the cost of the appellant if the director determines that the appeal is frivolous. If the determination of condemnation is sustained, the eggs or egg products shall be destroyed for human food purposes under the supervision of an inspector.

(4) The director shall cause such other inspections to be made of the business premises, facilities, inventory, operations, and records of egg handlers, and the records and inventory of other persons required to keep records under RCW 69.25.140, as he or she deems appropriate (and in the case of shell egg packers, packing eggs for the ultimate consumer, at least once each calendar quarter) to assure

that only eggs fit for human food are used for such purpose, and otherwise to assure compliance by egg handlers and other persons with the requirements of RCW 69.25.140, except that the director shall cause such inspections to be made as he or she deems appropriate to assure compliance with such requirements at food manufacturing establishments, institutions, and restaurants, other than plants processing egg products. Representatives of the director shall be afforded access to all such places of business for purposes of making the inspections provided for in this chapter. [2012 c 117 s 346; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 9.]

RCW 69.25.090 Sanitary operation of official plants—Inspection refused if requirements not met. (1) The operator of each official plant shall operate such plant in accordance with such sanitary practices and shall have such premises, facilities, and equipment as are required by regulations promulgated by the director to effectuate the purposes of this chapter, including requirements for segregation and disposition of restricted eggs.

(2) The director shall refuse to render inspection to any plant whose premises, facilities, or equipment, or the operation thereof, fail to meet the requirements of this section. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 10.]

RCW 69.25.100 Egg products—Pasteurization—Labeling requirements—False or misleading labels or containers—Director may order use of withheld—Hearing, determination, and appeal. (1) Egg products inspected at any official plant under the authority of this chapter and found to be not adulterated shall be pasteurized before they leave the official plant, except as otherwise permitted by regulations of the director, and shall at the time they leave the official plant, bear in distinctly legible form on their shipping containers or immediate containers, or both, when required by regulations of the director, the official inspection legend and official plant number, of the plant where the products were processed, and such other information as the director may require by regulations to describe the products adequately and to assure that they will not have false or misleading labeling.

(2) No labeling or container shall be used for egg products at official plants if it is false or misleading or has not been approved as required by the regulations of the director. If the director has reason to believe that any labeling or the size or form of any container in use or proposed for use with respect to egg products at any official plant is false or misleading in any particular, he or she may direct that such use be withheld unless the labeling or container is modified in such manner as he or she may prescribe so that it will not be false or misleading. If the person using or proposing to use the labeling or container does not accept the determination of the director, such person may request a hearing, but the use of the labeling or container shall, if the director so directs, be withheld pending hearing and final determination by the director. Any such determination by the director shall be conclusive unless, within thirty days after receipt of notice of such final determination, the person adversely affected thereby appeals to the superior court in the

county in which such person has its principal place of business.
[2012 c 117 s 347; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 11.]

RCW 69.25.103 Eggs or egg products—In-state production—Associated commercial egg layer operation compliance with applicable standards. Any egg handler or dealer involved with the in-state production of eggs or egg products only intended for sale outside of the state of Washington must ensure that the associated commercial egg layer operation is in compliance with the applicable standards as provided in RCW 69.25.065 and 69.25.107. [2019 c 276 s 6; 2011 c 306 s 4.]

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.010.

Construction—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.065.

Effective date—2011 c 306: See note following RCW 69.25.020.

RCW 69.25.107 Commercial egg layer operations—Requirements.

(1) All commercial egg layer operations required under RCW 69.25.065 to meet the American humane association facility system plan, or an equivalent to the plan, must also ensure that all hens in the operation are provided with:

(a) No less than one hundred sixteen and three-tenths square inches of space per hen; and

(b) Access to areas for nesting, scratching, and perching.

(2) All commercial egg layer operations required under RCW 69.25.065 to house egg-laying hens with at a minimum the amount of usable floor space per hen required by the 2017 edition of the united egg producers' Animal Husbandry Guidelines for United States Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing, or a subsequent version of the plan recognized by the department in rule as providing equal or more useable floor space per egg-laying hen, must ensure that the hens are housed in a cage-free housing system.

