

Chapter 64.38 RCW
Homeowners' associations

RCW Sections

- 64.38.005 Intent.
- 64.38.010 Definitions.
- 64.38.015 Association membership.
- 64.38.020 Association powers.
- 64.38.025 Board of directors -- Standard of care -- Restrictions -- Budget -- Removal from board.
- 64.38.028 Removal of discriminatory provisions in governing documents -- Procedure.
- 64.38.030 Association bylaws.
- 64.38.033 Flag of the United States -- Outdoor display -- Governing documents.
- 64.38.034 Political yard signs--Governing documents.
- 64.38.035 Association meetings -- Notice -- Board of directors.
- 64.38.040 Quorum for meeting.
- 64.38.045 Financial and other records -- Property of association -- Copies -- Examination -- Annual financial statement -- Accounts.
- 64.38.050 Violation -- Remedy -- Attorneys' fees.
- 64.38.055 Governing documents -- Solar panels.
- 64.38.060 Adult family homes.

Notes:

Speed enforcement: RCW 46.61.419.

64.38.005
Intent.

The intent of this chapter is to provide consistent laws regarding the formation and legal administration of homeowners' associations.

[1995 c 283 § 1.]

64.38.010
Definitions.

*** CHANGE IN 2011 *** (SEE 1309-S.SL) ***

For purposes of this chapter:

(1) "Homeowners' association" or "association" means a corporation, unincorporated association, or other legal entity, each member of which is an owner of residential real property located within the association's jurisdiction, as described in the governing documents, and by virtue of membership or ownership of property is obligated to pay real property taxes, insurance premiums, maintenance costs, or for improvement of real property other than that which is owned by the member. "Homeowners' association" does not mean an association created under chapter 64.32 or 64.34 RCW.

(2) "Governing documents" means the articles of incorporation, bylaws, plat, declaration of covenants, conditions, and restrictions, rules and regulations of the association, or other written instrument by which the association has the authority to exercise any of the powers provided for in this chapter or to manage, maintain, or otherwise affect the property under its jurisdiction.

(3) "Board of directors" or "board" means the body, regardless of name, with primary authority to manage the affairs of the association.

(4) "Common areas" means property owned, or otherwise maintained, repaired or administered by the association.

(5) "Common expense" means the costs incurred by the association to exercise any of the powers provided for in this chapter.

(6) "Residential real property" means any real property, the use of which is limited by law, covenant or otherwise to primarily residential or recreational purposes.

[1995 c 283 § 2.]

64.38.015
Association membership.

The membership of an association at all times shall consist exclusively of the owners of all real property over which the association has jurisdiction, both developed and undeveloped.

[1995 c 283 § 3.]

64.38.020
Association powers.

Unless otherwise provided in the governing documents, an association may:

(1) Adopt and amend bylaws, rules, and regulations;

(2) Adopt and amend budgets for revenues, expenditures, and reserves, and impose and collect assessments for common expenses from owners;

(3) Hire and discharge or contract with managing agents and other employees, agents, and independent contractors;

(4) Institute, defend, or intervene in litigation or administrative proceedings in its own name on behalf of itself or two or more owners on matters affecting the homeowners' association, but not on behalf of owners involved in disputes that are not the responsibility of the association;

(5) Make contracts and incur liabilities;

(6) Regulate the use, maintenance, repair, replacement, and modification of common areas;

(7) Cause additional improvements to be made as a part of the common areas;

(8) Acquire, hold, encumber, and convey in its own name any right, title, or interest to real or personal property;

(9) Grant easements, leases, licenses, and concessions through or over the common areas and petition for or consent to the vacation of streets and alleys;

(10) Impose and collect any payments, fees, or charges for the use, rental, or operation of the common areas;

(11) Impose and collect charges for late payments of assessments and, after notice and an opportunity to be heard by the board of directors or by the representative designated by the board of directors and in accordance with the procedures as provided in the bylaws or rules and regulations adopted by the board of directors, levy reasonable fines in accordance with a previously established schedule adopted by the board of directors and furnished to the owners for violation of the bylaws, rules, and regulations of the association;

(12) Exercise any other powers conferred by the bylaws;

(13) Exercise all other powers that may be exercised in this state by the same type of corporation as the association; and

(14) Exercise any other powers necessary and proper for the governance and operation of the association.

[1995 c 283 § 4.]

Notes:

Speed enforcement: RCW 46.61.419.

64.38.025

Board of directors — Standard of care — Restrictions — Budget — Removal from board.

*** CHANGE IN 2011 *** (SEE 1309-S.SL) ***

(1) Except as provided in the association's governing documents or this chapter, the board of directors shall act in all instances on behalf of the association. In the performance of their duties, the officers and members of the board of directors shall exercise the degree of care and loyalty required of an officer or director of a corporation organized under chapter 24.03 RCW.

