

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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

PENALTY ASSESSMENT: TN-240307  
PENALTY AMOUNT: \$300

Human Services Council  
120 NE 136th Ave. #215  
Vancouver, WA 98684

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes Human Services Council (Human Services Council or Company) violated Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-31-130, Operation of Motor Vehicles, which adopts Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (49 C.F.R.) Part 391 - Qualifications 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 April 30, 2024, Commission Motor Carrier Safety Investigator Tracy Cobile completed a routine safety investigation of Human Services Council and documented the following violations:

- **Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(a) - Using a driver not medically examined and certified.** Human Services Council allowed drivers Gerina Hatchto and Frank Roberts to operate a motor vehicle without a valid medical certificate.
- **Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 393.62 – Buses – Required emergency exit inoperable and not properly marked.** Human Service Council used a motor vehicle with an emergency exit that was not properly marked and inoperable.<sup>1</sup>

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. Private, nonprofit transportation providers that: (1) use drivers who are not medically certified, and (2) use motor vehicles with deficient emergency exits put their customers 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 previous technical assistance; and

---

<sup>1</sup> VIN 1FDES8PV9KKB87712

- Whether there is clear evidence through documentation or other means that shows the Company knew of and failed to correct the violations.

Human Services Council began its operations in February of 1957. The Company knew or should have known about these requirements; however, there is no evidence that suggests Human Services Council ignored Staff's previous technical assistance.

3. **Whether the Company self-reported the violations.** Human Services Council did not self-report these violations.
4. **Whether the Company was cooperative and responsive.** The Company was cooperative throughout the safety investigation.
5. **Whether the Company promptly corrected the violations and remedied the impacts.** Human Services Council has not provided staff with evidence of corrections.
6. **The number of violations.** Staff identified 12 violation types with a total of 24 individual occurrences during its routine safety investigation of Human Services Council. Of those violations, Staff identified two violation types with four individual occurrences that warrant penalties in accordance with the Commission's Enforcement Policy.
7. **The number of customers affected.** Human Services Council reported traveling 847 miles in 2023. These safety violations presented a public safety risk.
8. **The likelihood of recurrence.** The Company was cooperative throughout the safety investigation and was 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. In light of these factors, Staff believes the likelihood of recurrence is low.
9. **The Company's past performance regarding compliance, violations, and penalties.** The Company has no history of penalties for safety violations.
10. **The Company's existing compliance program.** Gerina Hatch, Safety Director, is responsible for the Company's safety compliance program.
11. **The size of the Company.** The Company employs five drivers and operates three motor vehicles. The Company reported \$1,900,000 in gross revenue for 2023.

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.<sup>2</sup> The Commission generally will assess penalties by violation category, rather than per occurrence, for first-time violations of those critical

---

<sup>2</sup> Docket A-120061 – Enforcement Policy of the Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission – Section V.

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.

The Commission has considered these factors and determined that it should penalize Human Services Council \$300 (Penalty Assessment), calculated as follows:

- Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(a) – Using a driver not medically examined and certified. The Commission assesses a “per category” penalty of \$100 for these first-time critical violations.
- Two violations of 49 C.F.R. § 393.62 - Buses – Required emergency exit inoperable and not properly marked. The Commission assesses a \$100 penalty for each of these out-of-service violations for a total of \$200.

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 of the violations did not occur, you may deny committing the violations and contest the penalty through evidence presented at a hearing or in writing. Alternatively, if there is a reason for any or all of 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 violations 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 violations 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 violations.
- Admit the violation(s) 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 at <https://efiling.utc.wa.gov/Form> **within FIFTEEN (15) days** after you receive this Penalty Assessment.<sup>3</sup> If you are unable to use the web portal, you may submit it via email to [records@utc.wa.gov](mailto:records@utc.wa.gov). If you are unable to submit the form electronically, you may

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://efiling.utc.wa.gov/Form>.

send a paper copy to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, PO Box 47250, Olympia, Washington 98504-7250.

If you wish to make a payment online, please use this link: [Make a Payment Now \(wa.gov\)](#).<sup>4</sup>

**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 May 20, 2024.

*/s/ Michael Howard*  
MICHAEL HOWARD  
Director, Administrative Law Division

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.utc.wa.gov/documents-and-proceedings/online-payments/make-payment-now>

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**PENALTY ASSESSMENT TN-240307**

**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, 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.  
 Enclose \$300 in payment of the penalty.  
 OR  Attest that I have paid the penalty in full through the Commission's payment portal.
2. **Contest the violations.** I believe that the alleged violations 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.