CHAPTER 111
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

SUBCHAPTER I
EMPLOYMENT PEACE

111.02 Definitions.

111.04 Rights of employees.

111.05 Representatives and elections.

111.06 What are unfair labor practices.

111.07 Prevention of unfair labor practices.

111.08 Financial reports to employees.

111.09 Rules, orders, transcripts, training programs and fees.

111.10 Arbitration.

111.11 Mediation.

111.15 Notice of certain proposed strikes.

111.17 Conflict of provisions; effect.

111.18 Limit on payment to health care institutions.

111.19 Title of subchapter I.

SUBCHAPTER II
FAIR EMPLOYMENT

111.31 Declaration of policy.

111.32 Definitions.

111.3205 Franchisors excluded.

111.321 Prohibited bases of discrimination.

111.322 Discriminatory actions prohibited.

111.325 Unlawful to discriminate.

111.33 Age; exceptions and special cases.

111.335 Arrest or conviction record; exceptions and special cases.

111.337 Creed; exceptions and special cases.

111.34 Disability; exceptions and special cases.

111.345 Marital status; exceptions and special cases.

111.35 Use or nonuse of lawful products; exceptions and special cases.

111.355 Military service; exceptions and special cases.

111.36 Sex, sexual orientation; exceptions and special cases.

111.365 Communication of opinions; exceptions and special cases.

111.37 Use of honesty testing devices in employment situations.

111.371 Local ordinance; collective bargaining agreements.

111.372 Use of genetic testing in employment situations.

111.375 Department to administer.

111.38 Investigation and study of discrimination.

111.39 Powers and duties of department.

111.395 Judicial review.

SUBCHAPTER III

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

PUBLIC UTILITIES

111.50 Declaration of policy.

111.51 Definitions.

111.52 Settlement of labor disputes through collective bargaining and arbitration.

111.53 Appointment of conciliators and arbitrators.

111.54 Conciliation.

111.55 Conciliator unable to effect settlement; appointment of arbitrators.

111.56 Existing state of affairs to be maintained.

111.57 Arbitrator to hold hearings.

111.58 Standards for arbitration.

111.59 Filing order with clerk of circuit court; period effective; retroactivity.

111.60 Judicial review of order of arbitrator.

111.61 Commission to establish rules.

111.62 Strikes, work stoppages, slowdowns, lockouts, unlawful; penalty.

111.63 Enforcement.

111.64 Construction.

SUBCHAPTER IV
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

111.70 Municipal employment.

111.71 General provisions.

111.77 Settlement of disputes.

SUBCHAPTER V
STATE EMPLOYMENT LABOR RELATIONS

111.81 Definitions.

111.815 Duties of state.

111.82 Rights of employees.

111.825 Collective bargaining units.

111.83 Representatives and elections.

111.84 Unfair labor practices.

111.845 Wage deduction prohibition.

111.85 Fair-share and maintenance of membership agreements.

111.86 Grievance arbitration.

111.87 Mediation.

111.88 Fact-finding.

111.89 Strike prohibited.

111.90 Management rights.

111.91 Subjects of bargaining.

111.915 Labor proposals.

111.92 Agreements.

111.93 Effect of labor organization; status of existing benefits and rights.

111.935 Representatives and elections for research assistants.

111.94 Rules, transcripts, training programs, fees.

111.02 Definitions. When used in this subchapter:

1. “All-union agreement” means an agreement between an employer and the representative of the employer’s employees in a collective bargaining unit whereby all or any of the employees in such unit are required to be members of a single labor organization.

2. “Collective bargaining” means the negotiation by an employer and a majority of the employer’s employees in a collective bargaining unit, or their representatives, concerning representation or terms and conditions of employment of such employees, in a mutually-genuine effort to reach an agreement with reference to the subject under negotiation.

3. “Collective bargaining unit” means all of the employees of one employer, employed within the state, except that where a majority of the employees engaged in a single craft, division, department or plant have voted by secret ballot as provided in s. 111.05 (2) to constitute such group a separate bargaining unit they shall be so considered, but, in appropriate cases, and to aid in the more efficient administration of this subchapter, the commission may find, where agreeable to all parties affected in any way thereby, an industry, trade or business comprising more than one employer in an association in any geographical area to be a “collective bargaining unit”.

4. “Commission” means the employment relations commission.

5. The term “election” shall mean a proceeding in which the employees in a collective bargaining unit cast a secret ballot for collective bargaining representatives or for any other purpose specified in this subchapter in reference to collective bargaining units otherwise established under this subchapter. Two or more collective bargaining units may bargain collectively through the same representative where a majority of the employees in each separate unit have voted by secret ballot as provided in s. 111.05 (2) so to do.

6. (a) “Employee” shall include any person, other than an independent contractor, working for another for hire in the state of Wisconsin in a nonconfidential, nonmanagerial, nonexecutive and nonsupervisory capacity, and shall not be limited to the employees of a particular employer unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(b) “Employee” shall include any individual whose work has ceased solely as a consequence of or in connection with any cur-
rent labor dispute or because of any unfair labor practice on the part of an employer and who has not:
1. Refused or failed to return to work upon the final disposition of a labor dispute or a charge of an unfair labor practice by a tribunal having competent jurisdiction of the same or whose jurisdiction was accepted by the employee or the employee’s representative;
2. Been found to have committed or to have been a party to any unfair labor practice hereunder;
3. Obtained regular and substantially equivalent employment elsewhere; or
4. Been absent from his or her employment for a substantial period of time during which reasonable expectation of settlement has ceased (except by an employer’s unlawful refusal to bargain) and whose place has been filled by another engaged in the regular manner for an indefinite or protracted period and not merely for the duration of a strike or lockout.

(c) “Employee” shall not include any individual employed in the domestic service of a family or person at the person’s home or any individual employed by his or her parent or spouse or any employee who is subject to the federal railway labor act.

(7) (a) “Employer” means a person who engages the services of an employee, and includes a person acting on behalf of an employer within the scope of his or her authority, express or implied.

(b) “Employer” does not include any of the following:
1. The state or any political subdivision thereof.
2. Any labor organization or anyone acting in behalf of such organization other than when it is acting as an employer in fact.

(8) The term “jurisdictional strike” shall mean a strike growing out of a dispute between 2 or more employers or representatives of employees as to the appropriate unit for collective bargaining, or as to which representative is entitled to act as collective bargaining representative, or as to whether employees represented by one or the other representative are entitled to perform particular work.

(9) The term “labor dispute” means any controversy between an employer and the majority of the employer’s employees in a collective bargaining unit concerning the right or process or details of collective bargaining or the designation of representatives. Any organization with which either the employer or such majority is affiliated may be considered a party to the labor dispute.

(9g) “Labor organization” means any employee organization in which employees participate and that exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of engaging in collective bargaining with any employer concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, hours, benefits, or other terms or conditions of employment.

(10) The term “person” includes one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, limited liability companies, legal representatives, trustees or receivers.

(11) The term “representative” includes any person chosen by an employee to represent the employee.

(12) The term “secondary boycott” shall include combining or conspiring to cause or threaten to cause injury to a person with whom no labor dispute exists in order to bring that person, against the person’s will, into a concerted plan to coerce or inflict damage upon another, whether by:
(a) Withholding patronage, labor or other beneficial business intercourse;
(b) Picketing;
(c) Refusing to handle, install, use or work on particular materials, equipment or supplies; or
(d) Any other unlawful means.

(13) The term “unfair labor practice” means any unfair labor practice as defined in s. 111.06.

ceasing within 30 days from the date of the certification of the results of such election, conduct a runoff election. In such runoff election, the commission may drop from the ballot the name of the representative that received the least number of votes at the original election, or the privilege of voting against any representative when the least number of votes cast at the first election was against representation by any named representative.

(4) Questions concerning the determination of collective bargaining units or representation of employees may be raised by petition of any employee or the employee’s employer, or the representative of either of them. Where it appears by the petition that any emergency exists requiring prompt action, the commission shall act on the petition immediately and hold the election requested within such time as will meet the requirements of the emergency presented. The fact that one election has been held does not prevent the holding of another election among the same group of employees, provided that it appears to the commission that sufficient reason for another election exists.


Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 3, 7, and 17, Wis. adm. code.

111.06 What are unfair labor practices. (1) It shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer individually or in concert with others:

(a) To interfere with, restrain or coerce the employer’s employees in the exercise of the rights guaranteed in s. 111.04.