(2) The board of directors shall not act on behalf of the association to amend the articles of incorporation, to take any action that requires the vote or approval of the owners, to terminate the association, to elect members of the board of directors, or to determine the qualifications, powers, and duties, or terms of office of members of the board of directors; but the board of directors may fill vacancies in its membership of the unexpired portion of any term.

(3) Within thirty days after adoption by the board of directors of any proposed regular or special budget of the association, the board shall set a date for a meeting of the owners to consider ratification of the budget not less than fourteen nor more than sixty days after mailing of the summary. Unless at that meeting the owners of a majority of the votes in the association are allocated or any larger percentage specified in the governing documents reject the budget, in person or by proxy, the budget is ratified, whether or not a quorum is present. In the event the proposed budget is rejected or the required notice is not given, the periodic budget last ratified by the owners shall be continued until such time as the owners ratify a subsequent budget proposed by the board of directors.

(4) The owners by a majority vote of the voting power in the association present, in person or by proxy, and entitled to vote at any meeting of the owners at which a quorum is present, may remove any member of the board of directors with or without cause.

[1995 c 283 § 5.]

64.38.028

Removal of discriminatory provisions in governing documents — Procedure.

(1) The association, acting through a simple majority vote of its board, may amend the association's governing documents for the purpose of removing:

(a) Every covenant, condition, or restriction that purports to forbid or restrict the conveyance, encumbrance, occupancy, or lease thereof to individuals of a specified race, creed, color, sex, or national origin; families with children status; individuals with any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or individuals who use a trained dog guide or service animal because they are blind or deaf or have a physical disability; and

(b) Every covenant, condition, restriction, or prohibition, including a right of entry or possibility of reverter, that directly or indirectly limits the use or occupancy of real property on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin; families with children status; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a physical disability or who is blind or deaf.

(2) Upon the board's receipt of a written request by a member of the association that the board exercise its amending authority granted under subsection (1) of this section, the board must, within a reasonable time, amend the governing documents, as provided under this section.

(3) Amendments under subsection (1) of this section may be executed by any board officer.

(4) Amendments made under subsection (1) of this section must be recorded in the public records and state the following:

"This amendment strikes from these covenants, conditions, and restrictions those provisions that are void under RCW 49.60.224. Specifically, this amendment strikes:

(a) Those provisions that forbid or restrict use, occupancy, conveyance, encumbrance, or lease of real property to individuals of a specified race, creed, color, sex, or national origin; families with children status; individuals with any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or individuals who use a trained dog guide or service animal because they are blind or deaf or have a physical disability; and

(b) Every covenant, condition, restriction, or prohibition, including a right of entry or possibility of reverter, that directly or indirectly limits the use or occupancy of real property on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin; families with children status; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a physical disability or who is blind or deaf."

(5) Board action under this section does not require the vote or approval of the owners.

(6) As provided in RCW 49.60.227, any owner, occupant, or tenant in the association or board may bring an action in superior court to have any provision of a written instrument that is void pursuant to RCW 49.60.224 stricken from the public records.

(7) Nothing in this section prohibiting discrimination based on families with children status applies to housing for older persons as defined by the federal fair housing amendments act of 1988, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 3607(b)(1) through (3), as amended by the housing for older persons act of 1995, P.L. 104-76, as enacted on December 28, 1995. Nothing in this section authorizes requirements for housing for older persons different than the requirements in the federal fair housing amendments act of 1988, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 3607(b)(1) through (3), as amended by the housing for older persons act of 1995, P.L. 104-76, as enacted on December 28, 1995.

(8) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (2) of this section, (a) nothing in this section creates a duty on the part of owners, occupants, tenants, associations, or boards to amend the governing documents as provided in this section, or to bring an action as authorized under this section and RCW 49.60.227; and (b) an owner, occupant, tenant, association, or board is not liable for failing to amend the governing documents or to pursue an action in court as authorized under this section and RCW 49.60.227.

[2006 c 58 § 2.]

Notes:

Finding -- Intent -- 2006 c 58: "The legislature finds that some homeowners' associations have governing documents that contain discriminatory covenants, conditions, or restrictions that are void and unenforceable under both the federal fair housing amendments act of 1988 and RCW 49.60.224. The continued existence of these discriminatory covenants, conditions, or restrictions is contrary to public policy and repugnant to many property owners. It is the intent of chapter 58, Laws of 2006 to allow homeowners' associations to remove all remnants of discrimination from their governing documents." [2006 c 58 § 1.]

