

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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

PENALTY ASSESSMENT: TE-161224
PENALTY AMOUNT: \$3,900

San Juan Transit Tours and Charters LLC
10 Front Street Cannery Landing #26
Friday Harbor, WA 98520

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) believes that you have committed violations of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-30-221 Vehicle and Driver Safety Requirements, which requires charter and excursion carriers to comply with Title 49 CFR Part 382 – Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing, Part 391 – Qualifications of Drivers, and Part 396 – Inspection, Repair and Maintenance.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 81.04.405 allows penalties of one hundred dollars for each violation of Title 49 CFR Parts 391 and 396. In the case of an ongoing violation, every day's continuance is considered a separate and distinct violation. RCW 81.04.530 allows penalties of \$1,500 for companies, and \$500 for each driver not in compliance with Title 49 CFR Part 382.

In October 2016, Commission Motor Carrier Investigator Wayne Gilbert conducted a compliance review of San Juan Transit Tours and Charters LLC (San Juan Transit) and documented the following violations of acute and critical regulations:

- **One violation of CFR Part 382.305 – Failing to implement a random controlled substance and/or alcohol testing program.** San Juan Transit failed to randomly test any drivers during calendar year 2015.
- **One violation (four occurrences) of CFR 382.301(a) – Using a driver before the motor carrier has received a negative pre-employment controlled substance test result.** The carrier allowed drivers Mary Morrison, William Pike, Dennis Hazelton and Holly Harbers each to drive before receiving a negative pre-employment controlled substance test.
- **One violation of CFR 391.51(a) – Failing to maintain driver qualification file for each driver.** San Juan Transit had no driver qualification files for any of the five drivers checked.
- **One violation of CFR 396.3(b) – Failing to keep minimum records of inspection and vehicle maintenance.** San Juan Transit failed to keep minimum vehicle inspection and maintenance records for the five vehicles checked.
- **One violation of CFR 396.11(a) – Failing to require driver to prepare driver vehicle inspection report.** San Juan Transit failed to require its drivers to complete driver vehicle inspection reports on 150 occasions.

- **One violation of CFR 396.17(a) – Using a commercial motor vehicle not periodically inspected.** None of the five vehicles checked had been periodically inspected.

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 violations noted are serious and potentially harmful to the public. Companies that are not in compliance with controlled substances and alcohol testing requirements or who fail to document driver qualifications or conduct and fail to document routine vehicle maintenance or inspections put the traveling public at risk. An impaired or unqualified driver, or unknown vehicle defect present serious safety concerns.
2. **Whether the violation is 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.

In his November 2013 application for charter and excursion authority, Kraig Hansen, owner of San Juan Transit acknowledged his responsibility to understand and comply with applicable motor carrier safety rules. In addition, staff provided new entrant technical assistance to the company in April 2014.

3. **Whether the company self-reported the violation.** The company did not self-report these violations, but did acknowledge many of the violations during the compliance review.
4. **Whether the company was cooperative and responsive.** San Juan Transit was very cooperative and responsive.
5. **Whether the company promptly corrected the violations and remedied the impacts.** The company took immediate steps to correct these violations.
6. **The number of violations.** For a company this size, the number of critical violations noted is significant.
7. **The number of customers affected.** The company traveled 70,225 miles and reported \$147,389 in gross revenue for 2015. A significant number of passengers were likely affected by these safety violations.
8. **The likelihood of recurrence.** The Commission does not know if the company is likely to repeat these violations, however the company has provided evidence of immediate steps taken to correct the violations and prevent future occurrences.
9. **The company's past performance regarding compliance, violations, and penalties.** This is the company's first compliance review. The company has no history of previous violations or penalties.

10. **The company's existing compliance program.** San Juan Transit has no formal compliance program.
11. **The size of the company.** San Juan Transit is a seasonal company, employing one driver year-round and up to 13 drivers during the peak season. The company operates eight commercial vehicles, and reported \$147,389 in gross revenue and 70,225 miles traveled in 2015.

These are first-time violations, but 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 other first-time violations of critical regulations that do not meet the criteria for mandatory penalties. The Commission will assess penalties for any repeat violations of critical regulations found in future compliance investigations, including for each occurrence of a repeat violation.

The Commission has considered these factors and determined that it should penalize San Juan Transit \$3,900 for violations of WAC 480-30-221 Driver Safety Requirements, which adopts CFR Parts 382, 391 and 396, calculated as follows:

- **One violation of CFR Part 382.305 – Failing to implement a random controlled substance and/or alcohol testing program.** The Commission assesses the statutory authorized penalty amount of \$1,500 for this acute violation, per RCW 81.04.530.
- **One violation (four occurrences) of CFR 382.301(a) – Using a driver before the motor carrier has received a negative pre-employment controlled substance test result.** The Commission assesses a penalty of \$500 for each of four occurrences of this critical violation, for a total of \$2,000, per RCW 81.04.530
- **One violation of CFR 391.51(a) – Failing to maintain driver qualification file for each driver.** As a first-time violation, the Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for one violation of this type.
- **One violation of CFR 396.3(b) – Failing to keep minimum records of inspection and vehicle maintenance.** As a first-time violation, the Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for one violation of this type.
- **One violation of CFR 396.11(a) – Failing to require driver to prepare driver vehicle inspection report.** As a first-time violation, the Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for one violation of this type.
- **One violation of CFR 396.17(a) – Using a commercial motor vehicle not periodically inspected.** As a first-time violation, the Commission assesses a penalty of \$100 for one violation of this type.

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

This information, if proved 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 violation(s) 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(s) 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 or all of the violations 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.

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 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 violations.
- Request mitigation to contest the amount of the penalty.

Please indicate your selection on the enclosed form and send it to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, Post Office Box 47250, Olympia, Washington 98504-7250, **within FIFTEEN (15) days** after you receive this notice.

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 December 5, 2016.



GREGORY J. KOPTA
Administrative Law Judge

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
PENALTY ASSESSMENT TE-161224

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:

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:

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.”