(3) Subsection (2) of this section does not apply:

(a) During medical research;

(b) During examination, testing, individual treatment, or operation for veterinary purposes;

(c) During transportation, or depopulation operations for periods of no more than seven days in any eighteen-month period;

(d) During rodeo exhibitions, state or county fair exhibitions, 4-H programs, and similar exhibitions;

(e) During the slaughter of an egg-laying hen in accordance with applicable laws and regulations; or

(f) During temporary periods for animal husbandry purposes of no more than six hours in any twenty-four hour period, and no more than twenty-four hours in any thirty-day period.

(4) The requirements of this section apply for any commercial egg layer operation on the same dates that RCW 69.25.065 requires compliance with the American humane association facility system plan or an equivalent to the plan, or requires housing egg-laying hens with at a minimum the amount of usable floor space per hen required by the united egg producers' Animal Husbandry Guidelines for United States

Egg-Laying Flocks: Guidelines for Cage-Free Housing or an equivalent to the guidelines. [2019 c 276 s 7; 2011 c 306 s 5.]

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.010.

Construction—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.065.

Effective date—2011 c 306: See note following RCW 69.25.020.

RCW 69.25.110 Prohibited acts and practices. (1) No person shall buy, sell, or transport, or offer to buy or sell, or offer or receive for transportation, in any business in intrastate commerce any restricted eggs, capable of use as human food, except as authorized by regulations of the director under such conditions as he or she may prescribe to assure that only eggs fit for human food are used for such purpose.

(2) No egg handler shall possess with intent to use, or use, any restricted eggs in the preparation of human food for intrastate commerce except that such eggs may be so possessed and used when authorized by regulations of the director under such conditions as he or she may prescribe to assure that only eggs fit for human food are used for such purpose.

(3) No person shall process any egg products for intrastate commerce at any plant except in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(4) No person shall buy, sell, or transport, or offer to buy or sell, or offer or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce any egg or egg product that was not produced in compliance with the standards required by RCW 69.25.065 and 69.25.107. This prohibition shall not apply to any sale undertaken at an official plant at which mandatory inspection is maintained under the federal egg products inspection act, 21 U.S.C. Sec. 1031 et seq. For the purposes of this subsection, a sale is deemed to occur at the location where the buyer takes physical possession of an item.

(5) No person shall buy, sell, or transport, or offer to buy or sell, or offer or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce any egg products required to be inspected under this chapter unless they have been so inspected and are labeled and packaged in accordance with the requirements of RCW 69.25.100.

(6) No operator of any official plant shall allow any egg products to be moved from such plant if they are adulterated or misbranded and capable of use as human food.

(7) No person shall:

(a) Manufacture, cast, print, lithograph, or otherwise make any device containing any official mark or simulation thereof, or any label bearing any such mark or simulation, or any form of official certificate or simulation thereof, except as authorized by the director;

(b) Forge or alter any official device, mark, or certificate;

(c) Without authorization from the director, use any official device, mark, or certificate, or simulation thereof, or detach, deface, or destroy any official device or mark; or use any labeling or container ordered to be withheld from use under RCW 69.25.100 after final judicial affirmance of such order or expiration of the time for appeal if no appeal is taken under said section;

(d) Contrary to the regulations prescribed by the director, fail to use, or to detach, deface, or destroy any official device, mark, or certificate;

(e) Knowingly possess, without promptly notifying the director or his or her representative, any official device or any counterfeit, simulated, forged, or improperly altered official certificate or any device or label, or any eggs or egg products bearing any counterfeit, simulated, forged, or improperly altered official mark;

(f) Knowingly make any false statement in any shipper's certificate or other nonofficial or official certificate provided for in the regulations prescribed by the director;

(g) Knowingly represent that any article has been inspected or exempted, under this chapter when in fact it has not been so inspected or exempted; and

(h) Refuse access, at any reasonable time, to any representative of the director, to any plant or other place of business subject to inspection under any provisions of this chapter.

