



Seattle Office of
Labor Standards

App-Based Workers Guide to Deactivation Rights

November 2025



CONTENTS



Contents

1	Introduction to the City of Seattle's App-Based Worker Deactivation Rights Ordinance and Using This Guide	4
	What is Deactivation?	8
	Who is Covered by the Law?	8
	Know Your Rights	10
	Note on when OLS will get involved	15
2	Getting Started	16
	Protecting Yourself in Your App-Based Work	17
	TIPS FOR RECORD-KEEPING	18
	HOW TO READ INFORMATION	20
	Investigations	23
	Deactivation and Challenge/Appeal Process	24
3	What can I do if I have been deactivated?	28
	Sample Challenges/Appeals	32
	What happens if the company doesn't follow the Notice/appeal procedure?	34
	Statute of Limitations	35
	Filing a complaint with OLS	36
4	Overlap with Independent Contractor Protections and Other Laws	38
5	A note on Small Claims Court	42
6	Resources	44
7	Acknowledgements	50
8	Appendices	52

INTRODUCTION TO THE APP-BASED WORKER DEACTIVATION RIGHTS ORDINANCE AND USING THIS GUIDE



Introduction to the App-Based Worker Deactivation Rights Ordinance and Using this Guide

App-based work (sometimes known as gig work) is a growing source of income for workers. However, app-based workers have different struggles with the companies they work for than employees do at their workplaces. You could be blocked from using an app to earn income without being made aware by the app. The app may not provide a reason for the deactivation. Discrimination or incorrect background checks could lead the company to deactivate you with no way to address what happened. The Seattle City Council passed the App-Based Worker Deactivation Rights Ordinance to help address some of these issues.

The App-Based Worker Deactivation Rights Ordinance (ABWDRO) (the Deactivation Law) went into effect on January 1, 2025. The Seattle Office of Labor Standards (OLS) enforces this Law. This guide provides a short overview of who the Deactivation Law applies to and what companies must now do to comply. Please visit www.seattle.gov/laborstandards for more information about the Deactivation Law and information about Seattle's other labor laws.

OLS created this guide for app-based workers to use to see whether they can and how to appeal a deactivation under the Deactivation Law. This guide includes information about the complaint process and resources available for app-based workers. OLS does not provide legal advice.

Before diving into deactivation, there are two other laws protecting app-based workers in Seattle that you should know about. This guide will not spend a lot of time on these, but here is some basic information:

App-Based Worker Minimum Pay

- Companies must pay a minimum amount per offer based on mileage and time necessary to complete the offer PLUS all customer tips
- Companies must give workers information about offers up front, including things like what's in a delivery order
- Companies must give workers receipts and payment records
- Workers can limit their work hours or refuse offers without being punished
- Workers can cancel offers with cause and still receive payment

App-Based Worker Paid Sick & Safe Time

- Workers earn one day of Paid Sick & Safe Time for every 30 days they work in Seattle
 - Any day with a pick up, drop off, or other work-related stop in Seattle counts as a day “worked in Seattle”
- Workers can use this paid time off:
 - To care for themselves or a family member for a physical or mental health issue, including doctor's appointment
 - To care for themselves, a family member, or a household member for reasons related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking
 - When a family member's school or place of care has been closed
 - If the company reduces, suspends, or discontinues operations for health or safety related reasons
- Workers can take off 1 day (24 hours) of work at a time
- On the days they take off, workers are paid their “average daily compensation rate” = Total pay during the previous 12 months of work divided by total days worked. This calculation does not include tips.
- Companies must tell workers how much Paid Sick & Safe Time they have and how much they have used at least once a month

The above laws do not cover as many apps as the Deactivation Law.
Most of the time they do not cover apps that are called “Marketplace Network Companies.” What is the difference between a “Marketplace Network Company” and a regular “Network Company”?



Network Companies	Marketplace Network Companies
Company sets the payment amount	Worker sets the payment amount
Company matches a worker to an offer before the worker and the customer can talk to each other	Customers can choose a worker they want to work with and the worker can talk to them before agreeing to do the work
Company tracks how long an offer takes to complete and/or the route/distance the worker travels for a job	Company does not track how long the worker is working on an offer or how far/where the worker drives
Mostly presents 'on-demand' offers (meaning that they would be started right after the worker accepts)	Mostly presents pre-scheduled offers (offers presented at least two hours before the work would have to start)
Most of the offers are deliveries	Most of the offers are NOT for deliveries or "on-demand" (meaning that they would be started right after the worker accepts)

So, the apps that aren't covered by the App-Based Worker Minimum Payment Law or the App-Based Worker Paid Sick & Safe Time Law act more like marketplaces. The Deactivation Law, however, is broader. The Deactivation Law covers Marketplace Network Companies and the other types of apps (Network Companies). Because the Deactivation Law covers all of these types of companies, the Law just refers to all of them as "Network Companies." So when you're reading the parts of this guide about the Deactivation Law and it says something like "Network Companies have to give you notice before deactivating you" know that it is talking about Marketplace Network Companies too.

What is Deactivation?

Deactivation is when a company:

- Blocks your access to the phone app or online platform where you get work.
- Changes your status on the app from being able to accept offers to being unable to accept offers.
- Restricts your access to the app in another way.



Deactivation does not include the app being unavailable to you for less than 48 hours when it doesn't have anything to do with your behavior or actions. The company is still required to tell you the reason that you have been temporarily suspended, how long it will last, and a description of the accounts that have been suspended. In addition, receiving fewer offers is not always a deactivation. It would only be a deactivation if it has something to do with your behaviors or actions. Sometimes companies send fewer offers because there are fewer offers in the area. But if they start sending fewer offers because, for instance, you've declined several offers in a row, this may be seen as deactivation.

Reasons for an app being temporarily unusable could be:

- Technology, software, or network outages.
- Account access or security issues.
- Maintenance the company must do on the app.
- Weather that endangers your safety.

Who is Covered by the Deactivation Law?

Which app companies are covered?

- The Deactivation Law refers to app companies that are covered as "Network Companies".
- A "Network Company" means a business that:
 - Uses online applications or platforms to connect customers with app-based workers.
 - Has 250 or more app-based workers using their platform for work worldwide.

Examples of app-based work that is probably covered:

- Food delivery
- Other kinds of delivery
- Grocery shopping
- Dog walking
- Child-care
- Laundry
- Cleaning
- In-person shift work
- Home repair
- Miscellaneous tasks

What types of app companies aren't included?

- Scheduling apps
- Payment processing apps
- Advertising apps
- Messaging platforms
- Digital-only platforms
- Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) (sometimes called "rideshare")
 - The state has its own laws about TNCs which you can read about here: <https://lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/industry-specific-requirements/transportation-network-company-drivers-rights/>
 - Taxis

Network companies (those who don't allow you to set your own rates) have to give you a way to figure out if you are covered. The Law calls this an "accessible system" that you can use to see if 25% of your offers in that time period involved work within Seattle's official boundaries. Some addresses might say "Seattle" but still not be within the City's official boundaries so it's good to check!

You can look at a map of Seattle's official boundaries here:

Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections GIS



You can also use this map to search addresses and see if they are in the City's boundaries.

Marketplace network companies don't have to create an accessible system, but they still have to give you information about whether or not you're covered by the Law if you ask. If you do ask for this information from a Marketplace Network Company,

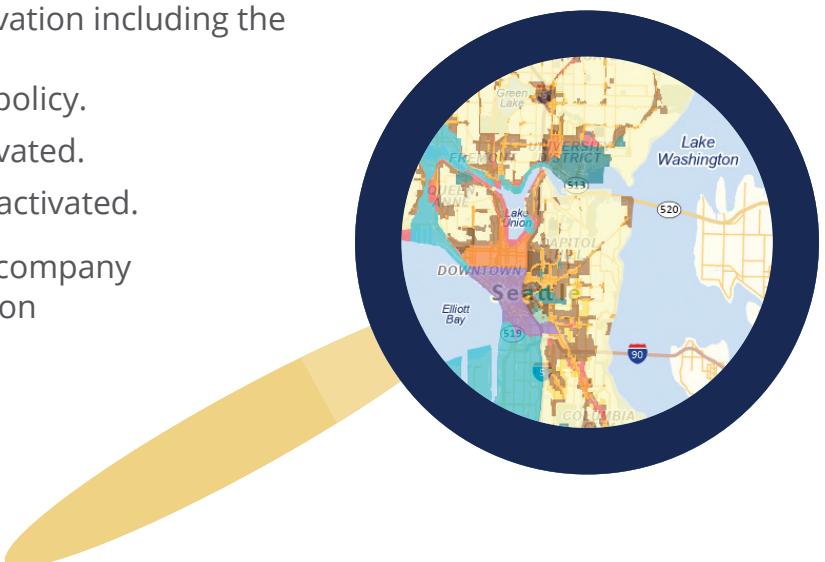
they should respond to you with an email. If the email is in English and you need it translated into your primary language, you can ask for that. Every type of company must tell you if you're covered, but the way that they have to do it is different.