(b) To initiate, create, dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization or contribute financial support to it, provided that an employer shall not be prohibited from reimbursing employees at their prevailing wage rate for the time spent conferring with the employer, nor from cooperating with representatives of at least a majority of the employer’s employees in a collective bargaining unit, at their request, by permitting employee organizational activities on company premises or the use of company property facilities where such activities or use create no additional expense to the company, provided, however, that it shall not be an unfair labor practice for an employer to become a member of the same labor organization of which the employer’s employees are members, when the employer and the employer’s employees work at the same trade.

(c) To encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization, employee agency, committee, association, or representation plan by discrimination in regard to hiring, tenure, or other terms or conditions of employment.

(d) To refuse to bargain collectively with the representative of a majority of the employer’s employees in any collective bargaining unit with respect to representation or terms and conditions of employment, provided, however, that where an employer files with the commission a petition requesting a determination as to majority representation, the employer shall not be deemed to have refused to bargain until an election has been held and the result thereof has been certified to the employer by the commission.

(e) To bargain collectively with the representatives of less than a majority of the employer’s employees in a collective bargaining unit, or to enter into an all-union agreement.

(f) To violate the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, including an agreement to accept an arbitration award.

(g) To refuse or fail to recognize or accept as conclusive of any issue in any controversy as to employment relations the final determination, after appeal, if any, of any tribunal having competent jurisdiction of the same or whose jurisdiction the employees or their representatives accepted.

(e) To cooperate in engaging in, promoting or inducing picketing that does not constitute an exercise of constitutionally guaranteed free speech, boycotting or any other overt concomitant of a cause to be done on behalf of or in the interest of employers or employees, or in connection with or to influence the outcome of any controversy as to employment relations.

(2) It shall be an unfair labor practice for an employee individually or in concert with others:

(a) To coerce or intimidate an employee in the enjoyment of the employee’s legal rights, including those guaranteed in s. 111.04, or to intimidate the employee’s family, picket the employee’s domicile, or injure the person or property of the employee or the employee’s family.

(b) To coerce, intimidate or induce any employer to interfere with any of the employer’s employees in the enjoyment of their legal rights, including those guaranteed in s. 111.04, or to engage in any practice with regard to the employer’s employees which would constitute an unfair labor practice if undertaken by the employer on the employer’s own initiative.

(c) To violate the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, including an agreement to accept an arbitration award.

(d) To refuse or fail to recognize or accept as conclusive of any issue in any controversy as to employment relations the final determination, after appeal, if any, of any tribunal having competent jurisdiction of the same or whose jurisdiction the employees or their representatives accepted.

(e) To cooperate in engaging in, promoting or inducing picketing that does not constitute an exercise of constitutionally guaranteed free speech, boycotting or any other overt concomitant of a strike, unless a majority of the employer’s employees have voted by secret ballot to call a strike.

(f) To hinder or prevent, by mass picketing, threats, intimidation, force or coercion of any kind the pursuit of any lawful work or employment, or to obstruct or interfere with entrance to or egress from any place of employment, or to obstruct or interfere with free and uninterrupted use of public roads, streets, highways, railways, airports, or other ways of travel or conveyance.

(g) To engage in a secondary boycott; or to hinder or prevent, by threats, intimidation, force, coercion or sabotage, the obtaining, use or disposition of materials, equipment or services; or to combine or conspire to hinder or prevent, by any means whatsoever, the obtaining, use or disposition of materials, equipment or services, provided, however, that nothing herein shall prevent sympathetic strikes in support of those in similar occupations working for other employers in the same craft.

(h) To take unauthorized possession of property of the employer or to engage in any concerted effort to interfere with production except by leaving the premises in an orderly manner for the purpose of going on strike.

(i) To fail to give the notice of intention to engage in a strike provided in s. 111.115 (3).

(j) To commit any crime or misdemeanor in connection with any controversy as to employment relations.

(L) To engage in, promote or induce a jurisdictional strike.

(m) To coerce or intimidate an employer working at the same trade of the employer’s employees to induce the employer to become a member of the labor organization of which they are members, permissible pursuant to s. 111.06 (1) (b).

(3) It shall be an unfair labor practice for any person to do or cause to be done on behalf of or in the interest of employers or employees, or in connection with or to influence the outcome of any controversy as to employment relations.

Changes effective after October 27, 2017 are designated by NOTES. (Published 10–27–17)
any controversy as to employment relations any act prohibited by
subs. (1) and (2).

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 2, Wis. adm. code.

A company is not required to bargain over a union to use equipment that elimi-
nates jobs, but it is required to bargain over the effects of the decision on the rights of the employees to severance pay, seniority, and related issues. Libby, McNeill & Libby v. WERC, 48 Wis. 2d 272, 179 N.W.2d 805 (1970).

Federal law has preempted the question of whether a union rule imposing a fine for exceeding production ceilings constitutes an unfair labor practice. UAW, Local 283 v. Scott Ferris, 48 Wis. 2d 117, 183 N.W.2d 103 (1971).

The failure to exhaust the available grievance remedies by an employee who was allegedly discharged in violation of the contract precluded recourse to the courts about discharge, which would be made by the union to procure the employee’s grievance. Mahnke v. WERC, 66 Wis. 2d 524, 225 N.W.2d 617 (1975).

WERC is authorized by s. 111.06 (1) (L) to determine whether conduct in violation of criminal law has occurred. Such authorization is not a delegation of judicial power in violation of Art. VII, s. 2 nor does the procedure violate Art. I, s. 8. Layton School of Art & Design v. WERC, 82 Wis. 2d 324, 262 N.W.2d 218 (1978).

State jurisdiction was preempted when a secondary boycott violated the federal Clarks v. Dingeldein, 207 Wis. 2d 333, 336 N.W.2d 460 (1982).

Federal preemption of labor relations is discussed. Machinists v. WERC, 427 U.S. 132.

Duty to bargain over decision to mechanize operations. Boivin, 55 MLR 179.

Duty to bargain basic business decisions prior to implementation. 1971 WLR 1250.

111.07 Prevention of unfair labor practices. (1) Any controversy concerning unfair labor practices may be submitted to the commission in the manner and with the effect provided in this subchapter, but nothing herein shall prevent the pursuit of legal or equitable relief in courts of competent jurisdiction.

(2) (a) Upon the filing with the commission by any party in interest of a complaint in writing, on a form provided by the commission, charging any person with having engaged in any specific unfair labor practice, it shall mail a copy of such complaint to all other parties in interest. Any other person claiming interest in the dispute or controversy, as an employer, an employee, or their repre-
sentatives, shall be made a party upon application. The commis-
sion may bring in additional parties by service of a copy of the complaint. Only one such complaint shall issue against a person with respect to a single controversy, but any such complaint may be amended in the discretion of the commission at any time prior to the issuance of a final order based thereon. The person or per-
sons so complained of shall have the right to file an answer to the original or amended complaint and to appear in person or otherwise and give testimony at the place and time fixed in the notice of hearing. The commission shall fix a time for the hearing on such complaint, which will be not less than 10 nor more than 40 days after the filing of such complaint, and notice shall be given to each party interested by service on the party personally or by mailing a copy thereof to the party at the party’s last-known post-
office address at least 10 days before such hearing. In case a party in interest is located without the state and has no known post-of-

ice address within this state, a copy of the complaint and copies of all notices shall be filed with the department of finance and charges so filed may also be sent by registered mail to the last-known post-office address of such party. Such filing and mailing shall constitute sufficient service with the same force and effect as if served upon the party located within this state. Such hearing may be adjourned from time to time in the discretion of the commission and hearings may be held at such places as the commission shall designate.

(b) 1. The commission shall have the power to issue subpoenas and administer oaths. Depositions may be taken in the manner prescribed by s. 103.005 (13) (c). No person may be excused from attending and testifying or from producing books, records, corre-
spendence, documents or other evidence in obedience to the sub-
poena of the commission on the ground that the testimony or evi-
dence required of him or her may tend to incriminate him or her or subject him or her to a penalty or forfeiture under the laws of the state of Wisconsin; but no individual may be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of testify-
ing or producing evidence, documentary or otherwise, before the commission in obedience to a subpoena issued by it; provided, that an individual so testifying shall not be exempt from prosecu-
ton and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.

