

**Chapter 60.28****LIEN FOR LABOR, MATERIALS, TAXES ON PUBLIC WORKS**

## Sections

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**NOTES:**

*Contractor's bond for payment of mechanics, laborers, materialmen, etc., on public works: Chapter 39.08 RCW.*

**60.28.011 Retained percentage—Labor and material lien created—Bond in lieu of retained funds—Termination before completion—Chapter deemed exclusive—Release of ferry contract payments—Projects of farmers home administration—General contractor/construction manager procedure—Definitions.**

\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2011 \*\*\* (SEE 1384-S.SL) \*\*\*

(1) Public improvement contracts shall provide, and public bodies shall reserve, a contract retainage not to exceed five percent of the moneys earned by the contractor as a trust fund for the protection and payment of: (a) The claims of any person arising under the contract; and (b) the state with respect to taxes imposed pursuant to Titles 50, 51, and 82 RCW which may be due from such contractor.

(2) Every person performing labor or furnishing supplies toward the completion of a public improvement contract shall have a lien upon moneys reserved by a public body under the provisions of a public improvement contract. However, the notice of the lien of the claimant shall be given within forty-five days of completion of the contract work, and in the manner provided in RCW 39.08.030.

(3) The contractor at any time may request the contract retainage be reduced to one hundred percent of the value of the work remaining on the project.

(a) After completion of all contract work other than landscaping, the contractor may request that the public body release and pay in full the amounts retained during the performance of the contract, and sixty days thereafter the public body must re-

lease and pay in full the amounts retained (other than continuing retention of five percent of the moneys earned for landscaping) subject to the provisions of chapters 39.12 and 60.28 RCW.

(b) Sixty days after completion of all contract work the public body must release and pay in full the amounts retained during the performance of the contract subject to the provisions of chapters 39.12 and 60.28 RCW.

(4) The moneys reserved by a public body under the provisions of a public improvement contract, at the option of the contractor, shall be:

(a) Retained in a fund by the public body;

(b) Deposited by the public body in an interest bearing account in a bank, mutual savings bank, or savings and loan association. Interest on moneys reserved by a public body under the provision of a public improvement contract shall be paid to the contractor;

(c) Placed in escrow with a bank or trust company by the public body. When the moneys reserved are placed in escrow, the public body shall issue a check representing the sum of the moneys reserved payable to the bank or trust company and the contractor jointly. This check shall be converted into bonds and securities chosen by the contractor and approved by the public body and the bonds and securities shall be held in escrow. Interest on the bonds and securities shall be paid to the contractor as the interest accrues.

(5) The contractor or subcontractor may withhold payment of not more than five percent from the moneys earned by any subcontractor or sub-subcontractor or supplier contracted with by the contractor to provide labor, materials, or equipment to the public project. Whenever the contractor or subcontractor reserves funds earned by a subcontractor or sub-subcontractor or supplier, the contractor or subcontractor shall pay interest to the subcontractor or sub-subcontractor or supplier at a rate equal to that received by the contractor or subcontractor from reserved funds.

(6) A contractor may submit a bond for all or any portion of the contract retainage in a form acceptable to the public body and from a bonding company meeting standards established by the public body. The public body shall accept a bond meeting these requirements unless the public body can demonstrate good cause for refusing to accept it. This bond and any proceeds therefrom are subject to all claims and liens and in the same manner and priority as set forth for retained percentages in this chapter. The public body shall release the bonded portion of the retained funds to the contractor within thirty days of accepting the bond from the contractor. Whenever a public body accepts a bond in lieu of retained funds from a contractor, the contractor shall accept like bonds from any subcontractors or suppliers from which the contractor has retained funds. The contractor shall then release the funds retained from the subcontractor or supplier to the subcontractor or supplier within thirty days of accepting the bond from the subcontractor or supplier.