Because you have to work for an app in Seattle to be covered by this law, workers who apply for accounts with companies and whose applications are rejected will not be covered. Rejecting an application before you perform work for the app is not seen as a deactivation.

Know Your Rights

Under the Deactivation Law, app-based workers have the right to:

- Receive a company's policy that says what actions could lead to deactivation and what the process is for challenging a deactivation.
 - The policy must be "reasonably related to the company's safe and efficient operations."
- 14 days' written notice before deactivation (except in cases of "egregious misconduct" or when the company is required to deactivate you because of another law)
- The notice should tell you:
 - The reason(s) for deactivation including the specific incident(s) that violated the company's policy.
 - When you will be deactivated.
 - How long you will be deactivated.
- Receive all the records the company looked at to make its decision to deactivate you.
- Appeal the deactivation.
- File a complaint with the Office of Labor Standards if companies violate the Deactivation Law.



WHAT IS EGREGIOUS MISCONDUCT?

When a Network company gets information that you may have committed "egregious misconduct" the company can deactivate you right away. The company still must give you notice of the deactivation and allow you to appeal it. But, what is egregious misconduct?

Egregious misconduct is an action or behavior that

1. Endangers the physical safety of a customer, another person, an animal, or the company
2. Intentionally causes economic harm to a customer, another person, or the company

Or

3. Is threatening, harassing, or abusive to a customer, another person, or the company

Even outside of your work for the network company, the company can consider acts of egregious misconduct. The company can use that information to deactivate you *if it is related enough to the work you're doing for the company.*

What are some examples of things that a company could say are egregious misconduct? If a delivery takes a longer time than the company thinks or the route you use is longer or out of the way, the company could claim that as "fraud."

If the company has trouble confirming your identity (like through a selfie check that didn't clear) they could say that is a safety or security issue.

If you're deactivated immediately without 14-days notice, it is for an egregious misconduct reason. OLS has found that most deactivations the Office is made aware of are for egregious misconduct. Companies can say that you engaged in egregious misconduct and deactivate you immediately even if you didn't actually do anything wrong. If a company does deactivate you for egregious misconduct, the way forward is to challenge the deactivation.

**Under the Deactivation Law,
Network Companies:**

- **Can only deactivate you when it is reasonably related to a violation of the company's policy.**
 - The company must consider the full circumstances (like why you might have acted a certain way, or positive factors like your long work history or high ratings on the app).
- **Can't deactivate you for an "unwarranted" reason, including but not only the following reasons:**
 - Your availability to work (how much time you're ready to accept offers, the times of day that you're available).
 - How many hours you work.
 - Your acceptance or rejection of any single offer, types of offers, number of offers, or percentage of offers.
 - You cancel an offer with cause.
 - You contact the Network Company.
 - Your average customer rating (when that is the only reason).
 - You speak about how much you get paid or your working conditions.
 - You assert your legal rights in court or with a government agency.
 - The results of a background check, consumer report, driver record, or record of traffic infractions (except when it is required by another law or for "egregious misconduct").
 - Discrimination.

"WITH CAUSE" MEANS YOU CANCELLED BECAUSE:

- The information that the company provided you about the offer ahead of time was largely incorrect or incorrect in an important way.
- You can't complete the offer because the customer didn't respond or wasn't at the work location, you needed them to respond or be present to do the work, and you tried to contact the customer through the channels offered by the company.
- You can't complete the offer in the time you were supposed to because of some unexpected obstacle.
- You experience sexual harassment or discrimination when you try to complete the offer, and you make a good faith complaint to the company.

- Must investigate claims that you violated the company's policy in a fair and objective way.
 - The company must give you a chance to participate in the investigation including the chance to give the company more information related to the deactivation.
 - *If you can take part in the investigation but choose not to, the company can finish the investigation based on the information they already have.*
- Must show that, more likely than not, you violated the policy.
- Must apply deactivation related rules, policies, and penalties in a consistent way (similarly for all workers).
- Can immediately deactivate you to follow laws, regulations, or due to egregious misconduct.
 - In this situation, the investigation can take place after you are deactivated.
 - An investigation that happens after your deactivation can't take longer than 14 days.
 - Delays are allowed for "extraordinary circumstances." If there is a delay, the company must:
 - Tell you in writing
 - Explain why
 - Tell you when the company thinks the investigation will be done.

WHAT WOULD BE ANOTHER LAW THAT WOULD REQUIRE A COMPANY TO DEACTIVATE YOU?

- If you do not have a driver's license or your license is suspended and you need to drive for work
- Because of a court order that says you can't drive or perform this type of work
- If you need a permit and don't have one (for example, you might need a food-handlers permit, or a massage license)
- These are just examples! There could be other types of laws or orders that require a company to deactivate you.

- Are required to create a system to help you understand whether you are covered under the Deactivation Law. (Marketplace Network Companies do not have to do this.)
- Must provide you with the Deactivation Notice of Rights in English and your primary language (if the company knows you use another language) through the app, email, or an online web portal.
- Must provide you with information about how you can appeal the deactivation

Retaliation is illegal.

Network companies are not allowed to take adverse (negative) action against you for exercising your rights protected by the Deactivation Law.

Some examples of retaliation are:

- Temporarily or permanently denying or limiting your access to work,
- Offering less desirable work,
- Telling other companies not to work with you,
- Threatening you based on immigration status or country of origin, or
- Taking any other action that would discourage a reasonable person from using their rights.

Actions protected by the Deactivation Law include:

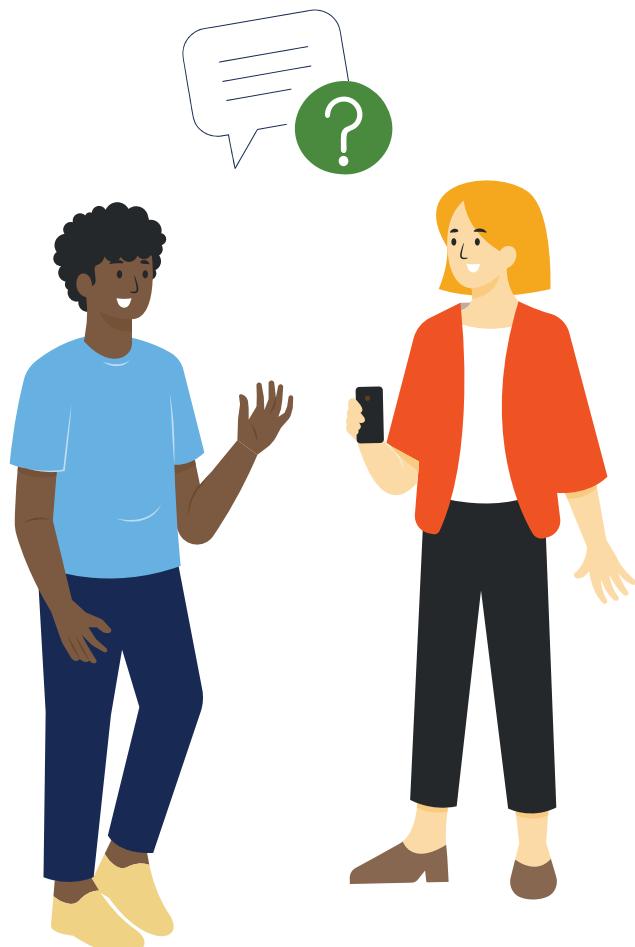
- Asking questions about the rights protected under Seattle's Deactivation Law;
- Informing others about their rights under the Deactivation Law;
- Informing the network company, legal counsel, a union or similar organization, or any other person about an alleged violation of the Deactivation Law;
- Filing a complaint about an alleged violation of the Deactivation Law;
- Participating in an investigation of an alleged violation of the Deactivation Law; and
- Opposing any policy, practice, or act that is unlawful under the Deactivation Law.