(8) No person, while an official or employee of the state or local governmental agency, or thereafter, shall use to his or her own advantage, or reveal other than to the authorized representatives of the United States government or the state in their official capacity, or as ordered by a court in a judicial proceeding, any information acquired under the authority of this chapter concerning any matter which the originator or relator of such information claims to be entitled to protection as a trade secret. [2019 c 276 s 8; 2012 c 117 s 348; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 12.]

Finding—Purpose—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.010.

Construction—2019 c 276: See note following RCW 69.25.065.

RCW 69.25.120 Director to cooperate with other agencies—May conduct examinations. The director shall, whenever he or she determines that it would effectuate the purposes of this chapter, cooperate with any state, federal, or other governmental agencies in carrying out any provisions of this chapter. In carrying out the provisions of this chapter, the director may conduct such examinations, investigations, and inspections as he or she determines practicable through any officer or employee of any such agency commissioned by him or her for such purpose. [2012 c 117 s 349; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 13.]

RCW 69.25.130 Eggs or egg products not intended for use as human food—Identification or denaturing required. Inspection shall not be provided under this chapter at any plant for the processing of any egg products which are not intended for use as human food, but such articles, prior to their offer for sale or transportation in intrastate commerce, shall be denatured or identified as prescribed by regulations of the director to deter their use for human food. No person shall buy, sell, or transport or offer to buy or sell, or offer or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce, any restricted eggs or egg products which are not intended for use as human food unless they are denatured or identified as required by the regulations of the director. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 14.]

RCW 69.25.140 Records required, access to and copying of. For the purpose of enforcing the provisions of this chapter and the regulations promulgated thereunder, all persons engaged in the business of transporting, shipping, or receiving any eggs or egg products in intrastate commerce or in interstate commerce, or holding such articles so received, and all egg handlers, shall maintain such records showing, for such time and in such form and manner, as the director may prescribe, to the extent that they are concerned therewith, the receipt, delivery, sale, movement, and disposition of all eggs and egg products handled by them, and shall, upon the request of the director, permit him or her at reasonable times to have access to and to copy all such records. [2012 c 117 s 350; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 15.]

RCW 69.25.150 Penalties—Liability of employer—Defense. (1) (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, any person violating any provision of this chapter or any rule adopted under this chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(b) A second or subsequent violation is a gross misdemeanor. Any offense committed more than five years after a previous conviction shall be considered a first offense.

(2) Whenever the director finds that a person has committed a violation of any of the provisions of this chapter, and that violation has not been punished pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the director may impose upon and collect from the violator a civil penalty not exceeding one thousand dollars per violation per day. Each violation shall be a separate and distinct offense.

(3) When construing or enforcing the provisions of RCW 69.25.110, the act, omission, or failure of any person acting for or employed by any individual, partnership, corporation, or association within the scope of the person's employment or office shall in every case be deemed the act, omission, or failure of such individual, partnership, corporation, or association, as well as of such person.

(4) No carrier or warehouse operator shall be subject to the penalties of this chapter, other than the penalties for violation of RCW 69.25.140, or 69.25.155, by reason of his or her receipt, carriage, holding, or delivery, in the usual course of business, as a carrier or warehouse operator of eggs or egg products owned by another person unless the carrier or warehouse operator has knowledge, or is in possession of facts which would cause a reasonable person to believe that such eggs or egg products were not eligible for transportation under, or were otherwise in violation of, this chapter, or unless the carrier or warehouse operator refuses to furnish on request of a representative of the director the name and address of the person from whom he or she received such eggs or egg products and copies of all documents, if there be any, pertaining to the delivery of the eggs or egg products to, or by, such carrier or warehouse operator. [2011 c 336 s 836; 2003 c 53 s 317; 1995 c 374 s 27; 1992 c 7 s 47; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 16.]

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

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

RCW 69.25.155 Interference with person performing official duties. (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person who forcibly assaults, resists, impedes, intimidates, or interferes with any person while engaged in or on account of the performance of his or her official duties under this chapter is guilty of a class C felony and shall be punished by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars or imprisonment in a state correctional facility for not more than three years, or both.

(2) Whoever, in the commission of any act described in subsection (1) of this section, uses a deadly or dangerous weapon is guilty of a class B felony and shall be punished by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a state correctional facility for not more than ten years, or both. [2003 c 53 s 318.]

