

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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

**PENALTY ASSESSMENT: TG-180165
PENALTY AMOUNT: \$100**

WASTE CONNECTIONS OF WASHINGTON, INC.
9411 NE 94th Ave
Vancouver, WA 98662

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes that Waste Connections of Washington Inc. (Waste Connections) has committed a violation of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-70-201 – Vehicle and Driver Safety Requirements, which adopts Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 393 – Parts and Accessories Necessary for Safe Operation.

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

In February 2018, Commission Motor Carrier Investigator Ed Steiner completed a vehicle inspection of Waste Connections vehicle number 709 during a destination check and documented the following violations:

- **One violation of Title 49 CFR Part 393.45(a) – Brake tubing and hoses; hose assemblies and end fittings.** Staff discovered an air leak above axle two, left side, coming from a valve flap. The vehicle was unable to maintain air pressure during an air loss rate test.

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

1. **How serious or harmful the violation is to the public.** The violation noted is serious and potentially harmful to the public. Companies that fail to maintain critical vehicle safety components such as brakes put the traveling public at risk. A poorly maintained vehicle presents serious safety concerns.
2. **Whether the violation is intentional.** Considerations include:
 - Whether the company ignored Commission staff's 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.

Waste Connections has operated as a solid waste hauler since October 1996. There is no evidence to suggest that Waste Connections ignored staff's technical assistance, or was aware of and failed to correct the violation.

3. **Whether the company self-reported the violation.** The company did not self-report the violation.
4. **Whether the company was cooperative and responsive.** The driver was cooperative and responsive throughout the vehicle inspection.
5. **Whether the company promptly corrected the violations and remedied the impacts.** Staff placed the vehicle out of service and directed Waste Connections to correct the violation.
6. **The number of violations.** Staff identified one violation type and placed the vehicle out of service.
7. **The number of customers affected.** The company reported 2,020,569 miles traveled in 2017. A significant number of customers, as well as members of the traveling public, were potentially affected by these safety violations.
8. **The likelihood of recurrence.** The Commission does not know if Waste Connections is likely to repeat this safety violation, however the driver was cooperative with staff during the inspection.
9. **The company's past performance regarding compliance, violations, and penalties.** The company had a similar violation in June 2017 when staff discovered an air leak in the brake hose behind the left rear brake chamber on company vehicle 825.
10. **The company's existing compliance program.** Ms. Mira Griffith (Region Safety Manager) is responsible for the carrier's safety and compliance program.
11. **The size of the company.** Waste Connections is a large company with 137 drivers and 126 commercial vehicles. The company reported \$19,980,139 in gross revenue for 2017.

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 per type of violation, 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 also for repeat violations of critical regulations found in future compliance investigations, including each occurrence of a repeat violation.

The Commission has considered these factors and determined that it should penalize Waste Connections \$100 for violation of WAC 480-70-201 Vehicle and Driver Safety Requirements, which adopts Title 49 CFR Part 393 calculated as follows:

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

- One violation of Title 49 CFR Part 393.45(a) – Brake tubing and hoses; hose assemblies and end fittings. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for this violation.

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 the violation did not occur, you may deny committing the violation and contest the penalty assessment 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 concerning the violation require consideration of evidence and resolution in a hearing. Any contest of the penalty assessment must include a written statement of the reasons supporting that contest. Failure to provide such a statement will result in denial of the contest.

If there is a reason for any the violation that you believe should excuse you from the penalty, you may ask for mitigation (reduction) of this 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 for mitigation 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 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 his or her 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.
- Request mitigation to contest the amount of the penalty.

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 notice. 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, Post Office 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 Olympia, Washington, and effective March 5, 2017.

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

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
PENALTY ASSESSMENT TG-180165

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 violation occurred and enclose \$_____ in payment of the penalty.

2. **Contest the violation.** I believe that the alleged violation 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 violation, 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 makes a materially false statement which he 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 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.”