If your rights are violated, the Deactivation Law empowers you in several ways:

- You can file a complaint about a network company with the Seattle Office of Labor Standards. OLS may try to resolve the dispute.
- You have a right to sue in court if you are harmed by a violation of the Deactivation Law or are retaliated against. Many network companies have something called an “arbitration clause” or “arbitration agreement” in their terms of use which you agree to when you start using the app. Arbitration agreements usually mean that you have to go through another process before being able to go to court. See Section 5 and 6 for more information about courts and resources that could help you.

Note on when OLS can get involved.

The Deactivation Law limits what OLS can investigate before June 1, 2027. Until then, OLS can investigate whether the company used the correct process for deactivation and whether the company retaliated against you. OLS will not be able to investigate whether the company deactivated you for an acceptable reason until June 1, 2027. See Section 3 for more information.



GETTING STARTED



2

Getting Started

Protecting Yourself in Your App-Based Work

As an app-based worker, you can take steps to understand how and why you may be deactivated and to prepare to appeal if you do get deactivated. Written records can help protect you if you and the network company disagree about something. Keeping records can also help you understand why a company might try to deactivate you so that you can avoid those actions.

To help you with this, the Deactivation Law says that the company must send you their deactivation policy. The policy must explain what actions could result in deactivation so that you can avoid those actions and not violate the policy. The company must make this policy available to you in English and your primary language (if they know that you speak or read another language).

Even if you are deactivated, the network company must give you access to the policy for at least 3 years afterward.

Network companies must also create something called a “compliance file” when they deactivate you. Companies have to keep these records for 3 years after deactivation so that you and any potential future investigator can understand what happened.

The compliance file must include:

- ✓ The notice of deactivation they provided you + when and how they gave it to you.
- ✓ The company’s deactivation policy that was in effect on the day they deactivated you + when and how they originally sent you the policy.
- ✓ Information about your primary language (for example, any messages you sent to them telling them that you mainly speak Spanish).
- ✓ The date the company finished the investigation about whatever led to your deactivation.
- ✓ Whether the deactivation involved egregious misconduct and if it did, what the conduct was.
- ✓ Whether the investigation was delayed by “extraordinary circumstances” and what those circumstances were.

- ✓ The number of offers you completed in the 180 days before you got the notice of deactivation.
- ✓ The number of offers you completed that involved working in Seattle in those 180 days.
- ✓ The number of offers that you cancelled with cause that involved working in Seattle in those 180 days.
- ✓ The date that you appealed the deactivation using the company's internal process.
- ✓ Every response to and/or communication with you about your appeal.

While the Deactivation Law says that companies must keep a compliance file, the companies may not always do this. As a worker, it's a good idea to keep your own records so that you will have access to them.

If the company fails to keep the required records, there is a "rebuttable presumption" that the company violated the Deactivation Law. This "rebuttable presumption" means that the company has to prove that they didn't violate the Deactivation Law instead of you having to prove that they did. The same rebuttable presumption applies if the company fails to provide you with these records when they deactivate you.

Tips for Record Keeping

- Always keep copies of any text messages, emails, and any other written communications between you and the company.
- Important information to keep track of includes, but is not limited to:
 - What are you agreeing to by signing up to work for the app?
 - What are the expectations of the work? That is, what do you need to have done to get paid? Does it need to be done within a certain time limit?
 - How much will the company pay for each offer? (The company is allowed to estimate this amount).
 - When will you be paid? When will you have access to your earnings?
 - How will you be paid? In the app?

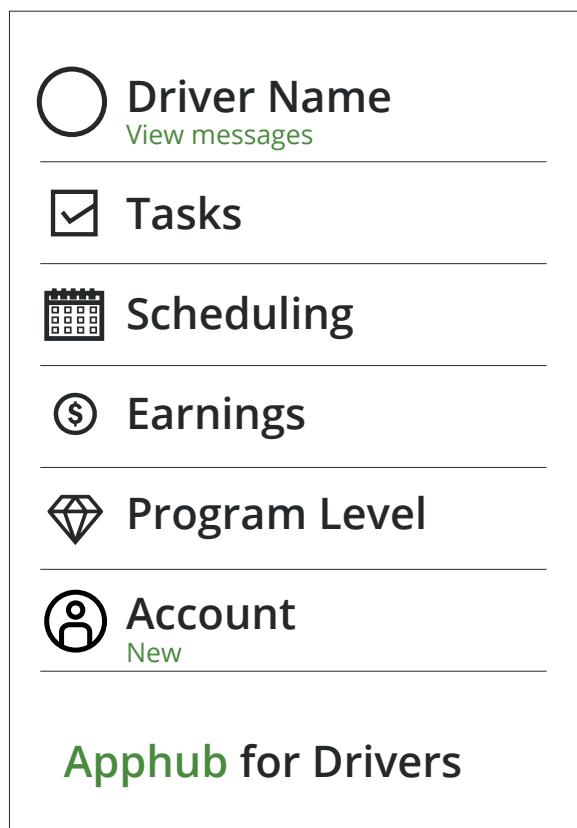
- If the work involves tips and/or service charges, how will those be split up between you and the company?
- What actions or behaviors could lead to deactivation?
- **Document your work as you do it.**
 - Keep track of the time you work, your route if you are driving/biking, and when you complete certain tasks.
 - Take photos when it makes sense to. For example, you could take a photo of a delivery that you completed at the correct address.
 - Keep screenshots or other documentation of any messages from the company, especially when they say that you did something wrong or violated the company's terms of service. Keep copies of your response(s) to the company as well.
 - You may be able to use these records as part of a deactivation appeal later. For example, if the company already reached out to you saying that you violated their policy and you sent back a message with information/evidence showing that you did not violate the policy, you could use those communications later.
- **Save your records somewhere safe.**
 - Save electronic records somewhere you'll still be able to access if you lose your phone or computer. For example, you could save them to a cloud storage service or email them to yourself.
 - If you are using technology provided by the network company (such as the worker app or platform), save work and payment records separately so you can still look at them if you lose access to those systems.
 - Saving these records might mean taking screenshots of offers, completion of offers, and payment.



Tips for reviewing information the company gives you

Most apps have a menu on the bottom or left side of the screen. There should be different tabs or buttons that you can click to access information about completed offers, payment, paid sick time available, messages between you and customers and other useful information. Every app uses different names for where to find this information. For example, one app might have a menu item titled “Earnings” while another app may keep information about pay under a menu item titled “Pay summary”. Sometimes apps include this information in the user profile menu item or under “settings.” You should review this information regularly to make sure that it is accurate.

9:26 AM



Finding company's policies around deactivation can be difficult. It might be available on the app itself but sometimes it is not. Most network companies have their terms of service or a user agreement available on their websites and the deactivation policy can sometimes be found there. It can help to use the search tool on a computer when looking at the terms of use or user agreement which you can do by pressing CTRL+F on a computer keyboard. That way you can search for the words “deactivation” or “deactivate” to see what the company says about deactivation.

Shopper app

-  Dashboard
-  Current orders
-  Demo orders
-  Messages
-  Help
-  How am I doing?
-  Referrals
-  Hours
-  Earnings
-  Profile



Screenshots are your friend!

