

(1) offering on at least one occasion to transport household goods within the state of Washington

(2) advertising household goods moving services within the state of Washington on at least one occasion

without the necessary permit required for such operations. On the same date, the Commission issued a *Subpoena and Subpoena Duces Tecum For Production of Documents* (Subpoenas) to the company commanding Carrie Creech d/b/a Cope Quality Services to appear before the Commission at a special proceeding scheduled to convene at 9:30 a.m., May 6, 2014, in the Commission's offices at 1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive S.W., Olympia, Washington, and to bring the documents specified in the *Subpoenas*.

3 **Hearing.** On May 6, 2014, the hearing convened, as scheduled, in Olympia, Washington, before Administrative Law Judge Adam Torem.

4 **Appearances.** Lynda Holloway, Compliance Investigator, Olympia, Washington, represents the Commission's regulatory staff (Commission Staff).¹ Carrie Creech, Poulsbo, WA, represents Cope Quality Services, *pro se*.

5 **Applicable Law.** RCW 81.80.010(5) defines "household goods carrier" as

a person who transports for compensation, by motor vehicle within this state, or who advertises, solicits, offers, or enters into an agreement to transport household goods.

RCW 81.80.075 prohibits household goods carriers from operating for compensation in Washington without first obtaining the required permit from the Commission. Upon proof of unauthorized operations, RCW 81.04.510 authorizes the Commission to order the unpermitted company to cease and desist its activities. Additionally, RCW 81.04.110

¹ In formal proceedings, such as this, the Commission's regulatory staff participates like any other party, while the Commissioners make the decision. To assure fairness, the Commissioners, the presiding administrative law judge, and the Commissioners' policy and accounting advisors do not discuss the merits of the proceeding with the regulatory staff, or any other party, without giving notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. *See RCW 34.05.455.*

authorizes the Commission to file a complaint on its own motion setting forth any act or omission by a company that violates any law, or any order or rule of the Commission.

6 RCW 81.80.075(4) subjects persons who engage in business as a household goods carrier in the state of Washington without the required permit to a penalty of up to \$5,000 for each violation. In deciding the penalty amount to be imposed per violation, RCW 81.80.075(4)(b) requires the Commission to consider two factors: (a) willingness to comply with the provisions of RCW 81.80.070 and the rules governing household goods carriers contained in WAC 480-15 and (b) compliance history.

7 **Stipulation Presented by Parties.** At hearing, Cope Quality Services agreed that it has been operating as a household goods carrier in the state of Washington without the required permit. The company offered to transport household goods on at least one occasion and also advertised to transport household goods on at least one occasion.

8 Cope Quality Services has agreed to shut down and cease operations as a household goods carrier, as defined by WAC 480-15.

9 Under RCW 81.04.075(4), Commission Staff is authorized to seek a penalty of up to \$10,000 against the company. Based upon the above-noted stipulation, Staff now seeks a lesser penalty of \$5,000 and, on condition of the company's honoring its pledge of future compliance by staying out of the industry for a period of two years from the date of this Initial Order, seeks to have \$4,500 of the penalty suspended for two years, then waived.

10 The parties agree that the company's currently expressed willingness to cease its unpermitted operations is a positive factor, mitigating in favor of a lowered penalty amount to be paid now. The parties also agree that the company's compliance history is a negative factor, making a suspended penalty appropriate as a tool to ensure Cope Quality Services does not re-enter the household goods moving business without first obtaining the required permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

11 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with authority to regulate persons engaged in the business of transporting household goods for compensation over public roads in Washington.

- 12 (2) On at least one occasion, Cope Quality Services offered to transport household goods within the state of Washington without first having obtained a household goods carrier permit from the Commission.
- 13 (3) On at least one occasion, Cope Quality Services advertised to transport household goods without first having obtained a household goods carrier permit from the Commission.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 14 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this proceeding and over Cope Quality Services, pursuant to RCW 81.04.510, RCW 81.80.010, and RCW 81.80.075.
- 15 (2) Cope Quality Services offered to perform household goods moving services without first having obtained a permit from the Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission, in violation of RCW 81.80.075.
- 16 (3) Cope Quality Services advertised to perform household goods moving services without first having obtained a permit from the Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission, in violation of RCW 81.80.075.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 17 (1) Cope Quality Services is classified as a common carrier of household goods within the state of Washington.
- 18 (2) Cope Quality Services is ordered to immediately cease and desist operations as a household goods carrier within the state of Washington.
- 19 (3) Cope Quality Services is assessed a penalty of \$5,000. \$4,500 of the penalty is suspended for a period of two years from the date of this Initial Order, and waived thereafter, provided Cope Quality Services refrains from further operations as a household goods carrier in the state of Washington without first obtaining the

required permit from the Commission. The remainder of the penalty, \$500, is due and payable subject to the payment schedule in Appendix A.


- 20 (4) The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties to this proceeding to effectuate the terms of this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective May 9, 2014.



Adam Torem
Administrative Law Judge

Agreed for Entry:



Lynda Holloway
Utilities and Transportation
Commission



Carrie Creech
Cope Quality Services

Appendix A

Due Date	Amount
<i>May 9, 2014</i>	<i>\$50</i>
<i>June 9, 2014</i>	<i>\$150</i>
<i>July 9, 2014</i>	<i>\$150</i>
<i>August 8, 2014</i>	<i>\$150</i>

If two consecutive payments are missed, the entire amount of the penalty, including the suspended portion of \$4,500, will become due and payable the day after the second missed penalty was due.

NOTICE TO THE PARTIES

This is an initial order. The action proposed in this initial order is not yet effective. If you disagree with this initial order and want the Commission to consider your comments, you must take specific action within the time limits outlined below. If you agree with this initial order, and you would like the Order to become final before the time limits expire, you may send a letter to the Commission, waiving your right to petition for administrative review.

WAC 480-07-825(2) provides that any party to this proceeding has twenty (20) days after the entry of this initial order to file a *Petition for Administrative Review*. Section (3) of the rule identifies what you must include in any petition as well as other requirements for a petition. WAC 480-07-825(4) states that any party may file an *Answer* to a Petition for review within (10) days after service of the petition.

WAC 480-07-830 provides that before the Commission enters a final order any party may file a petition to reopen a contested proceeding to permit receipt of evidence essential to a decision, but unavailable and not reasonably discoverable at the time of hearing, or for other good and sufficient cause. The Commission will not accept answers to a petition to reopen unless the Commission requests answers by written notice.

RCW 80.01.060(3), as amended in the 2006 legislative session, provides that an initial order will become final without further Commission action if no party seeks administrative review of the initial order and if the Commission fails to exercise administrative review on its own motion. You will be notified if this order becomes final either by operation of law or on administrative review.

You must serve on each party of record one copy of any Petition or Answer filed with the commission, including proof of service as required by WAC 480-07-150(8) and (9). To file a Petition or Answer with the Commission, you must file an original and **three (3)** copies of your Petition or Answer by mail delivery to:

Attn: Steven V. King, Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, Washington 98504-7250