

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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

PENALTY ASSESSMENT: TV-240750  
PENALTY AMOUNT: \$14,900

Martinson Piano Moving, LLC  
3231 Broadway Suite E  
Everett, WA 98201

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes Martinson Piano Moving, LLC (Martinson Piano or Company) violated Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-15-560, Vehicle and Driver Safety Requirements, which adopts Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (49 C.F.R.) Part 391 - Qualifications of Drivers and 49 C.F.R. Part 396 - Inspection, Repair, and Maintenance.

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 September 30, 2024, Commission Motor Carrier Safety Investigator Francine Gagne completed a routine safety investigation of Martinson Piano and documented the following violations:

- **One hundred forty-eight violations of 49 § C.F.R. § 391.45(a) - Using a driver not medically examined and certified.** Martinson Piano allowed drivers Darin Gable, Eric Martinson, and Michael Martinson to operate a motor vehicle without a valid medical certificate on 148 occasions between March 10, 2024, and September 10, 2024.
- **One violation of 49 C.F.R. § 396.17(a) - Using a commercial motor vehicle not periodically inspected.** Martinson Piano failed to annually inspect its commercial motor vehicle (CMV).

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) use drivers who are not medically certified, and (2) use CMVs not periodically inspected put their customers, their customers' belongings, and the traveling public at risk. These violations present 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 violations.

The Company began operations in 1988. On December 4, 2004, the Commission received the Company's application for transfer of household goods moving authority from Eric Martinson to Martinson Piano, LLC. In the application, Eric Martinson, owner of Martinson Piano, acknowledged the Company's responsibility to understand and comply with applicable motor carrier safety rules.

On November 3, 2005, Staff completed a routine safety investigation of Martinson Piano and documented violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(a).

On March 3, 2022, Staff completed a routine safety investigation of Martinson Piano and documented 136 violations of 49 C.F.R. § 391.45(a).

The Company knew or should have known about these requirements.

3. **Whether the Company self-reported the violations.** Martinson Piano did not self-report these violations.
4. **Whether the Company was cooperative and responsive.** The Company was cooperative throughout the safety inspection.
5. **Whether the Company promptly corrected the violations and remedied the impacts.** Martinson Piano has not provided Staff with evidence of correction.
6. **The number of violations.** Staff identified six violation types with a total of 159 occurrences during the routine safety investigation of Martinson Piano. Of those violations, Staff identified two violation types with 149 individual occurrences that warrant a penalty in accordance with the Commission's Enforcement Policy.
7. **The number of customers affected.** Martinson Piano last reported traveling 81,000 miles for 2023. These safety violations present a public safety risk.
8. **The likelihood of recurrence.** The Company incurred repeat violations despite prior technical assistance and suspended penalties. Absent a significant commitment to prioritize safe operations, the violations are likely to reoccur.
9. **The Company's past performance regarding compliance, violations, and penalties.** On April 4, 2022, the Commission assessed a \$13,800 penalty against Martinson Piano in Docket TV-220148 for safety violations of WAC 480-15-560 and WAC 480-15-570. On April 12, 2022, the Company responded to the Penalty Assessment, admitting the violations and requesting mitigation of the penalty. April 29, 2022, the Company paid \$3,500 of the penalty. On May 3, 2022, the Commission entered Order 01 granting a reduced penalty of \$7,000 with \$3,500 of the penalty suspended subject to the conditions that the company does not incur any repeat violations of 49 § C.F.R Part 391 upon reinspection.

10. **The Company's existing compliance program.** Eric Martinson is responsible for the Company's safety compliance program.
11. **The size of the Company.** The Company employs three drivers and operates two commercial motor vehicles. The Company reported \$969,852.91 in gross revenue in 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>1</sup> 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 also 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 Martinson Piano \$14,900 (Penalty Assessment), calculated as follows:

- One hundred forty-eight 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 these repeat critical violations, for a total of \$14,800.
- One violation of 49 C.F.R. § 396.17(a) - Using a commercial motor vehicle not periodically inspected. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for this repeat critical 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(s) 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 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.

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

**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 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>2</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 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>3</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 October 29, 2024.

*/s/ James E. Brown II*  
JAMES E. BROWN II  
Interim Director, Administrative Law  
Division

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<sup>2</sup> <https://efiling.utc.wa.gov/Form>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.utc.wa.gov/documents-and-proceedings/online-payments/make-payment-now>

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**PENALTY ASSESSMENT TV-240750**

**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 violation(s) occurred.  
 Enclose \$14,900 in payment of the penalty.  
 OR  Attest that I have paid the penalty in full through the Commission's payment portal.
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 violation(s), 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 they make a materially false statement which they know 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 their 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.