2. The immunity provided under subd. 1. is subject to the restrictions under s. 972.085.

(c) Any person who shall willfully and unlawfully fail or neglect to appear or testify or to produce books, papers and records as required, shall, upon application to a circuit court, be ordered to appear before the commission, there to testify or pro-
duce evidence if so ordered, and failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by the court as a contempt thereof.

(d) Each witness who appears before the commission by its order or subpoena at the request of the commission on its own motion shall receive for his or her attendance the fees and mileage provided for witnesses in civil cases in courts of record, which shall be audited and paid by the state in the same manner as other expenses are audited and paid upon the presentation of properly verified vouchers approved by the chairperson of the commission and charged to the appropriation under s. 20.425 (1) (a). Each wit-
ness who appears before the commission as a result of an order or subpoena issued by the commission at the request of a party shall receive for his or her attendance the fees and mileage as provided for witnesses in civil cases in courts of record, which shall be paid by the party requesting the order or subpoena in advance of the time set in the order or subpoena for attendance.

(3) A full and complete record shall be kept of all proceedings had before the commission, and all testimony and proceedings shall be taken down by the reporter appointed by the commission. Any such proceedings shall be governed by the rules of evidence prevailing in courts of equity and the party on whom the burden of proof rests shall be required to sustain such burden by a clear and satisfactory preponderance of the evidence.

(4) Within 60 days after hearing all testimony and arguments of the parties the commission shall make and file its findings of fact upon all of the issues involved in the controversy, and its order, which shall state its determination as to the rights of the par-
ties. Pending the final determination by it of any controversy before it the commission may, after hearing, make interlocutory findings and orders which may be enforced in the same manner as final orders. Final orders may dismiss the charges or require the person complained of to cease and desist from the unfair labor practices found to have been committed, suspend the person’s rights, immunities, privileges or remedies granted or afforded by this subchapter for not more than one year, and require the person to take such affirmative action, including reinstatement of employees with or without pay, as the commission deems proper. Any order may further require the person to make reports from time to time showing the extent to which the person has complied with the order.

(5) The commission may make findings and orders or may agree to an examination to make findings and orders. Any party in interest who is dissatisfied with the findings or order may file a written petition with the commission to review the findings or order. If no petition is filed within 20 days from the date that a copy of the findings or order was mailed to the last-known address of the parties in interest, such findings or order shall be considered the findings or order of the commission unless set aside, reversed, or modified by the commission or examiner within such time. If the findings or order are set aside by the commission or examiner the status shall be the same as prior to the findings or order set aside. If the findings or order are reversed or modified, the time for filing petition with the commission shall run from the time that notice of such reversal or modification is mailed to the last-known address of the parties in interest. Within 45 days after the filing of such petition with the commission, the commission shall either affirm, reverse, set aside, or modify such findings or order, in whole or in part, or direct the taking of additional testimony. Such action shall be based on a review of the evidence submitted. If the commission is satisfied that a party in interest has been prejudiced because of exceptional delay in the receipt of a copy of any find-

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ings or order, it may extend the time another 20 days for filing a petition with the commission.

(6) The commission shall have the power to remove or transfer the proceedings pending before an examiner. It may also, on its own motion, set aside, modify, or change any order, findings, or award, whether made by an examiner or by the commission, at any time within 20 days from the date thereof if it shall discover any mistake therein, or upon the grounds of newly discovered evidence.

(7) If any person fails or neglects to obey an order of the commission while the same is in effect the commission may petition the circuit court of the county wherein such person resides or usually transacts business for the enforcement of such order and for appropriate temporary relief or restraining order, and shall certify and file in the court its record in the proceedings, including all documents and papers on file in the matter, the pleadings and testimony upon which such order was entered, and the findings and order of the commission. Upon such filing the commission shall cause notice thereof to be served upon such person by mailing a copy to the last-known post-office address, and thereupon the court shall have jurisdiction of the proceedings and of the question determined therein. Said action may thereupon be brought on for hearing before said court upon such record by the commission serving 10 days' written notice upon the respondent; subject, however, to provisions of law for a change of the place of trial or the calling in of another judge. Upon such hearing the court may confirm, modify, or set aside the order of the commission and enter an appropriate decree. No objection that has not been urged before the commission shall be considered by the court unless the failure or neglect to urge such objection shall be excused because of extraordinary circumstances. The findings of fact made by the commission, if supported by credible and competent evidence in the record, shall be conclusive. The court may, in its discretion, grant leave to adduce additional evidence where such evidence appears to be material and reasonable cause is shown for failure to have adduced such evidence in the hearing before the commission. The commission may modify its findings as to facts, or make new findings by reason of such additional evidence, and it shall file such modified or new findings with the same effect as its original findings and shall file its recommendations, if any, for the modification or setting aside of its original order. The court's judgment and decree shall be final except that the same shall be subject to review by the court of appeals in the same manner as provided in s. 102.25.

(8) The order of the commission shall also be subject to review under ch. 227.

(9) Commencement of proceedings under sub. (7) shall, unless otherwise specifically ordered by the court, operate as a stay of the commission's order.

(10) Petitions filed under this section shall have preference over any civil cause of a different nature pending in the circuit court, shall be heard expeditiously, and the circuit courts shall always be deemed open for the trial thereof.

(12) A substantial compliance with the procedure of this subchapter shall be sufficient to give effect to the orders of the commission, and they shall not be declared inoperative, illegal, or void for any omission of a technical nature in respect thereto.

(13) A transcribed copy of the evidence and proceedings or any part thereof on any hearing taken by the stenographer appointed by the commission, being certified by such stenographer to be a true and correct transcript, carefully compared by the stenographer with the stenographer's original notes, and to be a correct statement of such evidence and proceedings, shall be received in evidence with the same effect as if such reporter were present and testified to the fact so certified.

(14) The right of any person to proceed under this section shall not extend beyond one year from the date of the specific act or unfair labor practice alleged.


Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 2, Wis. adm. code.

WERC’s limiting of “parties in interest” to those engaged in a controversy as to employment relations and defining such controversies as involving an employer and employees, or a union representing the employees or seeking to represent them, was reasonable. Chauffeurs, Teamsters & Helpers v. WERC, 51 Wis. 2d 391, 187 N.W.2d 364 (1971).

Since the NLRB has no jurisdiction to require collective bargaining with a one-employee unit, WERC may do so. WERC v. Atlantic Richfield Co. 52 Wis. 2d 126, 187 N.W.2d 805 (1971).

The grant of authority to WERC by s. 111.70 (4) (a), to prevent the commission of prohibited labor practices incorporates the provisions of s. 111.07 (4) for procedural and substantive remedial purposes. WERC v. City of Evansville, 69 Wis. 2d 140, 230 N.W.2d 688 (1975).

Sub. (8) provides that WERC orders may be reviewed under sub. (7) or under ch. 227 procedure. WERC v. Teamsters Local No. 563, 75 Wis. 2d 602, 250 N.W.2d 696 (1977). Overturned on other grounds. City of Madison v. Madison Professional Police Officers Association, 144 Wis. 2d 576, 425 N.W.2d 8 (1988).

111.08 Financial reports to employees. Every person acting as the representative of employees for collective bargaining shall keep an adequate record of its financial transactions and shall present annually to each member within 60 days after the end of its fiscal year a detailed written financial report thereof in the form of a balance sheet and an operating statement. In the event of failure of compliance with this section, any member may petition the commission for an order compelling such compliance. An order of the commission on such petition shall be enforceable in the same manner as other orders of the commission under this subchapter.

111.09 Rules, orders, transcripts, training programs and fees.

(1) The commission may adopt reasonable and proper rules and regulations relative to the exercise of its powers and authority and proper rules to govern its proceedings and to regulate the conduct of all elections and hearings. The commission shall, upon request, provide a transcript of a proceeding to any party to the proceeding for a fee, established by rule, by the commission at a uniform rate per page. All transcript fees shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.425 (1) (i).