(7) If the public body administering a contract, after a substantial portion of the work has been completed, finds that an unreasonable delay will occur in the completion of the remaining portion of the contract for any reason not the result of a

breach thereof, it may, if the contractor agrees, delete from the contract the remaining work and accept as final the improvement at the stage of completion then attained and make payment in proportion to the amount of the work accomplished and in this case any amounts retained and accumulated under this section shall be held for a period of sixty days following the completion. In the event that the work is terminated before final completion as provided in this section, the public body may thereafter enter into a new contract with the same contractor to perform the remaining work or improvement for an amount equal to or less than the cost of the remaining work as was provided for in the original contract without advertisement or bid. The provisions of this chapter are exclusive and shall supersede all provisions and regulations in conflict herewith.

(8) Whenever the department of transportation has contracted for the construction of two or more ferry vessels, sixty days after completion of all contract work on each ferry vessel, the department must release and pay in full the amounts retained in connection with the construction of the vessel subject to the provisions of RCW 60.28.021 and chapter 39.12 RCW. However, the department of transportation may at its discretion condition the release of funds retained in connection with the completed ferry upon the contractor delivering a good and sufficient bond with two or more sureties, or with a surety company, in the amount of the retained funds to be released to the contractor, conditioned that no taxes shall be certified or claims filed for work on the ferry after a period of sixty days following completion of the ferry; and if taxes are certified or claims filed, recovery may be had on the bond by the department of revenue, the employment security department, the department of labor and industries, and the material suppliers and laborers filing claims.

(9) Except as provided in subsection (1) of this section, reservation by a public body for any purpose from the moneys earned by a contractor by fulfilling its responsibilities under public improvement contracts is prohibited.

(10) Contracts on projects funded in whole or in part by farmers home administration and subject to farmers home administration regulations are not subject to subsections (1) through (9) of this section.

(11) This subsection applies only to a public body that has contracted for the construction of a facility using the general contractor/construction manager procedure, as defined under RCW 39.10.210. If the work performed by a subcontractor on the project has been completed within the first half of the time provided in the general contractor/construction manager contract for completing the work, the public body may accept the completion of the subcontract. The public body must give public notice of this acceptance. After a forty-five day period for giving notice of liens, and compliance with the retainage release procedures in RCW 60.28.021, the public body may release that portion of the retained funds associated with the subcontract. Claims against the retained funds after the forty-five day period are not valid.

(12) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section.

(a) "Contract retainage" means an amount reserved by a public body from the moneys earned by a person under a public improvement contract.

(b) "Person" means a person or persons, mechanic, subcontractor, or materialperson who performs labor or provides materials for a public improvement contract, and any other person who supplies the person with provisions or supplies for the carrying on of a public improvement contract.

(c) "Public body" means the state, or a county, city, town, district, board, or other public body.

(d) "Public improvement contract" means a contract for public improvements or work, other than for professional services, or a work order as defined in RCW 39.10.210. [2009 c 432 § 5; 2009 c 219 § 6. Prior: 2007 c 494 § 504; 2007 c 218 § 92; 2003 c 301 § 7; 2000 c 185 § 1; 1994 c 101 § 1; 1992 c 223 § 2.]

**NOTES:**

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2009 c 219 § 6 and by 2009 c 432 § 5, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Report—2009 c 432:** See note following RCW 18.27.062.