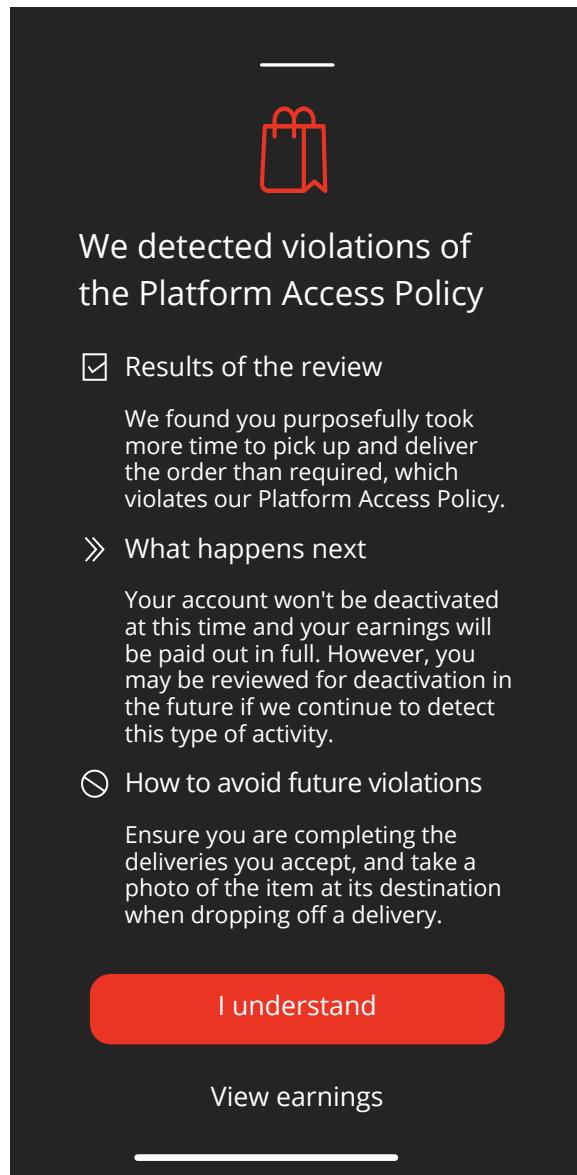
Taking screenshots of information related to pay or offers can be used as evidence in multiple situations. For example, if you are promised incentive pay (like the company promises to pay you 3X for working during a specific time), take a screen shot! That way if they don't end up paying you the correct amount later, you will have evidence that they told you they were going to pay more than they did.

Before deactivating you, the network company may reach out and give you some sort of warning.

If the company sends you reasons that you may be deactivated in the future, or talks about a specific issue, you can start creating a record showing what actually happened. Think about what they're saying you did and how you could disprove that if you have to appeal the deactivation.

In this example, the company has told the driver that they "took more time to pick up and deliver the order than required" which violates the company's policy. How could this driver protect themselves from claims like this? You could keep records of your delivery time by writing down information about when you picked up an order and when you dropped it off, including if there were any issues like long restaurant wait times or road accidents. Once you start driving or navigating, you could also screen shot the navigation app you're using to show the route and time that you actually took. You could also immediately contact support to tell the company that they got it wrong.

For other issues, like issues with customer communication, you could screenshot strange conversations with customers or conversations with complaints and save them to your own device. If you end up being deactivated, you will likely lose access to the app including all your messages so that's why keeping them on your own device is advised.



We detected violations of the Platform Access Policy

Results of the review

We found you purposefully took more time to pick up and deliver the order than required, which violates our Platform Access Policy.

What happens next

Your account won't be deactivated at this time and your earnings will be paid out in full. However, you may be reviewed for deactivation in the future if we continue to detect this type of activity.

How to avoid future violations

Ensure you are completing the deliveries you accept, and take a photo of the item at its destination when dropping off a delivery.

I understand

View earnings

Investigations

Companies should be investigating possible violations of their policies before they deactivate you. The company can only investigate the issue after deactivating you in cases of “egregious misconduct” or when they’re required to deactivate you due to other laws (like laws about drivers being licensed).

The company may reach out to you about an issue they’ve seen during their investigation. You can dispute the issue at that time. You can provide them with information that shows you didn’t violate the policy. If you choose not to take part in the investigation, the company can go forward with the information they have access to without you. The company might not tell you that they are investigating or ask you for your information before they deactivate you. You can try to provide them with information showing what happened even if they don’t reach out to you or give you what evidence they have before deactivating you.

When the company does deactivate you, they are supposed to provide you with evidence. Because there is no guarantee that the company will investigate thoroughly, it may not be worth it to wait for the company to give you the evidence before you challenge the deactivation. The pro of waiting is they might show you evidence that you can easily disprove. The downside is that you then have to wait longer for the challenge process to run its course.

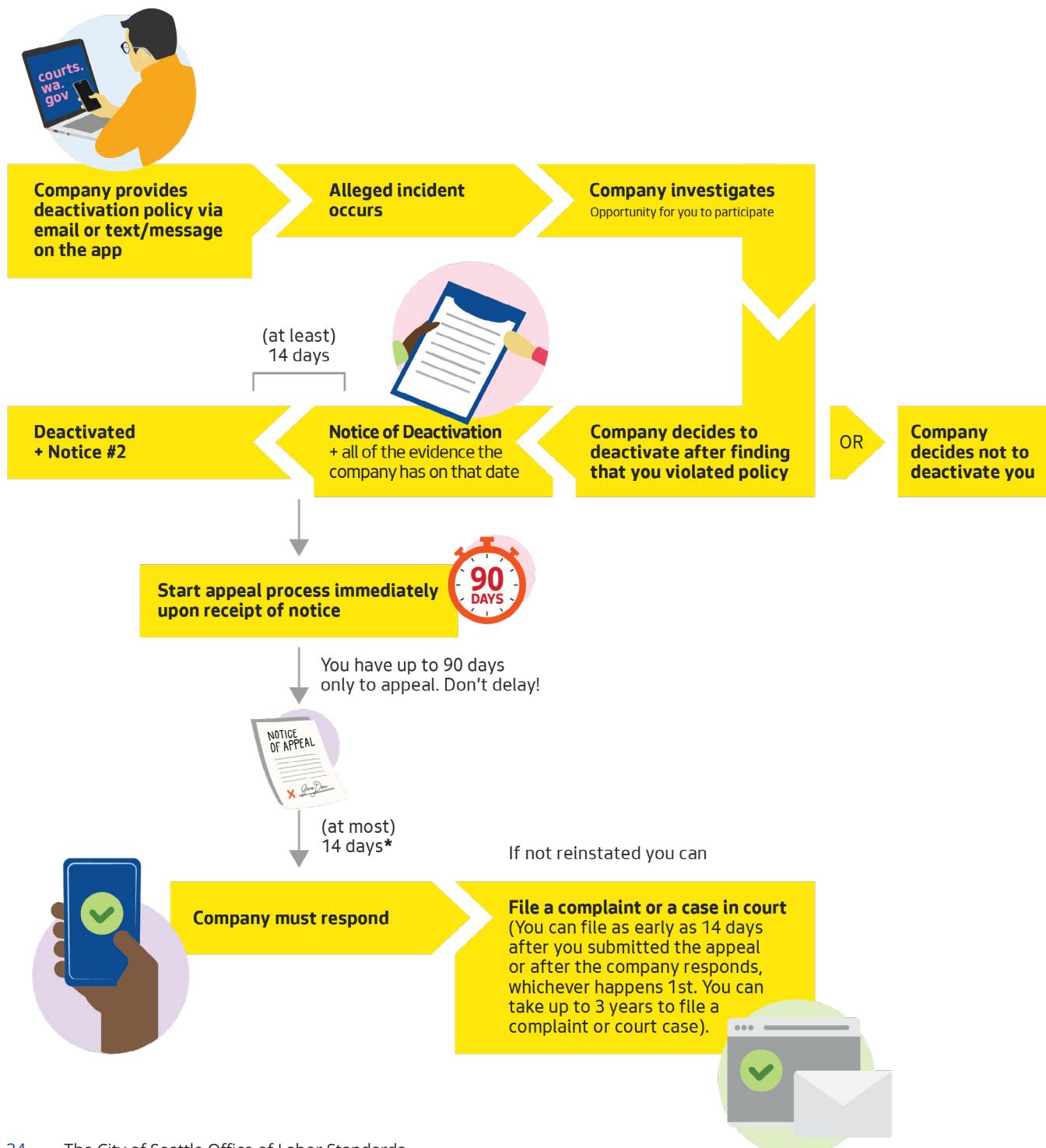
Whether or not you take part in the investigation, you should keep copies of any messages from the company to you about potential violations. That way, you can use them in a later deactivation process. If you don’t provide the information to the company again after a notice of deactivation, it may fail to consider it. The best practice is to not assume the company already has your story or evidence from what you’ve submitted before and send the information again.