(2) The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a complaint alleging that an unfair labor practice has been committed under s. 111.06. The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission act as an arbitrator to resolve a dispute involving the interpretation or application of a collective bargaining agreement under s. 111.10. The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission act as a mediator under s. 111.11. The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission initiate arbitration under s. 111.10. For the performance of commission actions under ss. 111.10 and 111.11, the commission shall require that the parties to the dispute equally share in the payment of the fee and, for the performance of commission actions involving a complaint alleging that an unfair labor practice has been committed under s. 111.06, the commission shall require that the party filing the complaint pay the entire fee. If any party has paid a filing fee requesting the commission to act as a mediator for a labor dispute and the parties do not enter into a voluntary settlement of the labor dispute, the commission may not subsequently assess or collect a filing fee to initiate arbitration to resolve the same labor dispute. If any request for the performance of commission actions concerns issues arising as a result of more than one unrelated event or occurrence, each such separate event or occurrence shall be treated as a separate request. The commission shall promulgate rules establishing a schedule of filing fees to be paid under this subsection. Fees required to be paid under this subsection shall be paid at the time of filing the com-
plaint or the request for mediation or arbitration. A complaint or request for mediation or arbitration is not filed until the date such fee or fees are paid. Fees collected under this subsection shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.425 (1) (i).

(3) The commission may provide training programs to individuals and organizations on private sector collective bargaining, and on areas of management and labor cooperation directly or indirectly affecting private sector collective bargaining, and may charge a reasonable fee for participation in the programs.

Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 2, 50, Wis. adm. code.

111.10 Arbitration. Parties to a dispute pertaining to the meaning or application of the terms of a written collective bargaining agreement may agree in writing to have the commission serve as arbitrator. Parties to a labor dispute may agree in writing to have the commission act as a mediator in any or all parts of such dispute, and thereupon the commission shall have the power so to act. The commission shall appoint as arbitrators only competent, impartial and disinterested persons. Proceedings in any such arbitration shall be as provided in ch. 788.

History: 1979 c. 32 s. 92 (15); 1995 a. 27.
Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 5, Wis. adm. code.

A grievance was arbitrable under the “discharge and nonrenewal” clause of a bargaining agreement when the contract offered by the board was signed by the teacher after deleting the title “probationary contract” and the board did not accept this counteroffer or offer the teacher a 2nd contract. Joint School District No. 10, City of Jefferson v. Jefferson Education Association, 78 Wis. 2d 94, 253 N.W.2d 536 (1977).

WERC’s power to participate in dispute settlement arbitration is liberally construed. Thus, when parties arbitrate to a collective bargaining agreement select an arbitrator from a list provided by WERC, this section applies. Layton School of Art & Design v. WERC, 82 Wis. 2d 324, 262 N.W.2d 218 (1978).

The arbitration is within the scope of ch. 788. Milwaukee District Council 48 v. Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, 107 Wis. 2d 590, 321 N.W.2d 309 (Cl. App. 1982).

The res judicata standard of confirmed arbitration awards in Wisconsin. 1987 WLR 895.

111.11 Mediation. The commission may appoint any competent, impartial, disinterested person to act as mediator in any labor dispute either upon its own initiative or upon the request of one of the parties to the dispute. It shall be the function of such mediator to bring the parties together voluntarily under such favorable auspices as will tend to effectuate settlement of the dispute, but neither the mediator nor the commission shall have any power of compulsion nor the commission shall provide necessary expenses for such mediators as it may appoint, order reasonable compensation not exceeding $10 per day for each such mediator, and prescribe reasonable rules of procedure for such mediators.

History: 1979 c. 32 s. 92 (15); 1995 a. 27, 225.
Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 6, Wis. adm. code.

111.115 Notice of certain proposed strikes. (1) In this section, “strike” includes any concerted stoppage of work by employees, and any concerted slowdown or other concerted interruption of operations or services by employees, or any concerted refusal of employees to work or perform their usual duties as employees, for the purpose of enforcing demands upon an employer.

(3) Where the exercise of the right to strike by employees of any employer engaged in the state of Wisconsin in the production, harvesting or initial off-farm processing of any farm or dairy product produced in this state would tend to cause the destruction or serious deterioration of such product, the employees shall give to the commission at least 30 days’ notice of their intention to strike and the commission shall immediately notify the employer of the receipt of such notice. Upon receipt of such notice, the commission shall take immediate steps to effect mediation, if possible. In the event of the failure of the efforts to mediate, the commission shall endeavor to induce the parties to arbitrate the controversy.


111.12 Duties of the attorney general and district attorneys. Upon the request of the commission, the attorney general or the district attorney of the county in which a proceeding is brought before the circuit court for the purpose of enforcing or reviewing an order of the commission shall appear and act as counsel for the commission in such proceeding and in any proceeding to review the action of the circuit court affirming, modifying or reversing such order.

111.14 Penalty. Any person who shall willfully assault, resist, prevent, impede, or interfere with the commission or any of its agents or agencies in the performance of duties pursuant to this subchapter shall be punished by a fine of not more than $500 or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than one year, or both.

History: 2017 a. 59.

111.15 Construction of subchapter I. Except as specifically provided in this subchapter, nothing therein shall be construed so as to interfere with or impede or diminish in any way the right to strike or the right of individuals to work; nor shall anything in this subchapter be so construed as to invade unlawfully the right to freedom of speech. Nothing in this subchapter shall be so construed or applied as to deprive any employee of any unemployment benefit which the employee might otherwise be entitled to receive under ch. 108.

History: 1995 a. 492.

111.17 Conflict of provisions; effect. Wherever the application of the provisions of other statutes or laws conflict with the application of the provisions of this subchapter, this subchapter shall prevail, except that in any situation where the provisions of this subchapter cannot be validly enforced the provisions of such other statutes or laws shall apply.

History: 1995 a. 27; 2011 a. 10.

111.18 Limit on payment to health care institutions. (1) In this section:

(a) “Health care institution” includes hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, tuberculosis hospitals, nursing homes, kidney disease treatment centers, free-standing hemodialysis units, ambulatory surgical facilities, health maintenance organizations, limited service health organizations, preferred provider plans, community-based residential facilities that are certified as medical assistance providers under s. 49.45 (16) or that otherwise meet the requirements for certification, home health agencies and other comparable facilities. “Health care institution” does not include facilities operated solely as part of the practice of an independent practitioner, unincorporated medical group or service corporation as defined in s. 180.1901 (2).

(b) “Proportional share” means the annual revenue of a health care institution received in the form of medical assistance reimbursement or public employee insurance from the state, divided by the total annual revenue of the health care institution.

(2) (a) 1. Any health care institution found by the national labor relations board to have committed an unfair labor practice under 29 USC 158 or found by the employment relations commission to have committed a prohibited practice under s. 111.70 (3) that includes payment to any person for services rendered with respect to concerted activity engaged in by its employees for purposes of collective bargaining shall return to the state a proportional share of the amount paid to the person for the activity that constituted the unfair labor practice.

2. Any group of employees of a health care institution subject to subd. 1. may commence an action in circuit court to enforce the provisions of this subsection.

3. Reasonable costs and attorney fees incurred in enforcing a return of funds to the state under this section may be awarded to successful plaintiffs.

(b) Paragraph (a) does not apply to:

1. Attorney fees for services rendered after the union is certified as a collective bargaining agent under this chapter or under the national labor relations act, 29 USC 151 to 169.

2015−16 Wisconsin Statutes updated through 2017 Wis. Act 59 and all Supreme Court and Controlled Substances Board Orders effective on or before October 27, 2017. Published and certified under s. 35.18. Changes effective after October 27, 2017 are designated by NOTES. (Published 10−27−17)
2. Attorney fees for services at an administrative agency or court proceeding or in preparation for the proceeding.

3. Salary paid to a full-time employee of a health care institution’s personnel department.


111.31 Declaration of policy. (1) The legislature finds that the practice of unfair discrimination in employment against properly qualified individuals by reason of their age, race, creed, color, disability, marital status, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, arrest record, conviction record, military service, use or nonuse of lawful products off the employer’s premises during nonworking hours, or declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters, substantially and adversely affects the general welfare of the state. Employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, and licensing agencies that deny employment opportunities and discriminate in employment against properly qualified individuals solely because of their age, race, creed, color, disability, marital status, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, arrest record, conviction record, military service, use or nonuse of lawful products off the employer’s premises during nonworking hours, or declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters, deprive those individuals of the earnings that are necessary to maintain a just and decent standard of living.

(2) It is the intent of the legislature to protect by law the rights of all individuals to obtain gainful employment and to enjoy privileges free from employment discrimination because of age, race, creed, color, disability, marital status, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, arrest record, conviction record, military service, use or nonuse of lawful products off the employer’s premises during nonworking hours, or declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters, deprive those individuals of the earnings that are necessary to maintain a just and decent standard of living.