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

RCW 69.25.160 Notice of violation—May take place of prosecution. Before any violation of this chapter, other than RCW 69.25.155, is reported by the director to any prosecuting attorney for institution of a criminal proceeding, the person against whom such proceeding is contemplated shall be given reasonable notice of the alleged violation and opportunity to present his or her views orally or in writing with regard to such contemplated proceeding. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as requiring the director to report for criminal prosecution violation of this chapter whenever he or she believes that the public interest will be adequately served and compliance with this chapter obtained by a suitable written notice of warning. [2003 c 53 s 319; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 17.]

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

RCW 69.25.170 Exemptions permitted by rule of director. (1) The director may, by regulation and under such conditions and procedures as he or she may prescribe, exempt from specific provisions of this chapter:

(a) The sale, transportation, possession, or use of eggs which contain no more restricted eggs than are allowed by the tolerance in the official state standards for consumer grades for shell eggs;

(b) The processing of egg products at any plant where the facilities and operating procedures meet such sanitary standards as may be prescribed by the director, and where the eggs received or used in the manufacture of egg products contain no more restricted eggs than are allowed by the official standards of the state consumer grades for shell eggs, and the egg products processed at such plant;

(c) The sale of eggs by any poultry producer from his or her own flocks directly to a household consumer exclusively for use by such consumer and members of his or her household and his or her nonpaying guests and employees, and the transportation, possession, and use of such eggs in accordance with this subsection;

(d) The sale of eggs by shell egg packers on his or her own premises directly to household consumers for use by such consumer and members of his or her household and his or her nonpaying guests and

employees, and the transportation, possession, and use of such eggs in accordance with this subsection;

(e) The sale of eggs by any egg producer with an annual egg production from a flock of three thousand hens or less.

(2) The director may modify or revoke any regulation granting exemption under this chapter whenever he or she deems such action appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this chapter. [2012 c 117 s 351; 1995 c 374 s 28; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 18.]

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

RCW 69.25.180 Limiting entry of eggs and egg products into official plants. The director may limit the entry of eggs and egg products and other materials into official plants under such conditions as he or she may prescribe to assure that allowing the entry of such articles into such plants will be consistent with the purposes of this chapter. [2012 c 117 s 352; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 19.]

RCW 69.25.190 Embargo of eggs or egg products in violation of this chapter—Time limit—Removal of official marks. Whenever any eggs or egg products subject to this chapter are found by any authorized representative of the director upon any premises and there is reason to believe that they are or have been processed, bought, sold, possessed, used, transported, or offered or received for sale or transportation in violation of this chapter, or that they are in any other way in violation of this chapter, or whenever any restricted eggs capable of use as human food are found by such a representative in the possession of any person not authorized to acquire such eggs under the regulations of the director, such articles may be embargoed by such representative for a reasonable period but not to exceed twenty days, pending action under RCW 69.25.200 or notification of any federal or other governmental authorities having jurisdiction over such articles, and shall not be moved by any person from the place at which they are located when so detained until released by such representative. All official marks may be required by such representative to be removed from such articles before they are released unless it appears to the satisfaction of the director that the articles are eligible to retain such marks. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 20.]

RCW 69.25.200 Embargo—Petition for court order affirming—Removal of embargo or destruction or correction and release—Court costs, fees, administrative expenses—Bond may be required. When the director has embargoed any eggs or egg products, he or she shall petition the superior court of the county in which the eggs or egg products are located for an order affirming such embargo. Such court shall have jurisdiction for cause shown and after a prompt hearing to any claimant of eggs or egg products, shall issue an order which directs the removal of such embargo or the destruction or correction and release of such eggs and egg products. An order for destruction or the correction and release of such eggs and egg products shall contain

such provision for the payment of pertinent court costs and fees and administrative expenses as is equitable and which the court deems appropriate in the circumstances. An order for correction and release may contain such provisions for a bond as the court finds indicated in the circumstance. [2012 c 117 s 353; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 21.]

RCW 69.25.210 Embargo—Order affirming not required, when. The director need not petition the superior court as provided for in RCW 69.25.200 if the owner or claimant of such eggs or egg products agrees in writing to the disposition of such eggs or egg products as the director may order. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 22.]

