

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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

PENALTY ASSESSMENT: TV-240927
PENALTY AMOUNT: \$300

Cherish Moving LLC
17715 NE 152nd Ave
Brush Prairie, WA 98606
cherishmovingmain@gmail.com

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes Cherish Moving LLC (Cherish Moving or Company) violated Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-15-555(1), Criminal Background Checks for Prospective Employees and WAC 480-15-560, Vehicle and Driver Safety Requirements, which adopts Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (49 C.F.R.) Part 395 – Hours of Service of Drivers and 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 November 20, 2024, Commission Motor Carrier Investigator Tracy Cobile completed a routine safety investigation of Cherish Moving and documented the following violations:

- **One violation of WAC 480-15-555(1) – Failing to complete a criminal background check for every person the carrier intends to hire.** Cherish Moving allowed an employee, Carlos M. Flores Ramirez, to work prior to having a criminal background check completed and reviewed by the carrier.
- **One hundred seventy-five violations of 49 C.F.R § 395.8(k)(1) – Failing to preserve driver's record of duty status for six months.** The Company failed to preserve and maintain six months of records of duty status.
- **One violation of 49 C.F.R. § 396.17(a) – Using a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) not periodically inspected.** The Company used a CMV that was not periodically inspected.¹

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 VIN: 2NKHHM6X26M497488

(1) fail to conduct criminal background checks on their employees, (2) fail to maintain driver record of duty status, and (3) use CMVs not periodically inspected put their customers, their customers' belongings, 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 (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 violation.

On February 29, 2016, the Commission received the Company's application for household goods moving authority. In the application, Emily Landis, owner of Cherish Moving, acknowledged the Company's responsibility to understand and comply with applicable motor carrier safety laws and regulations.

On August 11, 2016, Emily Landis attended household goods training provided by Staff and acknowledged receiving training pertaining to motor carrier safety regulations. The Company knew or should have known about these requirements.

On June 7, 2017, Staff completed a compliance review of Cherish Moving and discovered violations of 49 C.F.R. Part 396.17(a). The Company knew or should have known about these requirements.

3. **Whether the Company self-reported the violations.** Cherish Moving did not self-report these violations.
4. **Whether the Company was cooperative and responsive.** The Company was mostly cooperative throughout the safety investigation.
5. **Whether the Company promptly corrected the violations and remedied the impacts.** Cherish Moving has provided Staff with evidence that it corrected some of the violations.
6. **The number of violations.** Staff identified 17 violation types with a total of 198 individual occurrences during the routine safety investigation of Cherish Moving. Of those violations, Staff identified three violation types with 177 individual occurrences that warrant penalties in accordance with the Commission's Enforcement Policy.
7. **The number of customers affected.** Cherish Moving reported traveling 41,764 miles in 2023. These safety violations presented a public safety risk.
8. **The likelihood of recurrence.** The Company was cooperative throughout the safety investigation, made corrections, 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.** This is the Company's second comprehensive safety investigation.
10. **The Company's existing compliance program.** Emily Lenares is responsible for the Company's safety compliance program.
11. **The size of the Company.** The Company employs two drivers and operates one CMV. The Company reported \$37,842.81 in gross revenue for 2024.

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.² 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 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 Cherish Moving \$300 (Penalty Assessment), calculated as follows:

- One violation of WAC 480-15-555(1) – Failing to complete a criminal background check for every person the carrier intends to hire. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for this critical-type violation, for a total of \$100.
- One hundred-seventy-five violations of 49 C.F.R § 395.8(k)(1) – Failing to preserve driver's record of duty status for six months. The Commission assesses a \$100 "per category" penalty for these first-time critical violations.
- One violation of 49 C.F.R. § 396.17(a) – Using a CMV not periodically inspected. The Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for this critical-type 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 any or all 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 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.

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

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 violation(s).
- Admit the violations 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.³ 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, PO Box 47250, Olympia, Washington 98504-7250.

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

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 January 21, 2025.

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

³ <https://efiling.utc.wa.gov/Form>.

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

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
PENALTY ASSESSMENT TV-240927

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 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 they make a materially false statement which they 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.