(3) In the interpretation and application of this subchapter, and otherwise, it is declared to be the public policy of the state to encourage and foster to the fullest extent practicable the employment of all properly qualified individuals regardless of age, race, creed, color, disability, marital status, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, arrest record, conviction record, military service, use or nonuse of lawful products off the employer’s premises during nonworking hours, or declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters. Nothing in this subsection requires an affirmative action program to correct an imbalance in the work force. This subchapter shall be liberally construed for the accomplishment of this purpose.

(4) The practice of requiring employees or prospective employees to submit to a test administered by means of a lie detector, as defined in s. 111.37 (1) (b), is unfair, the practice of requesting employees and prospective employees to submit to such a test without providing safeguards for the test subjects is unfair, and the use of improper tests and testing procedures causes injury to the employees and prospective employees.

(5) The legislature finds that the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of creed under s. 111.337 is a matter of statewide concern, requiring uniform enforcement at state, county and municipal levels.


The department is not limited to finding sex discrimination only when a 14th amendment equal protection violation can also be found. Wisconsin Telephone Co. v. DILHR, 68 Wis. 2d 345, 228 N.W.2d 649 (1975).

The Wisconsin fair employment act (WFEA), subch. II, ch. 111, is more direct and positive in prohibiting sex discrimination in employment than is the basic constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws; enforcement of the law is not limited by the "rational basis" or "reasonableness" tests employed in 14th amendment cases. Ray—Vacc v. DILHR, 70 Wis. 2d 919, 236 N.W.2d 209 (1975).

Section 118.20 is not the exclusive remedy of a wronged teacher; it is supplemental to the remedy under WFEA. The general provisions of s. 893.80 are superseded by the specific authority of the act. Kurtz v. City of Waukesha, 91 Wis. 2d 103, 280 N.W.2d 757 (1979).

An employee who was not handicapped, but perceived by the employer to be so, was entitled to protection under WFEA. Dairy Equipment Co. v. DILHR, 95 Wis. 2d 319, 290 N.W.2d 330 (1980).

WFEA provides the exclusive remedy for retaliatory discrimination. Bourque v. Wausau Hospital Center, 145 Wis. 2d 589, 427 N.W.2d 433 (Cl. App. 1988).

WFEA does not apply to national guard personnel decisions; federal law prevents the state from regulating personnel criteria of the national guard. Hazelton v. Personnel Commission, 178 Wis. 2d 770, 505 N.W.2d 793 (Cl. App. 1993).

The exclusive remedy provision in s. 102.03 (2) does not bar a complainant whose claim is covered by the workers compensation act from pursuing an employment discrimination claim under WFEA. Byers v. LIRC, 208 Wis. 2d 388, 561 N.W.2d 678 (1997), 95—2490.

This act protects all employees, including prospective and de facto employees. 67 Atyi. Gen. 169.


Wisconsin’s fair employment act: coverage, procedures, substance, remedies. 1975 WLR 696.


111.32 Definitions. When used in this subchapter:

(1) “Arrest record” includes, but is not limited to, information indicating that an individual has been questioned, apprehended, taken into custody or detention, held for investigation, arrested, charged with, indicted or tried for any felony, misdemeanor or other offense pursuant to any law enforcement or military authority.

(2) “Commission” means the labor and industry review commission.

(2r) “Constituent group” includes a civic association, community group, social club, fraternal society, mutual benefit alliance, or labor organization.

(3) “Conviction record” includes, but is not limited to, information indicating that an individual has been convicted of any felony, misdemeanor or other offense, has been adjudicated delinquent, has been less than honorably discharged, or has been placed on probation, fined, imprisoned, placed on extended supervision or paroled pursuant to any law enforcement or military authority.

(3m) “Cred” means a system of religious beliefs, including moral or ethical beliefs about right and wrong, that are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views.

(4) “Department” means the department of workforce development.

(5) “Employee” does not include any individual employed by his or her parents, spouse, or child or any individual excluded under s. 452.38.

(6) (a) “Employer” means the state and each agency of the state and, except as provided in par. (b), any other person engaging in any activity, enterprise or business employing at least one individual. In this subsection, “agency” means an office, department, independent agency, authority, institution, association, society or
other body in state government created or authorized to be created by the constitution or any law, including the legislature and the courts.

(b) “Employer” does not include a social club or fraternal society under ch. 188 with respect to a particular job for which the club or society seeks to employ or employs a member, if the particular job is advertised only within the membership.

(7) “Employment agency” means any person, including this state, who regularly undertakes to procure employees or opportunities for employment for any other person.

(7m) “Genetic testing” means a test of a person’s genes, gene products or chromosomes, for abnormalities or deficiencies, including carrier status, that are linked to physical or mental disorders or impairments, or that indicate a susceptibility to illness, disease, impairment or other disorders, whether physical or mental, or that demonstrate genetic or chromosomal damage due to environmental factors.

(8) “Individual with a disability” means an individual who:

(a) Has a physical or mental impairment which makes achievement unusually difficult or limits the capacity to work;

(b) Has a record of such an impairment;

(c) Is perceived as having such an impairment.

(9) “Labor organization” means:

(a) Any organization, agency or employee representation committee, group, association or plan in which employees participate and which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours or other terms or conditions of employment; or

(b) Any conference, general committee, joint or system board or joint council which is subordinate to a national or international committee, group, association or plan under par. (a).

(10) “License” means the whole or any part of any permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter or similar form of permission required by a state or local unit of government for the undertaking, practice or continuation of any occupation or profession.

(11) “Licensing agency” means any board, commission, committee, department, examining board, affiliated credentialing board or officer, except a judicial officer, in the state or any city, village, town, county or local government authorized to grant, deny, renew, revoke, suspend, annul, withdraw or amend any license.

(12) “Marital status” means the status of being married, single, divorced, separated or widowed.

(12g) “Military service” means service in the U.S. armed forces, the state defense force, the national guard of any state, or any other reserve component of the U.S. armed forces.

(12i) “Political matters” means political party affiliation, a political campaign, an attempt to influence legislation, or the decision to join or not to join, or to support or not to support, any lawful political group, constituent group, or political or constituent group activity.

(12m) “Religious association” means an organization, whether or not organized under ch. 187, which operates under a creed.

(12p) “Religious matters” means religious affiliation or the decision to join or not to join, or to support or not to support, any bona fide religious association.

(13) “Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. “Sexual harassment” includes conduct directed by a person at another person of the same or opposite gender. “Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature” includes but is not limited to the deliberate, repeated making of unsolicited gestures or comments of a sexual nature; the deliberate, repeated display of offensive sexually graphic materials which is not necessary for business purposes; or deliberate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether or not repeated, that is sufficiently severe to interfere substantially with an employee’s work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

(13m) “Sexual orientation” means having a preference for heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality, having a history of such a preference or being identified with such a preference.

(13n) “Unfair genetic testing” means any test or testing procedure that violates s. 111.372.

(14) “Unfair honesty testing” means any test or testing procedure that violates s. 111.37.


The summary discharge, after 2 weeks of satisfactory employment, of a person with a history of asthma violated the fair employment act in that it constituted a discriminatory practice against the claimant based on handicap. Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Co. v. DLHR, 62 Wis. 2d 392, 215 N.W.2d 443 (1974).

Singling out disabilities associated with pregnancy for less favorable treatment in a benefit plan designed to relieve the economic burden of physical incapacity constituted discrimination on the basis of sex, as pregnancy is undisputedly sex–related. Robins v. DLHR, 70 Wis. 2d 919, 236 N.W.2d 209 (1975).

“Creed,” as used in sub. (5) (a) [now sub. (3m)], means a system of religious beliefs, not political beliefs. Augustine v. Anti–Delloration League of B’nai B’rith, 757 F. 2d 207, 249 N.W.2d 547 (1977).

Wisconsin law forbidding pregnancy benefits discrimination was not preempted when an employer negotiated, under the National Labor Relations Act, a welfare benefit plan under the Employers Retirement Income Security Act which operates under a certain and a 649 Benefit Corp. v. DLHR, 87 Wis. 2d 56, 273 N.W.2d 786 (Ct. App. 1978).

The Fair Employment Act (WFEA), subch. II of ch. 111, was not preempted by federal legislation. Chicago & North Western Railroad Co. v. LIRC, 91 Wis. 2d 462, 283 N.W.2d 603 (Ct. App. 1979).