64.38.030
Association bylaws.

Unless provided for in the governing documents, the bylaws of the association shall provide for:

(1) The number, qualifications, powers and duties, terms of office, and manner of electing and removing the board of directors and officers and filling vacancies;

(2) Election by the board of directors of the officers of the association as the bylaws specify;

(3) Which, if any, of its powers the board of directors or officers may delegate to other persons or to a managing agent;

(4) Which of its officers may prepare, execute, certify, and record amendments to the governing documents on behalf of the association;

(5) The method of amending the bylaws; and

(6) Subject to the provisions of the governing documents, any other matters the association deems necessary and appropriate.

[1995 c 283 § 6.]

64.38.033**Flag of the United States — Outdoor display — Governing documents.**

(1) The governing documents may not prohibit the outdoor display of the flag of the United States by an owner or resident on the owner's or resident's property if the flag is displayed in a manner consistent with federal flag display law, 4 U.S.C. Sec. 1 et seq. The governing documents may include reasonable rules and regulations, consistent with 4 U.S.C. Sec. 1 et seq., regarding the placement and manner of display of the flag of the United States.

(2) The governing documents may not prohibit the installation of a flagpole for the display of the flag of the United States. The governing documents may include reasonable rules and regulations regarding the location and the size of the flagpole.

(3) For purposes of this section, "flag of the United States" means the flag of the United States as defined in federal flag display law, 4 U.S.C. Sec. 1 et seq., that is made of fabric, cloth, or paper and that is displayed from a staff or flagpole or in a window. For purposes of this section, "flag of the United States" does not mean a flag depiction or emblem made of lights, paint, roofing, siding, paving materials, flora, or balloons, or of any similar building, landscaping, or decorative component.

(4) The provisions of this section shall be construed to apply retroactively to any governing documents in effect on June 10, 2004. Any provision in a governing document in effect on June 10, 2004, that is inconsistent with this section shall be void and unenforceable.

[2004 c 169 § 1.]

64.38.034**Political yard signs — Governing documents.**

(1) The governing documents may not prohibit the outdoor display of political yard signs by an owner or resident on the owner's or resident's property before any primary or general election. The governing documents may include reasonable rules and regulations regarding the placement and manner of display of political yard signs.

(2) This section applies retroactively to any governing documents in effect on July 24, 2005. Any provision in a governing document in effect on July 24, 2005, that is inconsistent with this section is void and unenforceable.

[2005 c 179 § 1.]

64.38.035**Association meetings — Notice — Board of directors.**

(1) A meeting of the association must be held at least once each year. Special meetings of the association may be called by the president, a majority of the board of directors, or by owners having ten percent of the votes in the association. Not less than fourteen nor more than sixty days in advance of any meeting, the secretary or other officers specified in the bylaws shall cause notice to be hand-delivered or sent prepaid by first-class United States mail to the mailing address of each owner or to any other mailing address designated in writing by the owner. The notice of any meeting shall state the time and place of the meeting and the business to be placed on the agenda by the board of directors for a vote by the owners, including the general nature of any proposed amendment to the articles of incorporation, bylaws, any budget or changes in the previously approved budget that result in a change in assessment obligation, and any proposal to remove a director.

(2) Except as provided in this subsection, all meetings of the board of directors shall be open for observation by all owners of record and their

authorized agents. The board of directors shall keep minutes of all actions taken by the board, which shall be available to all owners. Upon the affirmative vote in open meeting to assemble in closed session, the board of directors may convene in closed executive session to consider personnel matters; consult with legal counsel or consider communications with legal counsel; and discuss likely or pending litigation, matters involving possible violations of the governing documents of the association, and matters involving the possible liability of an owner to the association. The motion shall state specifically the purpose for the closed session. Reference to the motion and the stated purpose for the closed session shall be included in the minutes. The board of directors shall restrict the consideration of matters during the closed portions of meetings only to those purposes specifically exempted and stated in the motion. No motion, or other action adopted, passed, or agreed to in closed session may become effective unless the board of directors, following the closed session, reconvenes in open meeting and votes in the open meeting on such motion, or other action which is reasonably identified. The requirements of this subsection shall not require the disclosure of information in violation of law or which is otherwise exempt from disclosure.

[1995 c 283 § 7.]

64.38.040
Quorum for meeting.

Unless the governing documents specify a different percentage, a quorum is present throughout any meeting of the association if the owners to which thirty-four percent of the votes of the association are allocated are present in person or by proxy at the beginning of the meeting.

[1995 c 283 § 8.]

64.38.045
Financial and other records — Property of association — Copies — Examination — Annual financial statement — Accounts.

