

RCW 70.128.160 Department authority to take actions in response to noncompliance or violations—Civil penalties—Adult family home account. (1) The department is authorized to take one or more of the actions listed in subsection (2) of this section in any case in which the department finds that an adult family home provider has:

(a) Failed or refused to comply with the requirements of this chapter or the rules adopted under this chapter;

(b) Operated an adult family home without a license or under a revoked license;

(c) Knowingly or with reason to know made a false statement of material fact on his or her application for license or any data attached thereto, or in any matter under investigation by the department; or

(d) Willfully prevented or interfered with any inspection or investigation by the department.

(2) When authorized by subsection (1) of this section, the department may take one or more of the following actions:

(a) Refuse to issue a license;

(b) Impose reasonable conditions on a license, such as correction within a specified time, training, and limits on the type of clients the provider may admit or serve;

(c) Impose civil penalties of at least one hundred dollars per day per violation;

(d) Impose civil penalties of up to three thousand dollars for each incident that violates adult family home licensing laws and rules, including, but not limited to, chapters 70.128, 70.129, 74.34, and 74.39A RCW and related rules. Each day upon which the same or substantially similar action occurs is a separate violation subject to the assessment of a separate penalty;

(e) Impose civil penalties of up to ten thousand dollars for a current or former licensed provider who is operating an unlicensed home;

(f) Suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a license; or

(g) Suspend admissions to the adult family home by imposing stop placement.

(3) When the department orders stop placement, the facility shall not admit any person until the stop placement order is terminated. The department may approve readmission of a resident to the facility from a hospital or nursing home during the stop placement. The department shall terminate the stop placement only after: (a) The violations necessitating the stop placement have been corrected; and (b) the provider exhibits the capacity to maintain correction of the violations previously found deficient. However, if upon the revisit the department finds new violations that the department reasonably believes will result in a new stop placement, the previous stop placement shall remain in effect until the new stop placement is imposed. In order to protect the home's existing residents from potential ongoing neglect, when the provider has been cited for a violation that is repeated, uncorrected, pervasive, or presents a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more residents, and the department has imposed a stop placement, the department shall also impose a condition on license or other remedy to facilitate or spur prompter compliance if the violation has not been corrected, and the provider has not exhibited the capacity to maintain correction, within sixty days of the stop placement.

(4) Nothing in subsection (3) of this section is intended to apply to stop placement imposed in conjunction with a license revocation or summary suspension or to prevent the department from imposing a condition on license or other remedy prior to sixty days after a stop placement, if the department considers it necessary to protect one or more residents' well-being. After a department finding of a violation for which a stop placement has been imposed, the department shall make an on-site revisit of the provider within fifteen working days from the request for revisit, to ensure correction of the violation. For violations that are serious or recurring or uncorrected following a previous citation, and create actual or threatened harm to one or more residents' well-being, including violations of residents' rights, the department shall make an on-site revisit as soon as appropriate to ensure correction of the violation. Verification of correction of all other violations may be made by either a department on-site revisit or by written or photographic documentation found by the department to be credible. This subsection does not prevent the department from enforcing license suspensions or revocations. Nothing in this subsection shall interfere with or diminish the department's authority and duty to ensure that the provider adequately cares for residents, including to make departmental on-site revisits as needed to ensure that the provider protects residents, and to enforce compliance with this chapter.

(5) Chapter 34.05 RCW applies to department actions under this section, except that orders of the department imposing license suspension, stop placement, or conditions for continuation of a license are effective immediately upon notice and shall continue in effect pending a hearing, which must commence no later than sixty days after receipt of a request for a hearing. The time for commencement of a hearing may be extended by agreement of the parties or by the presiding officer for good cause shown by either party, but must commence no later than one hundred twenty days after receipt of a request for a hearing.

(6) A separate adult family home account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from civil penalties imposed under this chapter must be deposited into the account. Only the director or the director's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures. The department shall use the special account only for promoting the quality of life and care of residents living in adult family homes. During the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium, the account may be expended for funding costs associated with the adult family home program.

(7) The department shall by rule specify criteria as to when and how the sanctions specified in this section must be applied. The criteria must provide for the imposition of incrementally more severe penalties for deficiencies that are repeated, uncorrected, pervasive, or present a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more residents. The criteria shall be tiered such that those homes consistently found to have deficiencies will be subjected to increasingly severe penalties. The department shall implement prompt and specific enforcement remedies without delay for providers found to have delivered care or failed to deliver care resulting in problems that are repeated, uncorrected, pervasive, or present a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of one or more residents. In the selection of remedies, the health, safety, and well-being of residents must be

of paramount importance. [2025 c 424 s 971; 2016 sp.s. c 36 s 944; 2015 c 266 s 1; 2013 c 300 s 4; 2011 1st sp.s. c 3 s 208; 2001 c 193 s 5; 1995 1st sp.s. c 18 s 28; 1989 c 427 s 31.]

Effective date—2025 c 424: See note following RCW 9.46.100.

Effective date—2016 sp.s. c 36: See note following RCW 18.20.430.

Finding—Intent—2011 1st sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 70.128.005.

Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 18: See notes following RCW 74.39A.030.