The inclusion of pregnancy–related benefits within a disability benefit plan does not violate the federal Equal Pay Act. Kimberly–Clark Corp. v. LIRC, 95 Wis. 2d 558, 291 N.W.2d 584 (Ct. App. 1980).

An individual may be found to be handicapped under WFEA although no actual impairment is found. It is sufficient to find that the employer perceived that the individual is handicapped; discrimination may be found when the perceived handicap is the sole basis of a hiring decision. La Crosse Police Commission v. LIRC, 139 Wis. 2d 740, 407 N.W.2d 510 (1987).

Common law torts recognized before the adoption of WFEA if properly pled, are not barred by the act although the complained of act may fit a definition of discrimination behavior under WFEA. A battery claim was not precluded by WFEA, although the court held that the common law definition of “sexual harassment” is broad enough to include battery, when the tort was pled as an unlawful touching, not a discriminatory act. Becker v. Automatic Garage Door Co. 156 Wis. 2d 409, 456 N.W.2d 888 (Ct. App. 1990).

The standard to determine whether a person is an “employee” under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act is applicable to WFEA cases. A determination of “employee” status in a Title VII action precludes redetermination in a WFEA action. Moore v. LIRC, 175 Wis. 2d 561, 499 N.W.2d 288 (Ct. App. 1993).

A person claiming a disability under sub. 9 must demonstrate an actual or perceived impairment that makes, or is perceived as making, achievement unusually difficult or limits the capacity to work. An impairment is a real or perceived lessening of the function or capacity to manage a normal bodily function or bodily condition, or the absence of such bodily function or condition. “Achievement” is not as to a particular job, but as to a substantial limitation on life’s normal functions or a major life activity. “Limits the capacity to work” refers to the specific job at issue. Hutchinson Technology, Inc. v. LIRC, 2004 WI 90, 273 Wis. 2d 394, 682 N.W.2d 343, 02–3238.

LIRC properly interpreted sub. (8) to require a claimant to demonstrate a permanent impairment. To demonstrate that a disability exists, the claimant must provide competent evidence of a medical diagnosis regarding the alleged impairment. An employer’s decision to grant requests for light–duty work, rather than terminating employment for refusing to perform regular job duties, is not proof of a perceived disadvantage under sub. (8) (c). Erickson v. Labor and Industry Review Commission, 2005 WI App 208, 287 Wis. 2d 204, 704 N.W.2d 398, 04–3237.


A licensing agency may request information from an applicant regarding conviction records under sub. (5) (h) [now sub. (3)]. Atty. Gen. 327.


111.320 Franchisors excluded. For purposes of this subchapter, a franchisor, as defined in 16 CFR 436.1 (k), is not considered to be an employer of a franchisee, as defined in 16 CFR 436.1
(i), or of an employee of a franchisee, unless any of the following applies:

(1) The franchisor has agreed in writing to assume that role.

(2) The franchisor has been found by the department to have exercised a type or degree of control over the franchisee or the franchisee’s employees that is not customarily exercised by a franchisor for the purpose of protecting the franchisor’s trademarks and brand.

History: 2015 a. 203.

111.321 Prohibited bases of discrimination. Subject to ss. 111.33 to 111.365, no employer, labor organization, employment agency, licensing agency, or other person may engage in any act of employment discrimination as specified in s. 111.321 against any individual on the basis of age, race, creed, color, disability, marital status, sex, national origin, ancestry, arrest record, conviction record, military service, use or nonuse of lawful products off the employer’s premises during nonworking hours, or declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters.


The denial of a homosexual employee’s request for family coverage for herself and her companion did not violate equal protection or the s. 111.321 prohibition of discrimination because of marital status, sexual orientation, or gender. Phallus v. Wisconsin Personnel Commission, 167 Wis. 2d 205, 482 N.W.2d 121 (Ct. App. 1992).

A bargained agreement requiring married employees with spouses covered by comparable employer—provided health insurance to elect coverage under one policy or the other violated this section. Braun v. LIRC, 174 Wis. 286, 496 N.W.2d 597 (1993).

The exclusive remedy provision in s. 102.03 (2) does not bar a complainant whose claim is covered by the workers compensation act from pursuing an employment discrimination claim for the fair employment act, subch. II, ch. 111. Byers v. LIRC, 208 Wis. 2d 388, 561 N.W.2d 678 (1997), 95–2490.

A prima facie case of discrimination triggers a burden of production against an employer, but the employer remains silent in the face of the prima facie case, the complainant continues to bear the burden of proof on the ultimate issue of discrimination. Currie v. DILHR, 210 Wis. 2d 380, 565 N.W.2d 253 (Ct. App. 1997), 96–1720.

Unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature and unwelcome verbal conduct or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment, even when they do not create a hostile work environment. Jim Walter Color Separations v. LIRC, 287 Wis. 2d 775, 651 N.W.2d 292 (1999), 98–2360.

It was reasonable for LIRC to interpret the prohibition against marital status discrimination as protecting the status of being married in general rather than the status of being married to a particular person. Bammtt v. LIRC, 2000 WI App 28, 232 Wis. 2d 365, 606 N.W.2d 620 (2000).

The department of workforce development has statutory authority to receive and investigate a firefighter’s employment discrimination claim that is tied directly to the charges sustained and disciplinary sanctions imposed by a police and fire commission under ss. 111.33 and 111.365. City of Madison v. DWD, 2002 WI App 199, 257 Wis. 2d 348, 651 N.W.2d 292, 01–1910.

A discrimination provision has exclusive statutory authority under s. 62.13 (5) to review disciplinary actions against firefighters. Any claim that a disciplinary termination is discriminatory under ch. 111 must be raised before the PFC. DWD may not intrude on a ch. 111 compliant PFC to obtain evidence of a decision to terminate a firefighter. City of Madison v. DWD, 2003 WI 76, 262 Wis. 2d 652, 664 N.W.2d 584, 01–1910.

A person other than an employer, labor organization, or licensing agency can violate subch. II of ch. 111, if it engages in discriminatory conduct that has a sufficient nexus with the denial or restriction of some individual’s employment opportunity. A trucking company that leased its trucks and drivers from another company that hired the drivers and had the power to reject drivers approved by the leasing company, was an “other person” subject to this section. Szleezinski v. Labor & Industry Review Commission, 2005 WI App 229, 287 Wis. 2d 775, 706 N.W.2d 345, 04–1033.

Affirmed on other grounds. 2007 WI 106, 304 Wis. 2d 258, 736 N.W.2d 111, 04–3033.

Licensing boards do not have authority to enact general regulations that would allow them to suspend, deny, or revoke the license of a person who has a communicable disease. Licensing boards do have authority on a case-by-case basis to suspend, deny, or revoke the license of a person who presents a direct threat to the health or safety of other persons or who is unable to perform duties of the licensed activity. 77 Att'y Gen. 223.


111.322 Discriminatory actions prohibited. Subject to ss. 111.33 to 111.365, it is an act of employment discrimination to do any of the following:

(1) To refuse to hire, employ, admit or license any individual, to bar or terminate from employment or labor organization membership any individual, or to discriminate against any individual in promotion, compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment or labor organization membership because of any basis enumerated in s. 111.321.

(2) To print or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any statement, advertisement or publication, or to use any form of application for employment or to make any inquiry in connection with a prospective employment, which implies or expresses any limitation, specification or discrimination with respect to an individual or any intent to make such limitation, specification or discrimination because of any basis enumerated in s. 111.321.

(bm) The individual files a complaint or attempts to enforce a right under s. 49.197 (6) (d) or 49.845 (4) (d) or testifies or assists in any action or proceeding under s. 49.197 (6) (d) or 49.845 (4) (d).

(bm) The individual’s employer believes that the individual engaged or may engage in any activity described in pars. (a) to (bm).

(3) To discharge or otherwise discriminate against any individual because he or she has opposed any discriminatory practice upon his or her own behalf or because he or she has made a complaint, testified or assisted in any proceeding under this subchapter.


Actions under subs. (1) and (2) do not involve wholly different elements of proof.

Sub. (1) involves actual discrimination; the violation of sub. (2) is not in adopting a discriminatory policy, but rather the publication of it. The remaining elements are the same for both subsections. Sub. (2) is not limited to advertising for employees, it also applies to the printing of policies that affect existing employees. Racine Unified School District v. LIRC, 164 Wis. 2d 567, 476 N.W.2d 707 (Ct. App. 1991).

