

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**NOTICE OF PENALTIES INCURRED AND DUE
FOR VIOLATIONS OF LAWS AND RULES**

PENALTY ASSESSMENT: TV-220338

PENALTY AMOUNT: \$1,600

Four Seasons Moving & Storage LLC
d/b/a Four Seasons Moving;
Four Seasons Moving & Storage
21902 56th Ave W #A1
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes Four Seasons Moving & Storage LLC d/b/a Four Seasons Moving; Four Seasons Moving & Storage (Four Seasons or Company) violated Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-15-550, Cargo Insurance; WAC 480-15-555, Criminal Background Checks for Prospective Employees; WAC 480-15-560, Equipment Safety Requirements, which adopts Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (49 C.F.R.) Part 396 – Inspection, Repair and Maintenance; and WAC 480-15-570, Driver Safety Requirements, which adopts 49 C.F.R. Part 391 – Qualification of Drivers and Part 395 – Hours of Service of Drivers.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 81.04.405 allows penalties of \$100 for each violation. In the case of an ongoing violation, every day's continuance is considered a separate and distinct violation.

On May 11, 2022, Commission Motor Carrier Investigator Tracy Cobile completed a routine safety investigation of Four Seasons and documented the following violations:

- **One violation of WAC 480-15-550 – Operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) without having adequate cargo insurance coverage.** The Company operated a CMV without the required cargo insurance on April 14, 2022.
- **Four violations of WAC 480-15-555 – Failing to conduct or retain paperwork containing criminal background check or hiring an individual with a disqualifying conviction for a household goods carrier in the state of Washington.** Four Seasons failed to conduct a criminal background check for employees Eduardo Fuentes Lopez, Ana Hernandez, Hugo A. Rodriguez, and Monserrat Torres.
- **Six violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(a) – Using a driver not medically examined and certified.** The Company allowed driver Emmanuel Mendoza Martinez to operate a CMV without a valid medical certificate on six occasions between November 28, 2021, and January 15, 2022.
- **Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.51(b)(2) – Driver investigation history file must contain a copy of the response by each state agency concerning a driver's driving**

record pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 391.23(a)(1). Four Seasons failed to maintain driving records of Emmanuel Mendoza Martinez and Eynorth Josue Martinez.

- **Twenty-eight violations of 49 C.F.R. § 395.8(a)(1) – Failing to require driver to make a record of duty status.** The Company failed to require Emmanuel Mendoza Martinez to complete a record of duty status on 28 occasions between February 1 and February 28, 2022.
- **Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 395.8(e) – False or inaccurate reports of records of duty status.** The Company allowed driver Emmanuel Mendoza Martinez to complete an inaccurate or false record of duty status on February 10 and 11, 2022.
- **Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 396.3(b) – Failing to keep minimum records of inspection and vehicle maintenance.** Four Seasons failed to maintain a vehicle maintenance file for its two CMVs.

The Commission considered the following factors in determining the appropriate penalties for these violations:

1. **How serious or harmful the violations are to the public.** The violations noted are serious and potentially harmful to the public. Household goods moving companies that: (1) operate CMVs without the required cargo insurance, (2) fail to conduct criminal background checks on their employees, (3) use drivers that are not medically examined and certified, (4) fail to maintain drivers' driving records, (5) fail to maintain records of duty status, (6) allow drivers to make false or inaccurate records of duty status, and (7) fail to keep minimum records of inspection and vehicle maintenance put their customers, their customers' belongings, and the traveling public at risk. These violations present significant safety concerns.
2. **Whether the violations were intentional.** Considerations include:
 - Whether the Company ignored Commission staff's (Staff) previous technical assistance; and
 - Whether there is clear evidence through documentation or other means that shows the Company knew of and failed to correct the violation.

On February 19, 2021, the Commission received the Company's application for household goods moving authority. In the application, Anne De Santis, governing person of Four Seasons, acknowledged the Company's responsibility to understand and comply with applicable motor carrier safety laws and regulations.

On April 14 and October 13, 2021, Anne De Santis attended household goods training provided by Staff and acknowledged receiving training pertaining to motor carrier safety regulations on both occasions. The Company knew or should have known about these requirements.

3. **Whether the Company self-reported the violations.** Four Seasons did not self-report these violations.
4. **Whether the Company was cooperative and responsive.** The Company was both responsive and cooperative throughout the safety investigation.
5. **Whether the Company promptly corrected the violations and remedied the impacts.** The Company has not provided Staff with evidence that it corrected the violations.
6. **The number of violations.** Staff identified 21 violation types with a total of 68 individual occurrences during the routine safety investigation of Four Seasons. Of those violations, Staff identified seven violation types with a total of 45 individual occurrences that warrant penalties in accordance with the Commission’s Enforcement Policy.
7. **The number of customers affected.** Four Seasons reported traveling 19,300 miles in 2021. These safety violations presented a public safety risk.
8. **The likelihood of recurrence.** Staff provided technical assistance with specific remedies to help the Company assess how well its safety management controls support safe operations and how to begin improving its safety performance. Staff believes the likelihood of recurrence is low if the Company prioritizes safe operations.
9. **The Company’s past performance regarding compliance, violations, and penalties.** This is the Company’s first routine safety investigation. Four Seasons has no history of penalties or violations with the Commission.
10. **The Company’s existing compliance program.** Anne De Santis and Emmanuel Mendoza Martinez, governors of Four Seasons, are responsible for the Company’s safety compliance program.
11. **The size of the Company.** Four Seasons operates two CMVs and employs four drivers. The Company reported \$298,000 in gross revenue for 2021.