**Part headings and captions not law—Effective dates—Severability—2007 c 494:** See RCW 39.10.903 through 39.10.905.

**Intent—Finding—2007 c 218:** See note following RCW 1.08.130.

**Effective date—1992 c 223:** See note following RCW 39.76.011.

**Waiver of rights, construction—Application—1992 c 223:** See RCW 39.04.900 and 39.04.901.

**60.28.015 Recovery from retained percentage—  
Written notice to contractor of materials  
furnished.**

Every person, firm, or corporation furnishing materials, supplies, or equipment to be used in the construction, performance, carrying on, prosecution, or doing of any work for the state, or any county, city, town, district, municipality, or other public body, shall give to the contractor of the work a notice in writing, which notice shall cover the material, supplies, or equipment furnished or leased during the sixty days preceding the giving of such notice as well as all subsequent materials, supplies, or equipment furnished or leased, stating in substance and effect that such person, firm, or corporation is and/or has furnished materials and supplies, or equipment for use thereon, with the name of the subcontractor ordering the same, and that a lien against the retained percentage may be claimed for all materials and supplies, or equipment furnished by such person, firm, or corporation for use thereon, which notice shall be given by (1) mailing the same by registered or certified mail in an envelope addressed to the contractor, or (2) by serving the same personally upon the contractor or the contractor's representative and obtaining evidence of such service in the form of a receipt or other acknowledgement signed by the contractor or the contractor's representative, and no suit or action shall be maintained in any court against the retained percentage to recover for such material, supplies, or equipment or any part thereof unless the provisions of this section have been complied with. [1986 c 314 § 5.]

**60.28.021 Excess over lien claims paid to contractor.**

After the expiration of the forty-five day period for giving notice of lien provided in RCW 60.28.011(2), and after receipt of the certificates of the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries, and the public body is satisfied that the taxes certified as due or to become due by the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries are discharged, and the claims of material suppliers and laborers who have filed their claims, together with a sum sufficient to defray the cost of foreclosing the liens of such claims, and to pay attorneys' fees, have been paid, the public body may withhold from the remaining retained amounts for claims the public body may have against the contractor and shall pay the balance, if any, to the contractor the fund retained by it or release to the contractor the securities and bonds held in escrow.

If such taxes have not been discharged or the claims, expenses, and fees have not been paid, the public body shall either retain in its fund, or in an interest bearing account, or retain in escrow, at the option of the contractor, an amount equal to such unpaid taxes and unpaid claims together with a sum sufficient to defray the costs and attorney fees incurred in foreclosing the lien of such claims, and shall pay, or release from escrow, the remainder to the contractor. [2009 c 432 § 6; 2007 c 218 § 94; 1992 c 223 § 3.]

**NOTES:**

**Report—2009 c 432:** See note following RCW 18.27.062.

**Intent—Finding—2007 c 218:** See note following RCW 1.08.130.

**Effective date—1992 c 223:** See note following RCW 39.76.011.

**Waiver of rights, construction—Application—1992 c 223:** See RCW 39.04.900 and 39.04.901.

**60.28.030 Foreclosure of lien—Limitation of action—Release of funds.**

Any person, firm, or corporation filing a claim against the reserve fund shall have four months from the time of the filing thereof in which to bring an action to foreclose the lien. The lien shall be enforced by action in the superior court of the county where filed, and shall be governed by the laws regulating the proceedings in civil actions touching the mode and manner of trial and the proceedings and laws to secure property so as to hold it for the satisfaction of any lien against it: PROVIDED, That the public body shall not be required to make any detailed answer to any complaint or other pleading but need only certify to the court the name of the contractor; the work contracted to be done; the date of the contract; the date of completion and final acceptance of the work; the amount retained; the amount of taxes certified due or to become due to the state; and all claims filed with it showing respectively the dates of filing, the names of claimants, and amounts claimed. Such certification shall operate to arrest payment of so much of the funds retained as is required to discharge the taxes certified due or to become due and the claims filed in accordance with this chapter. In any action brought to enforce the lien, the claimant, if he prevails, is entitled to recover, in addition to all other costs, attorney fees in such sum as the court finds reasonable. If a claimant fails to bring action to foreclose his lien within the four months period,

the reserve fund shall be discharged from the lien of his claim and the funds shall be paid to the contractor. The four months limitation shall not, however, be construed as a limitation upon the right to sue the contractor or his surety where no right of foreclosure is sought against the fund. [1979 ex.s. c 38 § 1; 1955 c 236 § 3; 1927 c 241 § 1; 1921 c 166 § 3; RRS § 10322.]