An unlawful practice occurs when an impermissible motivating factor enters into an employment decision, but if the employer can demonstrate that it would have taken the same action in the absence of the impermissible factor, the complainant may not be awarded monetary damages or remuneration. Hoel v. LIRC, 186 Wis. 2d 657, 523 N.W.2d 234 (Ct. App. 1994).

The exclusive remedy provision in s. 102.03 (2) does not bar a complainant whose claim is covered by the workers compensation act from pursuing an employment discrimination claim under the fair employment act, subch. II of ch. 111. Byers v. LIRC, 208 Wis. 2d 388, 561 N.W.2d 678 (1997), 95–2490.

A prima facie case of discrimination triggers a burden of production against an emplee, but unless the employer remains silent in the face of the prima facie case, the complainant continues to bear the burden of proof on the ultimate issue of discrimination. Currie v. DILHR, 210 Wis. 2d 380, 565 N.W.2d 253 (Ct. App. 1997), 96–1720.

A prima facie case for a violation of this section requires that the complainant: 1) was a member of a protected class; 2) was discharged; 3) was qualified for the position; 4) was either replaced by someone not in the protected class or that others not in the protected class were treated more favorably. Knight v. LIRC, 220 Wis. 2d 323, 587 N.W.2d 448 (Ct. App. 1998), 97–1606.
The free exercise clause of the 1st amendment and the freedom of conscience clauses in Article I, Section 18, of the Wisconsin constitution preclude employment discrimination claims under ss. 111.31 to 111.395 for employees whose positions are appropriately linked to the religious mission of a religious organization. Coulee Catholic Schools v. LIRC, 2009 WI 88, 320 Wis. 2d 275, 768 N.W.2d 868, 07-0496.

LIRC’s interpretation of sub. (1) was reasonable. LIRC has interpreted the “because of” language in sub. (1) as delineating 2 types of discrimination by employers: 1) that which occurs “in the form of an employer acting on the basis of actual discrimination against an employee because that employee was an individual with a disability,” and 2) that which occurs “from the employer acting on the basis of dissatisfaction with that employee’s behavior or performance which is caused by the employee’s disability.” Under the second type of discrimination, causation is inferred based on the premise that if an employee is discharged because of unsatisfactory behavior that was a direct result of a disability, the discharge is, in legal effect, because of that disability. Wisconsin Bell, Inc. v. LIRC, 2017 WI App 24, 375 Wis. 2d 293, 895 N.W.2d 57, 16−0355.


111.325 Unlawful to discriminate. It is unlawful for any employer, labor organization, licensing agency or person to discriminate against any employee or any applicant for employment or licensing.

111.33 Age; exceptions and special cases. (1) The prohibition against employment discrimination on the basis of age applies only to discrimination against an individual who is age 40 or over.

(2) Notwithstanding sub. (1) and s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of age to do any of the following:

(a) To terminate the employment of any employee physically or otherwise unable to perform his or her duties.

(b) To implement the provisions of any retirement plan or system of any employer if the retirement plan or system is not a subterfuge to evade the purposes of this subchapter. No plan or system may excuse the failure to hire, or require or permit the involuntary retirement of, any individual under sub. (1) because of that individual’s age.

(d) To apply varying insurance coverage according to an employee’s age.

(e) To exercise an age distinction with respect to hiring an individual to a position in which the knowledge and experience to be gained is required for future advancement to a managerial or executive position.

(f) To exercise an age distinction with respect to employment in which the employee is exposed to physical danger or hazard, including without limitation because of enumeration, certain employment in law enforcement or fire fighting.

(g) To exercise an age distinction under s. 343.12 (2) (a) and (3).


Sub. (2) (f) exempts the hiring of fire fighters from being the subject of age discrimination suits. A fire department need not show that it operates and consistently discriminates on the basis of age to be exempt under sub. (2) (f). Johnson v. LIRC, 200 Wis. 2d 715, 547 N.W.2d 783 (Ct. App. 1996), 95−2346.

An employer is physically unable to perform a job under sub. (2) if that employee is prevented from doing the job with a physical accommodation. Harrison v. LIRC, 211 Wis. 2d 681, 565 N.W.2d 572 (Ct. App. 1997), 96−1795.

A city charged under the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act had the burden of establishing that a mandatory retirement age of 55 for law enforcement personnel was a bona fide occupational qualification. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. City of Janesville, 630 F.2d 1254 (1980).


111.335 Arrest or conviction record; exceptions and special cases. (1) Employment discrimination because of arrest record includes, but is not limited to, requesting an applicant, employee, member, licensee or any other individual, on an application form or otherwise, to supply information regarding any arrest record of the individual except a record of a pending charge, except that it is not employment discrimination to request such information when employment depends on the bondability of the individual under a standard fidelity bond or when an equivalent bond is required by state or federal law, administrative regulation or established business practice of the employer and the individual may not be bondable due to an arrest record.

(b) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of arrest record to refuse to employ or license, or to suspend from employment or licensing, any individual who is subject to a pending criminal charge if the circumstances of the charge substantially relate to the circumstances of the particular job or licensed activity.

(c) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ or license, or to suspend or terminate from employment or licensing, any individual who:

1. Has been convicted of any felony, misdemeanor or other offense the circumstances of which substantially relate to the circumstances of the particular job or licensed activity; or

2. Is not bondable under a standard fidelity bond or an equivalent bond where such bondability is required by state or federal law, administrative regulation or established business practice of the employer.

History: Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to deny or refuse to renew a license or permit under s. 440.26 to a person who has been convicted of a felony and has not been pardoned for that felony.

2. Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ as an installer of burglar alarms a person who has been convicted of a felony and has not been pardoned for that felony.

3. Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ in a business licensed under s. 440.26 or an employee specified in s. 440.26 (5) (b) if the person has been convicted of a felony and has not been pardoned for that felony.

(c) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ as an installer of burglar alarms a person who has been convicted of a felony and has not been pardoned for that felony.

(c) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ as an installer of burglar alarms a person who has been convicted of a felony and has not been pardoned for that felony.

History: Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ a person who has been convicted of a felony and has not been pardoned for that felony.

The prohibition against employment discrimination on the basis of age applies only to discrimination against an individual who is age 40 or over.

(2) Notwithstanding sub. (1) and s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of age to do any of the following:

(a) To terminate the employment of any employee physically or otherwise unable to perform his or her duties.

(b) To implement the provisions of any retirement plan or system of any employer if the retirement plan or system is not a subterfuge to evade the purposes of this subchapter. No plan or system may excuse the failure to hire, or require or permit the involuntary retirement of, any individual under sub. (1) because of that individual’s age.

(d) To apply varying insurance coverage according to an employee’s age.

(e) To exercise an age distinction with respect to hiring an individual to a position in which the knowledge and experience to be gained is required for future advancement to a managerial or executive position.

(f) To exercise an age distinction with respect to employment in which the employee is exposed to physical danger or hazard, including without limitation because of enumeration, certain employment in law enforcement or fire fighting.

(g) To exercise an age distinction under s. 343.12 (2) (a) and (3).
111.34 Disability; exceptions and special cases.

(1) Employment discrimination because of disability includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Contributing a lesser amount to the fringe benefits, including life or disability insurance coverage, of any employee because of the employee’s disability; or

(b) Refusing to reasonably accommodate an employee’s or prospective employee’s disability unless the employer can demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hardship on the employer’s program, enterprise or business.

(2) (a) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of disability to refuse to hire, employ, admit or license any individual, to bar or terminate from employment, membership or licensure any individual, or to discriminate against any individual in promotion, compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment if the disability is reasonably related to the individual’s ability to adequately undertake the job-related responsibilities of that individual’s employment, membership or licensure.

(b) In evaluating whether an individual with a disability can adequately undertake the job-related responsibilities of a particular job, membership or licensed activity, the present and future safety of the individual, the individual’s coworkers and, if applicable, of the general public may be considered. However, this evaluation shall be made on an individual case-by-case basis and may not be made by a general rule which prohibits the employment or licensure of individuals with disabilities in general or a particular class of individuals with disabilities.