Deactivation and the “Challenge” or Appeal Process

The Deactivation Law says that Network Companies must give you a way to “challenge” or appeal being deactivated. Although the Deactivation Law uses the word “challenge”, we’re going to refer to it as an appeal throughout this guide since that is a term that is more widely used and understood.

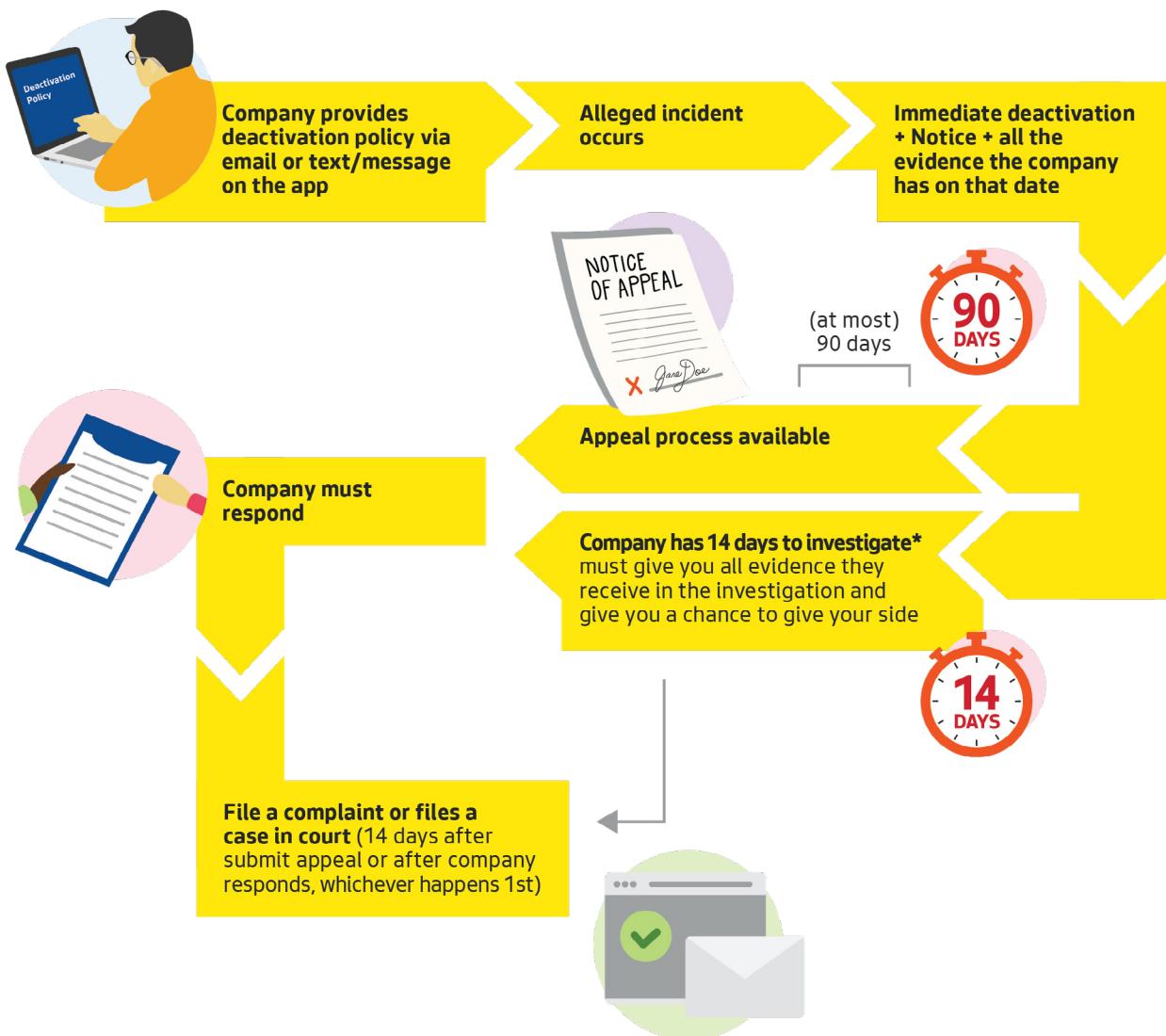
This is what a deactivation process SHOULD look like (we can’t guarantee that companies will follow the right process).

Deactivation & Appeal Process — Deactivation With Prior Notice



Deactivation & Appeal Process — Immediate Deactivation (for egregious misconduct or another law)

Even though it might not sound like it, deactivation for egregious misconduct is very common. Examples include being deactivated for "fraud" or failure to prove identity.



*Company can take longer than 14 days to investigate or respond if there are "extraordinary circumstances". If the investigation takes longer, they must tell you that it is delayed, why it is delayed, and when they think the investigation will be over. If they take longer to respond must tell you that it will take longer and tell you the date when they will be able to respond or reactivate you.

Notes about the appeal processes:

- The company must give you an email or a phone number of someone who you can contact for appeal and deactivation related issues.
- If the company finds that you did not violate their deactivation policy, they should reinstate you (allow you to use the app again).
- The company should provide you with instructions on how to appeal. You should have access to these instructions for 3 years after deactivation.
- The instructions should include:
 - A description of the appeal process
 - The timeline for the appeal, when the network company will respond to you
 - Where you can locate the system to see all of your receipts (if you need this)
 - How you can start an appeal
 - How to submit information and records about what led to the deactivation
- The company should make the appeal instructions and any rules the company has about appeals available to you via email and text message or message on the app.
- The company should have the appeal instructions available in English and any language that you mainly use.

Companies might tell you if they think you violated company policy outside of an official deactivation process. If they don't say that you will be deactivated, these types of messages don't have to say anything about the appeal process. However, you can still tell the company that you disagree with what they're saying and provide information to correct their version of events. Keep a record of those messages to protect yourself and show that you disputed what the company was saying as soon as possible.



WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE BEEN DEACTIVATED?



안녕

Hola

3

What can I do if I have been deactivated?

Companies are allowed to create their own process for challenging/ appealing a deactivation. The company should make the process for appealing available to you in writing. You should be able to access the appeal process on the app or through another method like email. The appeal process should be available in English and any other language the company knows you use. A copy of the company's appeal process should be available for at least three years after you are deactivated.

It can be upsetting to get notice that the company is planning to deactivate you, especially if app-based work is one of your main sources of income! We've collected some tips for workers that could help you during an appeals process. You can use these tips whether you've been deactivated immediately or if the company says you will be deactivated in a few weeks. If you've been keeping records of your work, this is when those records will come in handy so that you can show the company why you should not be deactivated.

We know that getting re-activated and back to work is an urgent issue for many workers. You may feel the need to reach out to OLS immediately when you get a notice of deactivation. It is important to remember that you cannot file a complaint with OLS until after you have submitted an appeal, so start with the appeal first and contact us if the process does not work for you.

How to write an appeal



Know your rights and review your records



Follow the company's procedure



Keep it polite and based on facts



Write out the timeline of events



State that you are challenging the deactivation and set a deadline by which you expect a response



State your next steps if they miss the deadline



Submit your appeal and make sure to keep a copy!



Know your rights and review your records.

Review the rights you have under the Deactivation Law (see Section 1 of this guide) and identify how they may apply to your situation. Review the company's deactivation policy and appeal procedure. Look back at your records and refresh your memory on the events that led to the deactivation.



Follow the company's procedure.

Each company is allowed to have their own process for challenging deactivations. Whichever app you're using, follow the company's procedure as closely as possible. If the company asks that you submit an appeal using a certain form, use that form. If the company wants you to submit your appeal in the app, do it that way rather than sending an email. If you don't follow the company's process, there could be negative consequences.



Keep it polite and factual.

Keep your appeal factual and write with your goal of being reactivated in mind. Avoid making any personal attacks, threats, or using aggressive language. It is understandable to feel angry but remember that the goal is to resolve the dispute. Keep in mind that if you end up in court, this appeal may be used as evidence and could be reviewed by a judge.