The Commission’s Enforcement Policy provides that some Commission requirements are so fundamental to safe operations that the Commission will issue mandatory penalties for each occurrence of a first-time violation.¹ The Commission generally will assess penalties by violation category, rather than per occurrence, for first-time violations of those critical regulations that do not meet the requirements for mandatory penalties. The Commission will assess penalties for any equipment violation meeting the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s “out-of-service” criteria and for repeat violations of critical regulations, including each occurrence of a repeat violation.

¹ Docket A-120061 – Enforcement Policy of the Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission – Section V.

The Commission has considered these factors and determined that it should penalize Four Seasons \$1,600 (Penalty Assessment), calculated as follows:

- One violation of WAC 480-15-550 – Operating a CMV without having adequate cargo insurance coverage. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for this acute violation.
- Four violations of WAC 480-15-555 – Failing to conduct or retain paperwork containing a criminal background check or hiring an individual with a disqualifying conviction for a household goods carrier in the state of Washington. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for each occurrence of this critical violation, for a total of \$400.
- Six violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(a) – Using a driver not medically examined and certified. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for each occurrence of this violation, for a total of \$600.
- Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.51(b)(2) – Driver investigation history file must contain a copy of the response by each state agency concerning a driver’s driving record pursuant to 49 C.F.R. § 391.23(a)(1). The Commission assesses a “per category” penalty of \$100 for these critical violations.
- Twenty-eight violations of 49 C.F.R. § 395.8(a)(1) – Failing to require driver to make a record of duty status. The Commission assesses a “per category” penalty of \$100 for these critical violations.
- Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 395.8(e) – False or inaccurate reports of records of duty status. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for each occurrence of this violation, for a total of \$200.
- Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 396.3(b) – Failing to keep minimum records of inspection and vehicle maintenance. The Commission assesses a “per category” penalty of \$100 for these critical violations.

This information, if proven at a hearing and not rebutted or explained, is sufficient to support the Penalty Assessment.

Your penalty is due and payable now. If you believe any or all the violations did not occur, you may deny committing the violation(s) and contest the penalty through evidence presented at a hearing or in writing. Alternatively, if there is a reason for any or all the violations that you believe should excuse you from the penalty, you may ask for mitigation (reduction) of the penalty through evidence presented at a hearing or in writing. The Commission will grant a request for hearing only if material issues of law or fact require consideration of evidence and resolution in a hearing. Any request to contest the violation(s) or for mitigation of the penalty must include a written statement of the reasons supporting that request. Failure to provide such a statement will result in denial of the request. *See* RCW 81.04.405.

If you properly present your request for a hearing and the Commission grants that request, the Commission will review the evidence supporting your dispute of the violation(s) or application

for mitigation in a Brief Adjudicative Proceeding before an administrative law judge. The administrative law judge will consider the evidence and will notify you of their decision.

You must act within 15 days after receiving this notice to do one of the following:

- Pay the amount due.
- Contest the occurrence of the violation(s).
- Admit the violations but request mitigation of the penalty amount.

Please indicate your selection on the enclosed form and submit it electronically through the Commission's web portal **within FIFTEEN (15) days** after you receive this Penalty Assessment. If you are unable to use the web portal, you may submit it via email to records@utc.wa.gov. If you are unable to submit the form electronically, you may send a paper copy to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, PO Box 47250, Olympia, Washington 98504-7250.

If you do not act within 15 days, the Commission may take additional enforcement action, including but not necessarily limited to suspending or revoking your certificate to provide regulated service, assessing additional penalties, or referring this matter to the Office of the Attorney General for collection.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective June 9, 2022.

/s/Rayne Pearson
RAYNE PEARSON
Director, Administrative Law Division

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
PENALTY ASSESSMENT TV-220338

PLEASE NOTE: You must complete and sign this document and send it to the Commission within 15 days after you receive the Penalty Assessment. Use additional paper if needed. I have read and understand RCW 9A.72.020 (printed below), which states that making false statements under oath is a class B felony. I am over the age of 18, am competent to testify to the matters set forth below and I have personal knowledge of those matters. I hereby make, under oath, the following statements.

- 1. **Payment of penalty.** I admit that the violations occurred and enclose \$1,600 in payment of the penalty.
- 2. **Contest the violation(s).** I believe that the alleged violation(s) did not occur for the reasons I describe below (**if you do not include reasons supporting your contest here, your request will be denied**):
 - a) I ask for a hearing to present evidence on the information I provide above to an administrative law judge for a decision.
 - OR b) I ask for a Commission decision based solely on the information I provide above.
- 3. **Application for mitigation.** I admit the violations, but I believe that the penalty should be reduced for the reasons set out below (**if you do not include reasons supporting your application here, your request will be denied**):
 - a) I ask for a hearing to present evidence on the information I provide above to an administrative law judge for a decision.
 - OR b) I ask for a Commission decision based solely on the information I provide above.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing, including information I have presented on any attachments, is true and correct.

Dated: _____ [month/day/year], at _____ [city, state]

Name of Respondent (company) – please print

Signature of Applicant

RCW 9A.72.020 "Perjury in the first degree."

- (1) A person is guilty of perjury in the first degree if in any official proceeding he or she makes a materially false statement which he or she knows to be false under an oath required or authorized by law.
- (2) Knowledge of the materiality of the statement is not an element of this crime, and the actor's mistaken belief that his or her statement was not material is not a defense to a prosecution under this section.
- (3) Perjury in the first degree is a class B felony.