(1) The association or its managing agent shall keep financial and other records sufficiently detailed to enable the association to fully declare to each owner the true statement of its financial status. All financial and other records of the association, including but not limited to checks, bank records, and invoices, in whatever form they are kept, are the property of the association. Each association managing agent shall turn over all original books and records to the association immediately upon termination of the management relationship with the association, or upon such other demand as is made by the board of directors. An association managing agent is entitled to keep copies of association records. All records which the managing agent has turned over to the association shall be made reasonably available for the examination and copying by the managing agent.

(2) All records of the association, including the names and addresses of owners and other occupants of the lots, shall be available for examination by all owners, holders of mortgages on the lots, and their respective authorized agents on reasonable advance notice during normal working hours at the offices of the association or its managing agent. The association shall not release the unlisted telephone number of any owner. The association may impose and collect a reasonable charge for copies and any reasonable costs incurred by the association in providing access to records.

(3) At least annually, the association shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a financial statement of the association. The financial statements of associations with annual assessments of fifty thousand dollars or more shall be audited at least annually by an independent certified public accountant, but the audit may be waived if sixty-seven percent of the votes cast by owners, in person or by proxy, at a meeting of the association at which a quorum is present, vote each year to waive the audit.

(4) The funds of the association shall be kept in accounts in the name of the association and shall not be commingled with the funds of any other association, nor with the funds of any manager of the association or any other person responsible for the custody of such funds.

[1995 c 283 § 9.]

64.38.050
Violation — Remedy — Attorneys' fees.

Any violation of the provisions of this chapter entitles an aggrieved party to any remedy provided by law or in equity. The court, in an appropriate case, may award reasonable attorneys' fees to the prevailing party.

[1995 c 283 § 10.]

64.38.055

Governing documents — Solar panels.

(1) The governing documents may not prohibit the installation of a solar energy panel by an owner or resident on the owner's or resident's property as long as the solar energy panel:

- (a) Meets applicable health and safety standards and requirements imposed by state and local permitting authorities;
- (b) If used to heat water, is certified by the solar rating certification corporation or another nationally recognized certification agency. Certification must be for the solar energy panel and for installation; and
- (c) If used to produce electricity, meets all applicable safety and performance standards established by the national electric code, the institute of electrical and electronics engineers, accredited testing laboratories, such as underwriters laboratories, and, where applicable, rules of the utilities and transportation commission regarding safety and reliability.

(2) The governing documents may:

- (a) Prohibit the visibility of any part of a roof-mounted solar energy panel above the roof line;
- (b) Permit the attachment of a solar energy panel to the slope of a roof facing a street only if:
 - (i) The solar energy panel conforms to the slope of the roof; and
 - (ii) The top edge of the solar energy panel is parallel to the roof ridge; or
- (c) Require:
 - (i) A solar energy panel frame, a support bracket, or any visible piping or wiring to be painted to coordinate with the roofing material;
 - (ii) An owner or resident to shield a ground-mounted solar energy panel if shielding the panel does not prohibit economic installation of the solar energy panel or degrade the operational performance quality of the solar energy panel by more than ten percent; or
 - (iii) Owners or residents who install solar energy panels to indemnify or reimburse the association or its members for loss or damage caused by the installation, maintenance, or use of a solar energy panel.

(3) The governing documents may include other reasonable rules regarding the placement and manner of a solar energy panel.

(4) For purposes of this section, "solar energy panel" means a panel device or system or combination of panel devices or systems that relies on direct sunlight as an energy source, including a panel device or system or combination of panel devices or systems that collects sunlight for use in:

- (a) The heating or cooling of a structure or building;
- (b) The heating or pumping of water;
- (c) Industrial, commercial, or agricultural processes; or
- (d) The generation of electricity.

(5) This section does not apply to common areas as defined in RCW [64.38.010](#).

(6) This section applies retroactively to a governing document in effect on July 26, 2009. A provision in a governing document in effect on July 26, 2009, that is inconsistent with this section is void and unenforceable.

[2009 c 51 § 1.]

64.38.060

Adult family homes.

(1) To effectuate the public policy of chapter 70.128 RCW, the governing documents may not limit, directly or indirectly:

(a) Persons with disabilities from living in an adult family home licensed under chapter 70.128 RCW; or

(b) Persons and legal entities from operating adult family homes licensed under chapter 70.128 RCW, whether for-profit or nonprofit, to provide services covered under chapter 70.128 RCW. However, this subsection does not prohibit application of reasonable nondiscriminatory regulation, including but not limited to landscaping standards or regulation of sign location or size, that applies to all residential property subject to the governing documents.

(2) This section applies retroactively to any governing documents in effect on July 26, 2009. Any provision in a governing document in effect on or after July 26, 2009, that is inconsistent with subsection (1) of this section is unenforceable to the extent of the conflict.

[2009 c 530 § 4.]