**60.28.040 Tax liens—Priority of liens (as amended by 2009 c 219).**

The amount of all taxes, increases and penalties due or to become due under Title 82 RCW, from a contractor or the contractor's successors or assignees with respect to a public improvement contract wherein the contract price is ((twenty)) thirty-five thousand dollars or more shall be a lien prior to all other liens upon the amount of the retained percentage withheld by the disbursing officer under such contract, except that the employees of a contractor or the contractor's successors or assignees who have not been paid the prevailing wage under such a public improvement contract shall have a first priority lien against the bond or retainage prior to all other liens. The amount of all other taxes, increases and penalties due and owing from the contractor shall be a lien upon the balance of such retained percentage remaining in the possession of the disbursing officer after all other statutory lien claims have been paid. [2009 c 219 § 7; 1985 c 80 § 1; 1971 ex.s. c 299 § 1; 1955 c 236 § 4. Prior: 1949 c 228 § 27, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 8370-204a, part; RCW 82.32.250, part.]

**60.28.040 Tax liens—Priority of liens (as amended by 2009 c 432).**

(1) Subject to subsection (5) of this section, the amount of all taxes, increases, and penalties due or to become due under Title 82 RCW, from a contractor or the contractor's successors or assignees with respect to a public improvement contract wherein the contract price is twenty thousand dollars or more, shall be a lien prior to all other liens upon the amount of the retained percentage withheld by the disbursing officer under such contract((, except that)).

(2) Subject to subsection (5) of this section, after payment of all taxes, increases, and penalties due or to become due under Title 82 RCW, from a contractor or the contractor's successors or assignees with respect to a public improvement contract wherein the contract price is twenty thousand dollars or more, the amount of all other taxes, increases, and penalties under Title 82 RCW, due and owing from the contractor, shall be a lien prior to all other liens upon the amount of the retained percentage withheld by the disbursing officer under such contract.

(3) Subject to subsection (5) of this section, after payment of all taxes, increases, and penalties due or to become due under Title 82 RCW, the amount of all taxes, increases, and penalties due or to become due under Titles 50 and 51 RCW from the contractor or the contractor's successors or assignees with respect to a public improvement contract wherein the contract price is twenty thousand dollars or more shall be a lien prior to all other liens upon the amount of the retained percentage withheld by the disbursing officer under such contract.

(4) Subject to subsection (5) of this section, the amount of all other taxes, increases, and penalties due and owing from the contractor shall be a lien upon the balance of such retained percentage remaining in the possession of the disbursing officer after all other statutory lien claims have been paid.

(5) The employees of a contractor or the contractor's successors or assignees who have not been paid the prevailing wage under such a public improvement contract shall have a first priority lien against the bond or retainage prior to all other liens. ((The amount of all other taxes, increases and penalties due and owing from the contractor shall be a lien upon the balance of such retained percentage remaining in the possession of the disbursing officer after all other statutory lien claims have been paid.)) [2009 c 432 § 7; 1985 c 80 § 1; 1971 ex.s. c 299 § 1; 1955 c 236 § 4. Prior: 1949 c 228 § 27, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 8370-204a, part; RCW 82.32.250, part.]

**NOTES:**

**Reviser's note:** RCW 60.28.040 was amended twice during the 2009 legislative session, each without reference to the other. For rule of construction concerning sections amended more than once during the same legislative session, see RCW 1.12.025.

**Report—2009 c 432:** See note following RCW 18.27.062.

**Severability—Effective dates—1971 ex.s. c 299:** See notes following RCW 82.04.050.

#### **60.28.051 Duties of disbursing officer upon completion of contract.**

Upon completion of a contract, the state, county, or other municipal officer charged with the duty of disbursing or authorizing disbursement or payment of such contracts shall forthwith notify the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries of the completion of contracts over thirty-five thousand dollars. Such officer shall not make any payment from the retained percentage fund or release any retained percentage escrow account to any person, until he or she has received from the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries certificates that all taxes, increases, and penalties due from the contractor, and all taxes due and to become due with respect to such contract have been paid in full or that they are, in each department's opinion, readily collectible without recourse to the state's lien on the retained percentage. [2009 c 432 § 8; 2007 c 210 § 2; 1992 c 223 § 4.]