Write out the timeline of events.

Provide a summary of the facts leading up to this appeal. Keep it short and to the point. Review what you have written and remove any statements that are not factual, such as judgments or accusations. Have someone you trust read your appeal.



State that you are challenging the deactivation. Set a deadline by which you expect a response.

Explain that you are challenging the deactivation. You can use the exact words "I am challenging this deactivation" to make sure that it is clear. The Deactivation Law says that the company has 14 days to respond to your appeal or tell you why they are not able to fully respond. You can remind them of this deadline in the appeal.



State your next steps if they miss the deadline.

End the appeal by telling them what actions you will take if they fail to reactivate you at the end of that 14 days. For example, you might plan to contact the Seattle Office of Labor Standards for enforcement assistance.



Submit your appeal. Make sure to keep a copy!

It is important to ensure the network company gets your appeal. You should submit your appeal in the way that the network company asks you to in their appeal procedure. Make sure to take a screenshot or document other proof that you sent the appeal.

3 What can I do if I have been deactivated?

If you have previously received information from the company, perhaps while they were doing an investigation prior to deactivating you, and you responded to their allegations.

Example: Written Appeal



Know your rights and review your records.



Follow the company's procedure.



Keep it polite and factual.



Write out the timeline of events.



State that you are challenging the deactivation. Set a deadline by which you expect a response.



State your next steps if they miss the deadline.



Submit your appeal. Make sure to keep a copy!

October 1st, 2025

Robertson Contracting
c/o Roberta Robertson
123 Fake St.
Seattle, WA 98101

ATTN [Company Contact Name],

I am writing this communication to challenge the deactivation for which I received notice on [date].

On [date], you notified me that I had [insert issue here, for example: not completed a delivery]. I have already disputed this claim on [date] when I sent information demonstrating that I had [for example: completed the delivery]. I [did not/did] receive a response from the company after I disputed the claim.

I do not believe that you will be able to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that I [did/did not] [for example: complete the order]. You stated in the notice of deactivation that I violated company policy by [insert issue here]. I dispute that I violated the policy and offer up the attached evidence to show that I was following [insert title and section of the policy].

Please respond to me within 14 days of receiving this challenge or rescind this notice of deactivation as soon as possible.

If I do not hear from you within 14 days, I will file a complaint with the Seattle Office of Labor Standards. If you do respond to me but do not rescind the deactivation, I will work with an attorney to file a case against you.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

If you submit an appeal but it does not resolve the deactivation, you should keep a copy and proof that you submitted it. If you choose to file a lawsuit or complaint, you will have to present your appeal as evidence that you first followed the company's process.

If you have not received information about the circumstances of the deactivation prior to getting notice of the deactivation, you did not participate in any investigation, or you did not dispute the allegations at the time you initially heard them.

What can I do if I have been deactivated? 3

Example: Written Appeal



Know your rights and review your records.



Follow the company's procedure.



Keep it polite and factual.



Write out the timeline of events.



State that you are challenging the deactivation. Set a deadline by which you expect a response.



State your next steps if they miss the deadline.



Submit your appeal. Make sure to keep a copy!

October 1st, 2025

Robertson Contracting
c/o Roberta Robertson
123 Fake St.
Seattle, WA 98101

ATTN [Company Contact Name],

I am writing this communication to challenge my deactivation. On [date], I received notice that I will be deactivated on [date] for [insert reason listed in deactivation notice, for example: not completing a delivery].

I do not believe that you will be able to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that I [did/did not] [for example: complete the order]. You stated in the notice of deactivation that I violated company policy by [insert issue here]. I dispute that I violated the policy and offer up the attached evidence to show that I was following [insert title and section of company policy].

Please respond to me within 14 days of receiving this challenge or rescind this notice of deactivation as soon as possible.

If I do not hear from you within 14 days, I will file a complaint with the Seattle Office of Labor Standards. If you do respond to me but do not rescind the deactivation, I will work with an attorney to file a case against you.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

What happens if the Network Company doesn't follow the right process?

Although the Network Companies are required by law to follow these processes, that doesn't mean they will always do what they're supposed to. You can protect your work by informing the company of their mistakes and following what the Deactivation Law says workers can do.

If a network company deactivates you without sending any form of notice or if a network company deactivates you and/or does not tell you how to appeal the decision:

- First look to see if they sent you a deactivation policy with information on how to appeal a deactivation.
- Look to see if that policy is explained on the company website or in the app.
- If they have sent you information on how to appeal or you can find that information on the website, follow that process.
- If you can't find a deactivation policy, you can try to find a company contact and send an email appealing the deactivation to them or call the service line and appeal verbally.
- Appealing in writing is helpful to have a record of the time and date that you appealed.
- Because the company did not follow the correct process, you can also contact OLS for help. You must appeal before you can file a complaint but you can ask OLS questions even if you have not appealed.

Did someone send you a message saying that you would be deactivated?

If yes, send that person a version of the appeal above. Even though the network company does not have an official appeal process, you still have the right to appeal the decision. You can also tell them that the Deactivation Law says they are supposed to come up with an appeal process and since they have not, you are contacting them directly instead. If they haven't given you enough notice (14 days) and/or didn't give you information explaining why you were deactivated, you can tell them that the Deactivation Law requires them to give you notice 14 days before deactivating you and that they need to provide you with the information/evidence they looked at when deciding to deactivate you.

You can send them the [form notice \(Appendix B\)](#) that OLS created showing what information companies are required to provide workers before deactivating someone.

Did the message about your deactivation come from a bot or a no-reply email?

The Law states that the company is supposed to give you a real person to talk to about your appeal. But the company may not be following that part of the law. In this situation, it's a good idea to see if you can find the company's deactivation policy and see if there is a contact at the company who can help you resolve the issue. You can try to find a different company contact and message them or message the company through the app as well. Additionally, you can reach out to OLS for assistance because the company did not follow the correct process.

Timing

Once you are deactivated, we strongly recommend that you appeal the deactivation within 90 days. If you do not appeal the deactivation within 90 days, you may not be able to appeal the deactivation at all. If you do not submit an appeal, you may not be able to file a complaint with OLS or a court case. However, even if you don't challenge you may still be able to file a complaint with OLS if the company did not follow the right procedure, especially if they never gave you a chance to appeal.

If your appeal does not resolve the deactivation, you could file a complaint. You can file a complaint 14 days after you sent your appeal or after the company responds, whichever is sooner. OLS will not be able to assist you until it's been 14 days since your appeal or the company responds.

Statute of Limitations

If you think the company violated the Deactivation Law, you have to file a complaint or a court case within a certain number of years. If you do not file a claim within the time limit, you lose your right to take legal action. Use the chart below as a guide to see how long you may have to take action. These time limits have some exceptions. Please talk to an attorney if you have questions about how the statute of limitations applies to your case.¹

Complaint or Claim	Time Period to File Complaint or Claim
Filing a Complaint with OLS	Within 3 years of the company's alleged violation
Filing a claim in court	Within 3 years of the company's alleged violation

Filing a complaint with OLS

If you believe your rights have been violated, you can reach out to OLS to ask a question or file a complaint. OLS staff will never ask about immigration status. OLS provides language interpretation and accommodations for disability-related needs. OLS services are always free.

The Deactivation Law limits what OLS can investigate before June 1, 2027. Until then, OLS can investigate the following issues which are mostly about the process the company uses for deactivation:

- You must have access to the company's deactivation policy.
- The deactivation policy must be reasonably related to the company's "safe and efficient" operations.
- Most of the time, you must receive 14 days' notice before you are deactivated.
- If you are immediately deactivated for "egregious misconduct", then the company must finish investigating the conduct within 14 days.
- You have the right to appeal deactivation through the company's procedure.
- The company must respond to your appeal within 14 days.
- Companies must give you the records they looked at to make their deactivation decision.
- Companies must send you a notice of rights that includes information about filing a complaint or a civil case.
- Companies cannot retaliate against you for using your rights.

Starting June 1, 2027, OLS will be able to investigate the following types of claims which are more about why the company deactivating you. OLS can still investigate the issues listed above.

