

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of Amending Washington
Utilities and Transportation Commission
Tariff 15-C, Relating to Intrastate
Transportation of Household Goods

DOCKET TV-200809

ORDER 01

APPROVING REVISIONS TO
TARIFF 15-C

BACKGROUND

- 1 RCW 81.80.150 assigns certain duties and responsibilities to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) for tariffs that apply to intrastate transportation of household goods. These duties include amending, altering, and reissuing tariffs when changes are approved by the Commission. The Commission published Tariff 15-C, which applies to the intrastate transportation of household goods, initially effective February 1, 2008.
- 2 This tariff revision is intended to clarify two rules within Tariff 15-C, and to correct two tariff rates that were inadvertently overlooked during the rate review that took effect in February 2020.
- 3 The initial proposed change is being made to codify the Commission’s guidance regarding mobile applications and digital platforms for estimates. In March 2017, the Commission issued a letter to the household goods industry stating carriers may conduct visual inspections using video conferencing applications that allow the carrier to interact with the consumer “in real time.” The proposed change would implement this guidance into Item 85, Estimates.
- 4 The second proposed change revises the title of Item 15. Although the current title implies that Item 15 addresses only refusals to provide service, pick up a shipment, or deliver a shipment, Item 15 also allows a carrier to provide shuttle service, which is an additional service involving the use of a smaller vehicle if the company is unable to provide service with a standard size moving truck due to inaccessible or unsafe roads or driveways. Commission staff (Staff) also reformatted the text of Item 15 to make it readily apparent that Item 15 covers both refusal of service and shuttle service options.

5 In addition, while Item 15 currently allows a company to charge a customer for the additional cost of using smaller vehicles and/or other equipment to deliver or pick up the shipment, there is no guidance on how to appropriately charge for these activities. It appears that this guidance was inadvertently removed in a previous tariff revision. Staff's proposal aims to clarify that the hourly rates listed in Item 230 apply to this additional service.

6 The third proposed change corrects two rate errors that were discovered after the last tariff revision became effective in February 2020. First, the current maximum rate for appliance re-servicing for each additional article or appliance in Item 62, Appliance Service, is lower than the current minimum rate for that service. The proposed correction aligns this maximum rate with the other services listed under this section. The second proposed rate change corrects the minimum and maximum rates for "King mattress single-use cover" in Item 195, Packing Charges. In the current tariff, these rates are lower than the rates for queen mattresses and were out of line with the rates contained in Item 196, Container Prices. Staff's proposal increases the king mattress minimum and maximum rates listed in Item 195 to maintain the correct ratio between the different sized containers.

7 On October 19, 2020, the Washington Movers Conference (WMC) filed comments in response to Staff's proposed revisions. WMC supports Staff's proposed language change to Item 85, and proposes adding "Household Goods Shuttle Service" to Item 10, Definitions, as follows:

"Household Goods Shuttle Service": allows household goods carriers to serve their customers who are moving into or out of homes that are difficult to access with a large transport vehicle such as tractor/trailer combination truck. The shuttle is the use of a smaller truck to transport the household goods from the larger truck thereby allowing the driver and crew to bring the smaller vehicle close to the residence to finish loading or unloading the customer's possessions as safely as possible.

8 Additionally, WMC proposes a new Tariff Item, Household Goods Shuttle Service, which would read:

When circumstances exist which prevent the carrier from using a standard tractor/trailer combination moving truck and a smaller vehicle is required, the carrier must discuss with the customer [if] there is a need to provide smaller

equipment and/or additional labor to be able to move the shipment between the point of origin or the point of destination and the carrier's vehicle. To accomplish the needed work, the carrier may charge the customer these additional Household Goods Shuttle Service costs using the hourly rates listed in ITEM 230, as long as the carrier discloses the charges to the customer by use of a binding, nonbinding, or supplemental estimate and obtains the customer's signature before the work begins.

- 9 To support its request, WMC argues that its proposed changes “would make the requirement for ‘HHG Shuttle Service’ fully understandable to Washington based HHG carriers, Consumers they work with, and the UTC Compliance Staff.”¹
- 10 Staff recommends the Commission amend Tariff 15-C as reflected in Appendix A to this Order, which incorporates most of WMC's proposed revisions while incorporating the language into the existing Item 15.

DISCUSSION

- 11 We agree with Staff's recommendation and approve Staff's proposed amendments to Tariff 15-C for the following reasons.
- 12 The proposed change to Item 85 creates consistency between our guidance and Tariff 15-C regarding mobile applications and digital platforms for estimates. Given the current need for social distancing, this implementation is important for safe business practices.
- 13 Staff's proposed change to Item 15 clarifies that the tariff already allows the practice of using a smaller vehicle in situations where access is restricted or unsafe and specifies how to appropriately charge for this service. Also, Staff's proposed revisions have incorporated the language proposed by WMC, including the term “shuttle service” into the existing Item 15.
- 14 Finally, the maximum and minimum rate corrections to Item 65 and Item 195 will allow for fair compensation under the appropriate rates.

¹ WMC Comments, p. 2.

15 We conclude that Staff's proposed revisions are reasonable and consistent with the public interest and approve them as reflected in Appendix A to this Order.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

16 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington required by statute to compile, publish, and distribute tariffs containing rates, charges, classifications, rules, and regulations to be used by all common carriers.

17 (2) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 29, 2020.

18 (3) After review and giving due consideration, the Commission finds that Tariff 15-C should be amended as proposed by Staff and reflected in Appendix A to this Order.

ORDER

19 **THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT** Effective November 1, 2020, the revisions proposed to Tariff 15-C, attached to this Order as Appendix A and by this reference made a part of this Order, are adopted for use by all carriers transporting household goods in the state of Washington that are subject to Commission regulation.

20 The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the provision of RCW 81.80.150 and in the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective October 29, 2020.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MARK L. JOHNSON
Executive Director and Secretary