**NOTES:**

**Report—2009 c 432:** See note following RCW 18.27.062.

**Effective date—1992 c 223:** See note following RCW 39.76.011.

**Waiver of rights, construction—Application—1992 c 223:** See RCW 39.04.900 and 39.04.901.

#### **60.28.060 Duties of disbursing officer upon final acceptance of contract—Request of payment of taxes, increases, penalties, and claims.**

If within thirty days after receipt of notice by the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries of the completion of the contract, the amount of all taxes, increases and penalties due from the contractor or any of his successors or assignees or to become due with respect to such contract have not been paid, the depart-

ment of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries may certify to the disbursing officer the amount of all taxes, increases and penalties due from the contractor, together with the amount of all taxes due and to become due with respect to the contract and may request payment thereof in accordance with the priority provided by this chapter. The disbursing officer shall within ten days after receipt of such certificate and request pay to the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries the amount of all taxes, increases and penalties certified to be due or to become due and all claims which by statute are a lien upon the retained percentage withheld by the disbursing officer in accordance with the priority provided by this chapter. If the contractor owes no taxes imposed pursuant to Titles 50, 51, and 82 RCW, the department of revenue, the employment security department, and the department of labor and industries shall so certify to the disbursing officer. [2009 c 432 § 9; 1967 ex.s. c 26 § 25; 1955 c 236 § 6. Prior: 1949 c 228 § 27, part; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 8370-204a, part; RCW 82.32.250, part.]

**NOTES:**

**Report—2009 c 432:** See note following RCW 18.27.062.

**Effective date—1967 ex.s. c 26:** See note following RCW 82.01.050.

#### **60.28.080 Delay due to litigation—Change order or force account directive—Costs—Arbitration—Termination.**

(1) If any delay in issuance of notice to proceed or in construction following an award of any public construction contract is primarily caused by acts or omissions of persons or agencies other than the contractor and a preliminary, special or permanent restraining order of a court of competent jurisdiction is issued pursuant to litigation and the appropriate public contracting body does not elect to delete the completion of the contract as provided by RCW 60.28.011(7), the appropriate contracting body will issue a change order or force account directive to cover reasonable costs incurred by the contractor as a result of such delay. These costs shall include but not be limited to contractor's costs for wages, labor costs other than wages, wage taxes, materials, equipment rentals, insurance, bonds, professional fees, and subcontracts, attributable to such delay plus a reasonable sum for overhead and profit.

In the event of a dispute between the contracting body and the contractor, arbitration procedures may be commenced under the applicable terms of the construction contract, or, if the contract contains no such provision for arbitration, under the then obtaining rules of the American Arbitration Association.

If the delay caused by litigation exceeds six months, the contractor may then elect to terminate the contract and to delete the completion of the contract and receive payment in proportion to the amount of the work completed plus the cost of the delay. Amounts retained and accumulated under RCW 60.28.011 shall be held for a period of forty-five days following the election of the contractor to terminate. Election not to terminate the contract by the contractor shall not affect the accumulation of costs incurred as a result of the delay provided above.

(2) This section shall not apply to any contract awarded pursuant to an invitation for bid issued on or before July 16, 1973. [2009 c 219 § 8; 1982 c 170 § 3; 1973 1st ex.s. c 62 § 3.]

**NOTES:**

**Severability—1973 1st ex.s. c 62:** See note following RCW 39.04.120. *Change orders due to environmental protection requirements, costs: RCW 39.04.120.*

**60.28.900 Severability—1955 c 236.**

If any section, provision or part of this chapter shall be adjudged to be invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of this chapter as a whole or any section, provision or part hereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional. [1955 c 236 § 8.]