- You cannot be deactivated for an "unwarranted" reason.
 - Deactivation is unwarranted if it results in discrimination.
- Companies must fairly and objectively investigate your conduct before deactivating you.

- Companies can only immediately deactivate you for “egregious misconduct” or if they are required to by law.
- Companies must show that more likely than not, you violated their policy.
- Companies must apply their deactivation policies similarly to all workers.
- How bad the penalty is must match up with the seriousness of the violation.

What happens when I make a complaint?

OLS will talk to you about the problem and collect relevant information and documents. After reviewing the information, we will decide how we can help you. For more information about the complaint process, please contact OLS.

Because we have limited capacity, OLS focuses on violations that affect low-wage workers and applies certain standards to which cases we can take. For more information on our current priorities, please visit the OLS website.

If OLS cannot assist directly with your problem, we may refer you to another agency or one of our community partners. We can also provide you with a list of private attorneys who may be able to help.

How do I make a complaint?

For deactivation cases, OLS has created a special tool so that you can see if we're able to help you with your problem at this time:

<https://olsconnect.powerappspalts.us/deactivation/>



You can make a complaint by phone or email, through our website, or by visiting the OLS office.



In person

810 3rd Ave, Ste 375
Seattle, WA 98104



By phone

(206) 256-5297

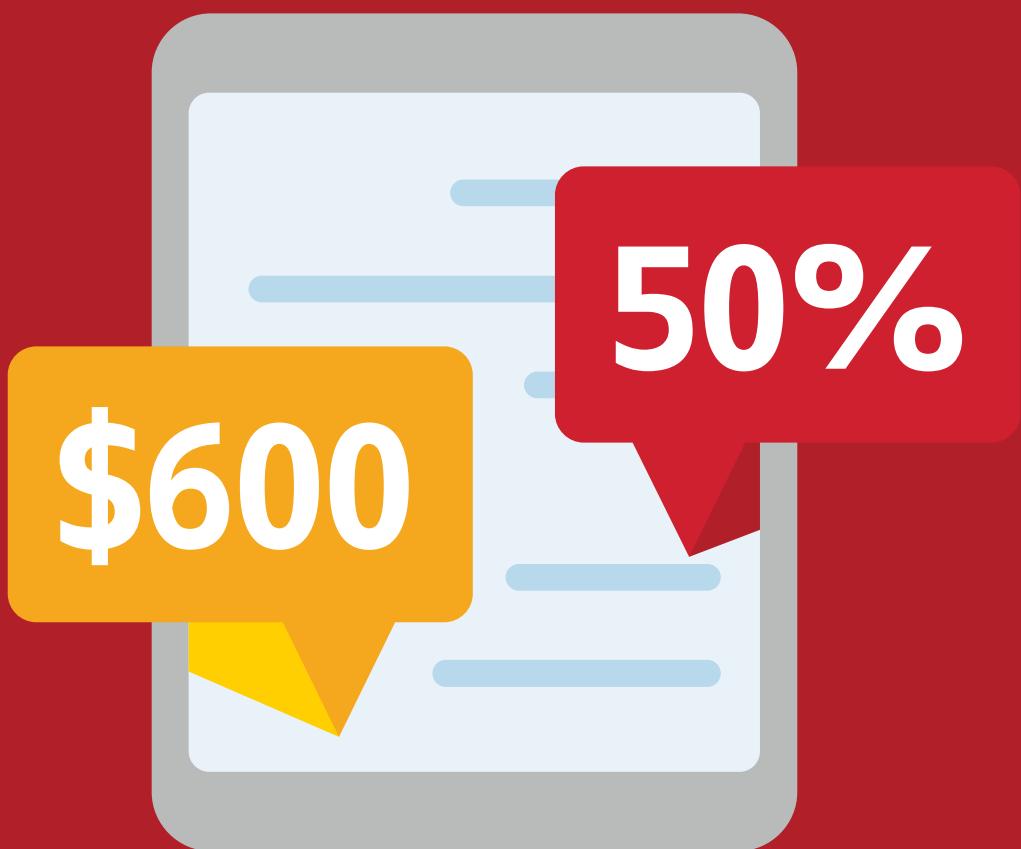
For drop-in inquiries, please review the OLS website for current hours of availability. Call ahead to make an appointment when possible.



By email or web

workers.laborstandards@seattle.gov
www.seattle.gov/laborstandards

OVERLAP WITH INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR PROTECTIONS AND OTHER LAWS



4

Overlap with Independent Contractor Protections and Other Laws

App-Based Workers are commonly treated as independent contractors by network companies. Seattle has an Independent Contractors Protections Ordinance (ICPO) that may protect app-based workers in some situations. For example, the ICPO notes that a “hiring entity” (which in the case of app-based work is the Network Company) must give workers a document called a “pre-work written notice” which outlines the work to be done and the terms of payment. Terms of payment includes the rate of pay, any variable pricing policy or multiplier incentive pay that applies to the work, and any tip or service charge policies, like what percentage of a service charge (if any) goes to you as the worker. That document needs to talk about the hiring entity’s tip and service charge policies, like how much of the service charge an app-based worker should get if the customer pays that charge. If the hiring entity does not include that information, the entire service charge should go to the worker providing the services.

Another example is that the ICPO requires the hiring entity and the worker to agree on payment before the worker begins to provide services. If the hiring entity does not pay the agreed upon amount, that is a violation of the ICPO. The ICPO requires that workers be paid in full based on the terms set out in the pre-work written notice in either 30 days or another time period laid out in the pre-work written notice.



Other Issues

Besides deactivation, these are other issues app-based workers commonly experience for which different Seattle laws provide protections (like the other app-based worker laws or the ICPO):

- Not receiving tips or the correct portion of a service charge
- Not receiving the correct minimum payment
 - You can use this calculator to help figure out what the minimum payment for an offer should be based on time and miles
 - Not receiving the promised amount of incentive pay (for example, if the company says that they'll pay you 3 times the normal payment to take an order at a specific time/in a specific area but then don't pay you the agreed upon amount)
- Not being paid the correct "average daily compensation rate" when you use Paid Sick and Safe Time
 - How to calculate your average daily compensation rate
 - Add up everything you've earned (minus tips) for each day where you worked in Seattle in whole or in part over the last 12 months (total compensation)
 - Count up the number of days that you worked in Seattle in whole or in part over the last 12 months (days worked)
 - Divide your total compensation by the days worked
 - The average daily compensation rate will change every month
 - Not being able to access your earnings or PSST after you're deactivated



What can I do if I am experiencing these other issues?

Even if the issue is not deactivation related, you can reach out to the Office of Labor Standards for help. You may be able to go to small claims court to address some problems. See page 33 for information on how to contact the Office of Labor Standards or file a complaint. See page 45 for more information on small claims court.



A NOTE ON SMALL CLAIMS COURT



A Note on Small Claims Court

Small claims court does not allow people to ask for anything but money. So you cannot go to small claims court and ask the court to get the company to reactivate you. Deactivation cases, therefore, likely won't work well in small claims court unless you are asking for back wages rather than to be reactivated.

There may be other reasons to go to small claims court about issues in your app-based work. For example, you may not have been paid the correct minimum amount for an offer. You may not have been paid out for the sick or safe time you earned on an app when you took a sick or safe day off. Or the company may have offered you an incentive to take a job (like "Earn 3 times the normal payment") but then did not pay you the agreed upon amount. Small claims court is somewhere that you can bring issues like this where you are asking for money that is owed to you.

However, many of the network companies have something called an "arbitration clause" or "arbitration agreement" in their terms of use which you agree to when you start using the app. An arbitration agreement means that the company can remove your case from court and ask that you go through their arbitration process first. Arbitration is a form of alternative dispute resolution outside of court. Like in a court hearing, both sides present evidence and their side of the story. If you think you may have signed an agreement with an arbitration clause, please consult with a lawyer about your specific situation.

If you would like to read more about small claims court, you can check out our Independent Contractors Protections Guide:

https://www.seattle.gov/documents/departments/laborstandards/final2_cityofseattle_ols_navigationguide_092424.pdf



RESOURCES



6

Resources

Legal Self-Help

King County Law Library

The King County Law Library (KCLL) provides free access to legal materials, training, education, and services to the public. Visit www.kcll.org or call (206) 477-1305 for more information.

