

RCW 69.50.315 Medical assistance—Drug-related overdose—

Prosecution for possession. (1) A person acting in good faith who seeks medical assistance for someone experiencing a drug-related overdose shall not be charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance pursuant to RCW 69.50.4013, or penalized under RCW 69.50.4014, if the evidence for the charge of possession of a controlled substance was obtained as a result of the person seeking medical assistance.

(2) A person who experiences a drug-related overdose and is in need of medical assistance shall not be charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance pursuant to RCW 69.50.4013, or penalized under RCW 69.50.4014, if the evidence for the charge of possession of a controlled substance was obtained as a result of the overdose and the need for medical assistance.

(3) The protection in this section from prosecution for possession crimes under RCW 69.50.4013 shall not be grounds for suppression of evidence in other criminal charges. [2015 c 205 s 4; 2010 c 9 s 2.]

Intent—2015 c 205: See note following RCW 69.41.095.

Intent—2010 c 9: "The legislature intends to save lives by increasing timely medical attention to drug overdose victims through the establishment of limited immunity from prosecution for people who seek medical assistance in a drug overdose situation. Drug overdose is the leading cause of unintentional injury death in Washington state, ahead of motor vehicle-related deaths. Washington state is one of sixteen states in which drug overdoses cause more deaths than traffic accidents. Drug overdose mortality rates have increased significantly since the 1990s, according to the centers for disease control and prevention, and illegal and prescription drug overdoses killed more than thirty-eight thousand people nationwide in 2006, the last year for which firm data is available. The Washington state department of health reports that in 1999 unintentional drug poisoning was responsible for four hundred three deaths in this state; in 2007, the number had increased to seven hundred sixty-one, compared with six hundred ten motor vehicle-related deaths that same year. Many drug overdose fatalities occur because peers delay or forego calling 911 for fear of arrest or police involvement, which researchers continually identify as the most significant barrier to the ideal first response of calling emergency services." [2010 c 9 s 1.]