RCW 69.25.220 Embargo—Consolidation of petitions. Two or more petitions under RCW 69.25.200 which pend at the same time and which present the same issue and claimant hereunder may be consolidated for simultaneous determination by one court of competent jurisdiction, upon application to any court of jurisdiction by the director or claimant. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 23.]

RCW 69.25.230 Embargo—Sampling of article. The claimant in any proceeding by petition under RCW 69.25.200 shall be entitled to receive a representative sample of the article subject to such proceedings upon application to the court of competent jurisdiction made at any time after such petition and prior to the hearing thereon. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 24.]

RCW 69.25.240 Condemnation—Recovery of damages restricted. No state court shall allow the recovery of damages for administrative action for condemnation under the provisions of this chapter, if the court finds that there was probable cause for such action. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 25.]

RCW 69.25.250 Assessment—Rate, applicability, time of payment—Reports—Contents, frequency—Exemption. (1)(a) There is hereby levied an assessment not to exceed three mills per dozen eggs entering intrastate commerce, as prescribed by rules issued by the director. The assessment is applicable to all eggs entering intrastate commerce, except as provided in RCW 69.25.170 and 69.25.290, and must be paid to the director on a monthly basis on or before the tenth day following the month the eggs enter intrastate commerce.

(b) The director may require reports by egg handlers or dealers along with the payment of the assessment fee. The reports may include any and all pertinent information necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

(c) The director may, by rule, require egg container manufacturers to report on a monthly basis all egg containers sold to any egg handler or dealer and bearing such egg handler or dealer's permanent number.

(2) Egg products in intrastate commerce are exempt from the assessment in subsection (1) of this section. [2011 c 306 s 6; 1995 c 374 s 29; 1993 sp.s. c 19 s 12; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 26.]

Effective date—2011 c 306: See note following RCW 69.25.020.

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

RCW 69.25.260 Assessment—Prepayment by purchase of egg seals—Permit for printing seal on containers or labels. Any egg handler or dealer may prepay the assessment provided for in RCW 69.25.250 by purchasing Washington state egg seals from the director to be placed on egg containers showing that the proper assessment has been paid. Any carton manufacturer or printer may apply to the director for a permit to place reasonable facsimiles of the Washington state egg seals to be imprinted on egg containers or on the identification labels which show egg grade and size and the name of the egg handler or dealer. The director shall, from time to time, prescribe rules and regulations governing the affixing of seals and he or she is authorized to cancel any such permit issued pursuant to this chapter, whenever he or she finds that a violation of the terms under which the permit has been granted has been violated. [2012 c 117 s 354; 1979 ex.s. c 238 s 10; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 27.]

Severability—1979 ex.s. c 238: See note following RCW 15.44.010.

RCW 69.25.270 Assessment—Monthly payment—Audit—Failure to pay, penalty. Every egg handler or dealer who pays assessments required under the provisions of this chapter on a monthly basis in lieu of seals shall be subject to audit by the director at such frequency as is deemed necessary by the director. The cost to the director for performing such audit shall be chargeable to and payable by the egg handler or dealer subject to audit. Failure to pay assessments when due or refusal to pay for audit costs may be cause for a summary suspension of an egg handler's or dealer's license and a charge of one percent per month, or fraction thereof shall be added to the sum due the director, for each remittance not received by the director when due. The conditions and charges applicable to egg handlers and dealers set forth herein shall also be applicable to payments due the director for facsimiles of seals placed on egg containers. [1987 c 393 s 16; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 28.]

RCW 69.25.280 Assessment—Use of proceeds. The proceeds from assessment fees paid to the director shall be retained for the inspection of eggs and carrying out the provisions of this chapter relating to eggs. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 29.]

RCW 69.25.290 Assessment—Exclusions. The assessments provided in this chapter shall not apply to:

- (1) Sale and shipment to points outside of this state;
- (2) Sale to the United States government and its instrumentalities;
- (3) Sale to breaking plants for processing into egg products;
- (4) Sale between egg dealers. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 30.]