The KCLL website features a series of videos on what to expect when in small claims court. The videos (available at www.kcll.org/videos/) are tailored to King County District Court but may still be useful in preparing for small claims court in another county.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is a collection of all permanent Washington State laws currently in effect. Visit www.leg.wa.gov to find the laws published online.

Washington State Courts

The Washington Courts website provides information about the court system in Washington State. Visit www.courts.wa.gov for court rules, sample forms, a directory of all the courts in Washington, information for those representing themselves in court, and more.

Washington Law Help

WashingtonLawHelp.org is a website authored and maintained by the Northwest Justice Project to provide self-help guidance on a wide range of legal issues. Visit www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/small-claims-court for information and guidance specific to small claims court.

Legal Clinics

Bilingual Legal Clinics (English/Spanish)

El Centro de La Raza, the King County Bar Association and the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington offer free monthly legal clinics with bilingual attorneys and interpreters available. Please call (844) 502-9832 for more information on the current clinic location and schedule.

Eastside Legal Assistance Program

The Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) offers free legal clinics for low-income individuals living in King County. ELAP legal clinics offer one-time appointments to meet with an attorney to get resources or advice on a specific topic.

To make an appointment or to learn more, call (425) 747-7274 for assistance in English or (425) 620-2778 for assistance in Spanish. Leave a message with your name, phone number, and a brief description of your legal issue. Visit www.elap.org for more information.

International District & Rainier Valley Legal Clinics

The Asian Bar Association of Washington, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, Chinese Information and Service Center, and the King County Bar Association co-sponsor free legal clinics focused on the Asian/Pacific Islander Community in Washington.

For appointments at the International District Legal Clinic, please call (206) 624-5633, ext. 4111.

Legal Self-Help

King County Law Library

The King County Law Library (KCLL) provides free access to legal materials, training, education, and services to the public. Visit www.kcll.org or call (206) 477-1305 for more information.

The KCLL website features a series of videos on what to expect when in small claims court. The videos (available at www.kcll.org/videos/) are tailored to King County District Court but may still be useful in preparing for small claims court in another county.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is a collection of all permanent Washington State laws currently in effect. Visit www.leg.wa.gov to find the laws published online.

Fair Work Center

The Fair Work Center is a workers' rights hub that uses education, organizing, and free dedicated legal services to enforce our rights and win economic and racial justice. To learn more about the Fair Work Center, visit www.fairworkcenter.org or email gig@fairworkcenter.org.

King County Bar Association (KCBA) Neighborhood Legal Clinics

The King County Bar Association (KCBA) Neighborhood Legal Clinics program offers free, limited legal advice and referrals to King County residents and Washington State residents with a legal issue within King County.

The KCBA Neighborhood Legal Clinics offer free 30–60 minute consultations with a volunteer attorney, usually on the phone. Attorneys determine whether each client has a legal problem, suggest possible options, and provide appropriate referrals.

Visit www.kcba.org and submit a Client Intake Form to request an appointment. If you are unable to use the online form, call 206-267-7070 and press 1 to leave a voicemail requesting an appointment.

Seattle University Workers' Rights Clinic

Seattle University Law School faculty and students offer a Workers' Rights Clinic. The clinic offers no cost consultations to workers between September 1 and May 1. Request a consultation at www.law.seattleu.edu.

Private Attorneys

King County Bar Association (KCBA) Lawyer Referral Service

The Lawyer Referral Service refers members of the public, who are willing and able to pay regular attorney fees, to attorneys registered with the King County Bar Association. Visit www.kcba.org to submit an LRS Request Form or call (206) 267-7010.

Washington Employment Lawyers Association

The Washington Employment Lawyers Association (WELA) is a network of employment and labor lawyers in Washington State. While WELA focuses on enforcing employee rights, many of the member attorneys may be familiar with issues affecting independent contractors. Visit www.welalaw.org for more information and to search for a lawyer in their member directory.

Washington State Bar Association

Visit www.wsba.org/search to access a searchable directory of legal professionals in Washington State.

Other

CLEAR Hotline

CLEAR (Coordinated Legal Education, Advice and Referral) is a toll-free legal hotline for people in Washington State with low incomes. The hotline is open Monday through Friday.

In King County, call 2-1-1 for referral to an appropriate legal provider. Outside of King County, call the CLEAR hotline at 1 (888) 201-1014.

211 and CLEAR will provide interpreters. Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired callers can call CLEAR or 211 (or toll-free 1 (877) 211-9274) using the relay service of their choice.

El Centro de la Raza

The El Centro de la Raza Labor Standards Program educates Spanish-speaking workers on local, state, and federal labor laws, including Seattle Labor Standards laws.

Contact Enrique Espinosa, Labor Standards Specialist, at (206) 973-4290 or e.espinosa@elcentrodelaraza.org with any questions or to get help. Learn more about El Centro de La Raza and the other programs they offer at www.elcentrodelaraza.org.

Freelancers Union

Freelancers Union is a non-profit organization serving as a support system for independent contractors through advocacy, education, and services. Visit www.freelancersunion.org to learn more.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Wage and Hour Division

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Wage and Hour Division enforces federal minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards act among other federal labor laws.

The U.S. DOL Wage and Hour Division has some helpful resources about misclassification of Independent Contractors available on their website. Visit www.dol.gov/whd to learn more.

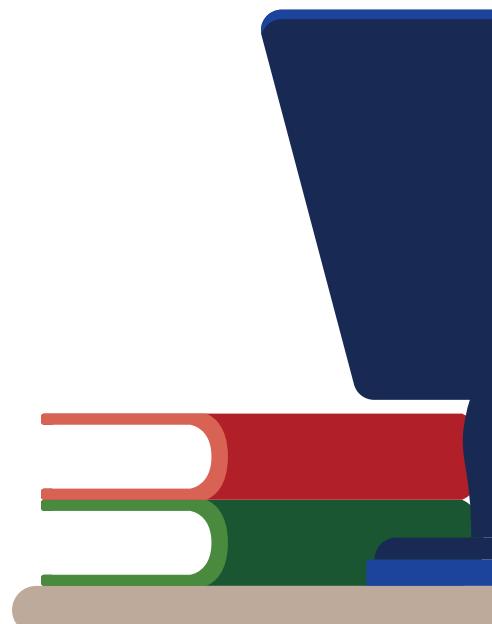
To file a complaint with the U.S. DOL Wage and Hour Division, call 1 (866) 487-9243 or submit a contact form at www.dol.gov/whd.

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I)

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries is a state agency dedicated to the safety, health, and security of workers in Washington. The agency enforces state laws including those that protect workers' wages and working conditions.

Many of the laws that L&I enforces do not apply to independent contractors. However, if you think you were classified incorrectly as a contractor instead of an employee, L&I may be able to help.

Visit www.lni.wa.gov to submit a worker rights complaint. You can also download a worker rights complaint form from the website and mail it to L&I once completed, visit your nearest L&I office in person, or call 1 (866) 219-7321 to file a complaint by phone.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



7

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the [Fair Work Center](#) for their support and input for this guide.

The Fair Work Center generously shared resources and expertise from their experiences helping workers navigate deactivation and the appeals process. Visit www.fairworkcenter.org to learn more about their efforts to improve the working conditions and lives of all workers.

Thank you to the [Northwest Justice Project](#) for creating and maintaining the wide range of self-help legal resources available at WashingtonLawHelp.org.

Thank you to the [workers who supported this project](#) and provided their expertise based on their experiences with deactivation.

LIST OF APPENDICES



8

List of Appendices

Appendix A

Deactivation Notice of Rights

Appendix B

Model Notice of Deactivation

Appendix C

Notice of Rights for App-Based Workers

Appendix D

App-Based Worker Minimum Payment Fact Sheet

Appendix E

App-Based Worker Paid Sick and Safe Time Fact Sheet

Appendix F

App-Based Worker Deactivation Fact Sheet

Some of these resources are updated each year.
For the most up to date resources, you can go to this [web page](#).



App-Based Workers Guide

Published by The City of Seattle Office of Labor Standards
Graphic design by ConceptShell Art and Design Studio



**Seattle Office of
Labor Standards**