

by the disbursing officer of a warrant in accordance with the procedure set forth in this section and proper indorsement thereof by the financial institution shall have the same legal effect as payment directly to the recipient.

For the purposes of this section "financial institution" shall have the meaning given in RCW 41.04.240 as now or hereafter amended.

Passed the Senate February 18, 1982.

Passed the House March 11, 1982.

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CHAPTER 110

[Engrossed Senate Bill No. 3297]

INSURANCE—ARSON AREAS—APPLICANT INFORMATION—POLICY CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

AN ACT Relating to insurance; amending section .18.29, chapter 79, Laws of 1947 as last amended by section 7, chapter 102, Laws of 1980 and RCW 48.18.290; adding a new chapter to Title 48 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. It is the purpose of this chapter to reduce the incidence of arson fraud by requiring insurers to obtain specified information prior to issuing a fire insurance policy for certain structures and by authorizing insurers to cancel fire insurance policies when characteristics frequently associated with arson fraud are present.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) The state fire marshal may designate certain classes of occupancy within a geographic area or may designate geographic areas as having an abnormally high incidence of arson. This designation shall not be a valid reason for cancellation, refusal to issue or renew, modification, or increasing the premium for any fire insurance policy.

(2) A fire insurance policy may not be issued to insure any property within a class of occupancy within a geographic area or within a geographic area designated by the state fire marshal as having an abnormally high incidence of arson until the applicant has submitted an anti-arson application and the insurer or the insurer's representative has inspected the property. The application shall be prescribed by the state fire marshal and shall contain but not be limited to the following:

(a) The name and address of the prospective insured and any mortgagees or other parties having an ownership interest in the property to be insured;

(b) The amount of insurance requested and the method of valuation used to establish the amount of insurance;

(c) The dates and selling prices of the property, if any, during the previous three years;

(d) Fire losses exceeding one thousand dollars during the previous five years for property in which the prospective insured held an equity interest or mortgage;

(e) Current corrective orders pertaining to fire, safety, health, building, or construction codes that have not been complied with within the time period or any extension of such time period authorized by the authority issuing such corrective order applicable to the property to be insured;

(f) Present or anticipated occupancy of the structure, and whether a certificate of occupancy has been issued;

(g) Signature and title, if any, of the person submitting the application.

(3) If the facts required to be reported by subsection (2) of this section materially change, the insured shall notify the insurer of any such change within fourteen days.

(4) An anti-arson application is not required for: (a) Fire insurance policies covering one to four-unit owner-occupied residential dwellings; (b) policies existing as of the effective date of this act; or (c) the renewal of these policies.

(5) An anti-arson application shall contain a notice stating: "Designation of a class of occupancy within a geographic area or geographic areas as having an abnormally high incidence of arson shall not be a valid reason for cancellation, refusal to issue or renew, modification, or increasing the premium for any fire insurance policy."

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 48.18.290, where two or more of the following conditions exist, an insurer may, under section 4 of this act, cancel a fire insurance policy for any structure:

(1) Which, without reasonable explanation, is unoccupied for more than sixty consecutive days, or in which at least sixty-five percent of the rental units are unoccupied for more than one hundred twenty consecutive days unless the structure is maintained for seasonal occupancy or is under construction or repair;

(2) On which, without reasonable explanation, progress toward completion of permanent repairs has not occurred within sixty days after receipt of funds following satisfactory adjustment or adjudication of loss resulting from a fire;

(3) Which, because of its physical condition, is in danger of collapse;

(4) For which, because of its physical condition, a vacation or demolition order has been issued, or which has been declared unsafe in accordance with applicable law;

(5) From which fixed and salvageable items have been removed, indicating an intent to vacate the structure;

(6) For which, without reasonable explanation, heat, water, sewer, and electricity are not furnished for sixty consecutive days; and

(7) Which is not maintained in substantial compliance with fire, safety, and building codes.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. An insurer may cancel a fire insurance policy when the requirements of section 3 of this act are met only in accordance with the following procedure:

(1) The insurer shall, not less than five days prior to cancellation, issue written notice of cancellation to the insured or the insured's representative in charge of the policy. The notice shall contain at least the following:

- (a) The date that the policy will be canceled;
- (b) A description of the specific facts justifying the cancellation;
- (c) A copy of this chapter; and

(d) The name, title, address, and telephone number of the insurer's employee who may be contacted regarding cancellation of the policy.