RCW 69.25.300 Transfer of moneys in state egg account. All moneys in the state egg account, created by *RCW 69.24.450, at the time of July 1, 1975, shall be transferred to the director and shall be retained and expended for administering and carrying out the purposes of this chapter. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 31.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 69.24.450 was repealed by 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 40.

RCW 69.25.310 Containers—Marking required—Obliteration of previous markings required for reuse—Temporary use of another handler's or dealer's permanent number—Penalty. (1) All containers used by an egg handler or dealer to package eggs shall bear the name and address or the permanent number issued by the director to said egg handler or dealer. Such permanent number shall be displayed in a size and location prescribed by the director. It shall be a violation for any egg handler or dealer to use a container that bears the permanent number of another egg handler or dealer unless such number is totally obliterated prior to use. The director may in addition require the obliteration of any or all markings that may be on any container which will be used for eggs by an egg handler or dealer.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section and following written notice to the director, licensed egg handlers and dealers may use new containers bearing another handler's or dealer's permanent number on a temporary basis, in any event not longer than one year, with the consent of such other handler or dealer for the purpose of using up existing container stocks. Sale of container stock shall constitute agreement by the parties to use the permanent number. [1995 c 374 s 30; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 32.]

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

RCW 69.25.320 Records required, additional—Sales to retailer or food service—Exception—Defense to charged violation—Sale of eggs deteriorated due to storage time—Requirements for storage, display, or transportation. (1) In addition to any other records required to be kept and furnished the director under the provisions of this chapter, the director may require any person who sells to any retailer, or to any restaurant, hotel, boarding house, bakery, or any institution or concern which purchases eggs for serving to guests or patrons thereof or for its use in preparation of any food product for human consumption, candled or graded eggs other than those of his or her own production sold and delivered on the premises where produced, to furnish that retailer or other purchaser with an invoice covering each such sale, showing the exact grade or quality, and the size or weight of the eggs sold, according to the standards prescribed by the director, together with the name and address of the person by whom the eggs were sold. The person selling and the retailer or other purchaser shall keep a copy of said invoice on file at his or her place of business for a period of thirty days, during which time the copy shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times by the director: PROVIDED, That no retailer or other purchaser shall be guilty of a violation of this chapter if he or she can establish a guarantee from

the person from whom the eggs were purchased to the effect that they, at the time of purchase, conformed to the information required by the director on such invoice: PROVIDED FURTHER, That if the retailer or other purchaser having labeled any such eggs in accordance with the invoice keeps them for such a time after they are purchased as to cause them to deteriorate to a lower grade or standard, and sells them under the label of the invoice grade or standard, he or she shall be guilty of a violation of this chapter.

(2) Each retailer and each distributor shall store shell eggs awaiting sale or display eggs under clean and sanitary conditions in areas free from rodents and insects. Shell eggs must be stored up off the floor away from strong odors, pesticides, and cleaners.

(3) After being received at the point of first purchase, all graded shell eggs packed in containers for the purpose of sale to consumers shall be held and transported under refrigeration at ambient temperatures no greater than forty-five degrees Fahrenheit (seven and two-tenths degrees Celsius). This provision shall apply without limitation to retailers, institutional users, dealer/wholesalers, food handlers, transportation firms, or any person who handles eggs after the point of first purchase.

(4) No invoice shall be required on eggs when packed for sale to the United States department of defense, or a component thereof, if labeled with grades promulgated by the United States secretary of agriculture. [2012 c 117 s 355; 1995 c 374 s 31; 1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 33.]

Effective date—1995 c 374 ss 1-47, 50-53, and 59-68: See note following RCW 15.36.012.

RCW 69.25.900 Savings. The enactment of this chapter shall not have the effect of terminating or in any way modifying any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence on July 1, 1975. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 35.]

RCW 69.25.910 Chapter is cumulative and nonexclusive. The provisions of this chapter shall be cumulative and nonexclusive and shall not affect any other remedy at law. [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 37.]

RCW 69.25.930 Short title. This act may be known and cited as the "Washington wholesome eggs and egg products act". [1975 1st ex.s. c 201 s 39.]