

RCW 49.28.130 Hours of health care facility employees—

Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this section and RCW 49.28.140 and 49.28.150 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) (a) "Employee" means a person who:

(i) Is employed by a health care facility;

(ii) Is involved in direct patient care activities or clinical services; and

(iii) Receives an hourly wage or is covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

(b) "Employee" does not mean a person who:

(i) Is employed by a health care facility as defined in subsection (3)(a)(v) of this section; and

(ii) Is a surgical technologist registered under chapter 18.215 RCW, a diagnostic radiologic technologist or cardiovascular invasive specialist certified under chapter 18.84 RCW, a respiratory care practitioner licensed under chapter 18.89 RCW, or a certified nursing assistant as defined in RCW 18.88A.020.

(2) "Employer" means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, the state, a political subdivision of the state, or person or group of persons, acting directly or indirectly in the interest of a health care facility.

(3) (a) "Health care facility" means the following facilities, or any part of the facility, including such facilities if owned and operated by a political subdivision or instrumentality of the state, that operate on a twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week basis:

(i) Hospices licensed under chapter 70.127 RCW;

(ii) Hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW, except that until July 1, 2021, the provisions of section 3, chapter 296, Laws of 2019 do not apply to:

(A) Hospitals certified as critical access hospitals under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1395i-4;

(B) Hospitals with fewer than twenty-five acute care beds in operation; and

(C) Hospitals certified by the centers for medicare and medicaid services as sole community hospitals as of January 1, 2013, that: Have had less than one hundred fifty acute care licensed beds in fiscal year 2011; have a level III adult trauma service designation from the department of health as of January 1, 2014; and are owned and operated by the state or a political subdivision;

(iii) Rural health care facilities as defined in RCW 70.175.020;

(iv) *Psychiatric hospitals licensed under chapter 71.12 RCW; or

(v) Facilities owned and operated by the department of corrections or by a governing unit as defined in RCW 70.48.020 in a correctional institution as defined in RCW 9.94.049 that provide health care services.

(b) If a nursing home regulated under chapter 18.51 RCW or a home health agency regulated under chapter 70.127 RCW is operating under the license of a health care facility, the nursing home or home health agency is considered part of the health care facility for the purposes of this subsection.

(4) "Overtime" means the hours worked in excess of an agreed upon, predetermined, regularly scheduled shift within a 24-hour period not to exceed 12 hours in a 24-hour period or 80 hours in a consecutive 14-day period.

(5) "On-call time" means time spent by an employee who is not working on the premises of the place of employment but who is compensated for availability or who, as a condition of employment, has agreed to be available to return to the premises of the place of employment on short notice if the need arises.

(6) "Reasonable efforts" means that the employer, to the extent reasonably possible, does all of the following but is unable to obtain staffing coverage:

(a) Seeks individuals to volunteer to work extra time from all available qualified staff who are working;

(b) Contacts qualified employees who have made themselves available to work extra time;

(c) Seeks the use of per diem staff; and

(d) Seeks personnel from a contracted temporary agency when such staffing is permitted by law or an applicable collective bargaining agreement, and when the employer regularly uses a contracted temporary agency.

(7) "Unforeseeable emergent circumstance" means (a) any unforeseen declared national, state, or municipal emergency; (b) when a health care facility disaster plan is activated; or (c) any unforeseen disaster or other catastrophic event which substantially affects or increases the need for health care services. [2024 c 354 s 1; 2019 c 296 s 2; 2011 c 251 s 1; 2002 c 112 s 2.]

***Reviser's note:** The term "psychiatric hospital" was changed to "behavioral health hospital" by 2024 c 121 s 19.

Effective date—2024 c 354: "This act takes effect January 1, 2025." [2024 c 354 s 3.]

Effective date—2019 c 296: See note following RCW 49.12.480.

Finding—2002 c 112: "Washington state is experiencing a critical shortage of qualified, competent health care workers. To safeguard the health, efficiency, and general well-being of health care workers and promote patient safety and quality of care, the legislature finds, as a matter of public policy, that required overtime work should be limited with reasonable safeguards in order to ensure that the public will continue to receive safe, quality care." [2002 c 112 s 1.]