(2) The notice required by this section shall be actually delivered or mailed to the insured by certified mail, return receipt requested, and in addition by first class mail. A copy of the notice shall, at the time of delivery or mailing to the insured, or the insured's representative in charge of the policy, be mailed to the insurance commissioner.

(3) The insurer shall also comply with the requirements of RCW 48.18.290(1) (b), (2) and (3), and shall provide not less than twenty days notice of cancellation to each mortgagee, pledgee, or other person shown by the policy to have an interest in any loss which may occur thereunder except as provided in subsection (1) of this section.

(4) The portion of any premium paid to the insurer on account of the policy, unearned because of the cancellation and in an amount as computed on a pro rata basis, must be actually paid or mailed to the insured or other person entitled thereto as shown by the policy or any endorsement thereon, as soon as possible, and no later than thirty days after the date that the notice of cancellation was issued.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. (1) Any fire insurance policy issued in violation of this chapter shall not be cancelled by the insurer under the procedures authorized by this chapter.

(2) Cancellation of a fire insurance policy in violation of this chapter shall constitute a violation of this title.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. Rules designating geographic areas or classes of occupancy as having an abnormally high incidence of arson, and any other rules necessary to implement this chapter shall be adopted by the state fire marshal under chapter 34.04 RCW.

Sec. 7. Section .18.29, chapter 79, Laws of 1947 as last amended by section 7, chapter 102, Laws of 1980 and RCW 48.18.290 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Cancellation by the insurer of any policy which by its terms is cancellable at the option of the insurer, or of any binder based on such policy,

may be effected as to any interest only upon compliance with either or both of the following:

(a) Written notice of such cancellation must be actually delivered or mailed to the insured or to his representative in charge of the subject of the insurance not less than twenty days prior to the effective date of the cancellation except for cancellation of insurance policies for nonpayment of premiums, which notice shall be not less than ten days prior to such date and except for cancellation of fire insurance policies under chapter 48... RCW (sections 1 through 6 of this act), which notice shall not be less than five days prior to such date;

(b) Like notice of not less than twenty days must also be so delivered or mailed to each mortgagee, pledgee, or other person shown by the policy to have an interest in any loss which may occur thereunder.

(2) The mailing of any such notice shall be effected by depositing it in a sealed envelope, directed to the addressee at his last address as known to the insurer or as shown by the insurer's records, with proper prepaid postage affixed, in a letter depository of the United States post office. The insurer shall retain in its records any such item so mailed, together with its envelope, which was returned by the post office upon failure to find, or deliver the mailing to, the addressee.

(3) The affidavit of the individual making or supervising such a mailing, shall constitute prima facie evidence of such facts of the mailing as are therein affirmed.

(4) The portion of any premium paid to the insurer on account of the policy, unearned because of the cancellation and in amount as computed on the pro rata basis, must be actually paid to the insured or other person entitled thereto as shown by the policy or by any endorsement thereon, or be mailed to the insured or such person as soon as possible, and no later than thirty days after the date of notice of cancellation to the insured for homeowners', dwelling fire, and private passenger auto. Any such payment may be made by cash, or by check, bank draft, or money order.

(5) This section shall not apply to contracts of life or disability insurance without provision for cancellation prior to the date to which premiums have been paid.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. Sections 1 through 6 of this act shall constitute a new chapter in Title 48 RCW.

Passed the Senate March 9, 1982.

Passed the House March 7, 1982.

Approved by the Governor March 31, 1982.

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