(c) If the employment, membership or licensure involves a special duty of care for the safety of the general public, including but not limited to employment with a common carrier, this special duty of care may be considered in evaluating whether the employer or applicant can adequately undertake the job-related responsibilities of a particular job, membership or licensed activity. However, this evaluation shall be made on an individual case-by-case basis and may not be made by a general rule which prohibits the employment or licensure of individuals with disabilities in general or a particular class of individuals with disabilities.

History: 1981 c. 332; 1997 a. 112.

(3) No county, city, village or town may adopt any provision concerning employment discrimination because of creed that prohibits activity allowed under this section.

History: 1981 c. 334; 1983 a. 189 s. 329 (25); 1987 a. 149.

Sub. (2) does not allow religious organizations to engage in prohibited forms of discrimination. Sacred Heart School Board v. LIRC, 157 Wis. 2d 638, 460 N.W.2d 430 (Ct. App. 1990).


11.337 Creed: exceptions and special cases.

(1) Employment discrimination because of creed includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Contributing a lesser amount to the fringe benefits, including life or disability insurance coverage, of any employee because of the employee’s creed; or

(b) Refusing to reasonably accommodate an employee’s or prospective employee’s creed unless the employer can demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hardship on the employer’s program, enterprise or business.

(2) (a) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of creed to refuse to hire, employ, admit or license any individual, to bar or terminate from employment, membership or licensure any individual, or to discriminate against any individual in promotion, compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment if the creed is reasonably related to the individual’s ability to adequately undertake the job-related responsibilities of that individual’s employment, membership or licensure.

(b) In evaluating whether an individual with a creed can adequately undertake the job-related responsibilities of a particular job, membership or licensed activity, the present and future safety of the individual, the individual’s coworkers and, if applicable, of the general public may be considered. However, this evaluation shall be made on an individual case-by-case basis and may not be made by a general rule which prohibits the employment or licensure of individuals with creeds in general or a particular class of individuals with creeds.

(c) If the employment, membership or licensure involves a special duty of care for the safety of the general public, including but not limited to employment with a common carrier, this special duty of care may be considered in evaluating whether the employer or applicant can adequately undertake the job-related responsibilities of a particular job, membership or licensed activity.

However, this evaluation shall be made on an individual case-by-case basis and may not be made by a general rule which prohibits the employment or licensure of individuals with creeds in general or a particular class of individuals with creeds.


The utilization of federal regulations as a hiring standard, although not applicable to the employing taxi company, demonstrated a rational relationship to the safety obligations imposed on the employer, and its use was not the result of an arbitrary belief lacking an objective reason or rationale. Boynton Cab Co. v. DILHR, 96 Wis. 2d 396, 291 N.W.2d 850 (1980).

An employee handicapped by alcoholism was properly discharged under s. 111.32 (5) (f), 1973 Stats., (a predecessor to this section) for inability to efficiently perform job duties. Squires v. LIRC, 97 Wis. 2d 648, 294 N.W.2d 48 (Ct. App. 1980).

Small stature is not a handicap. American Motors Corp. v. LIRC, 114 Wis. 2d 288, 338 N.W.2d 518 (Ct. App. 1983); aff’d, 119 Wis. 2d 706, 350 N.W.2d 120 (1984).

Physical standards for school bus operators established under s. 345.12 (2) (g) are not exempt from the requirements of sub. (2) (b). Botham v. Department of Transportation, 134 Wis. 2d 378, 396 N.W.2d 785 (Ct. App. 1986).

The duty to reasonably accommodate under sub. (1) (b) is to be broadly interpreted and may involve the transfer of an individual from one job to another. What is reasonable will depend on the facts of the case. McMullen v. LIRC, 148 Wis. 2d 270, 434 N.W.2d 270 (Ct. App. 1986).

To avail itself of the defense under sub. (2) (a) that an ostensibly safety-based employment restriction is job-related, an employer bears the burden of proving to a reasonable probability that the restriction is necessary to prevent harm to the employee or others. Racine Unified School District v. LIRC, 164 Wis. 2d 567, 476 N.W.2d 707 (Ct. App. 1991).
Temporary forbearance of work rules while determining whether an employer’s medical problem is treatable may be a reasonable accommodation under sub. (1)(b). The purpose of reasonable accommodation is to enable employees to adequately undertake job-related responsibilities. Target Stores v. LIRC, 217 Wis. 2d 446, 600 N.W.2d 545 (Ct. App. 1999), 97−1253. See also Stoughton Trailers, Inc. v. LIRC, 2007 WI 105, 303 Wis. 2d 514, 735 N.W.2d 477, 04−1550.

Wisconsin’s mental illness caused him to react angrily and commit the act of insubordination that led to the termination of his employment was sufficiently complex and technical that expert testimony was required. Wal−Mart Stores, Inc. v. LIRC, 2004 WLR 1535, 240 Wis. 2d 209, 622 N.W.2d 633, 99−2632.

A complaint must show that he or she is handicapped and that the employer took one of the prohibited actions based on that handicap. The employer then has a burden of proof under sub. (1)(b) to show that it was not necessary to make a reasonable accommodation if the accommodation will impose a hardship on the employer, but if the employer is not able to demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hard-ship there is a violation. Crystal Lake Cheese Factory v. LIRC, 2003 WI 106, 264 Wis. 2d 200, 664 N.W.2d 651, 02−0815.

A reasonable accommodation is not limited to that which would allow the employee to perform adequately all of his or her job duties. A change in job duties may be a reasonable accommodation in a given circumstance. Crystal Lake Cheese Factory v. LIRC, 2003 WI 106, 264 Wis. 2d 200, 664 N.W.2d 651, 02−0815.

An interstate commercial driver need not seek a determination of medical qualification from the federal department of transportation (DOT) prior to filing a disability discrimination claim under this chapter. When medical and physical qualifications to be an interstate driver are material to a claim, and a dispute arises concerning those qualifications that cannot be resolved by facial application of DOT regulations, the dispute should be resolved by the DOT under its dispute resolution procedure. The employer must seek a determination of medical and physical qualification from the DOT if the employer intends to offer a defense that the driver was not qualified for medical reasons. Szleszinski v. Labor & Industry Review Commission, 2004 WLR 1535.

A complaint must show that he or she is handicapped and that the employer took one of the prohibited actions based on that handicap. The employer then has a burden of proof under sub. (1)(b) to show that it was not necessary to make a reasonable accommodation if the accommodation will impose a hardship on the employer, but if the employer is not able to demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hard-ship there is a violation. Crystal Lake Cheese Factory v. LIRC, 2003 WI 106, 264 Wis. 2d 200, 664 N.W.2d 651, 02−0815.

A reasonable accommodation is not limited to that which would allow the employee to perform adequately all of his or her job duties. A change in job duties may be a reasonable accommodation in a given circumstance. Crystal Lake Cheese Factory v. LIRC, 2003 WI 106, 264 Wis. 2d 200, 664 N.W.2d 651, 02−0815.

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A complaint must show that he or she is handicapped and that the employer took one of the prohibited actions based on that handicap. The employer then has a burden of proof under sub. (1)(b) to show that it was not necessary to make a reasonable accommodation if the accommodation will impose a hardship on the employer, but if the employer is not able to demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hard-ship there is a violation. Crystal Lake Cheese Factory v. LIRC, 2003 WI 106, 264 Wis. 2d 200, 664 N.W.2d 651, 02−0815.

A reasonable accommodation is not limited to that which would allow the employee to perform adequately all of his or her job duties. A change in job duties may be a reasonable accommodation in a given circumstance. Crystal Lake Cheese Factory v. LIRC, 2003 WI 106, 264 Wis. 2d 200, 664 N.W.2d 651, 02−0815.
111.355 Military service; exceptions and special cases. (1) Employment discrimination because of military service includes an employer, labor organization, licensing agency, employment agency, or other person refusing to hire, employ, admit, or license an individual, barring or terminating an individual from employment, membership, or licensure, or discriminating against an individual in promotion, in compensation, or in the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because the individual is or applies to be a member of the U.S. armed forces, the state defense force, the national guard of any state, or any reserve component of the U.S. armed forces or because the individual performs, has performed, applies to perform, or has an obligation to perform military service.

(2) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of military service for an employer, licensing agency, employment agency, or other person to refuse to hire, employ, or license an individual or to bar or terminate an individual from employment or licensure because the individual has been discharged from military service under a bad conduct, dishonorable, or other than honorable discharge, or under an entry-level separation, and the circumstances of the discharge or separation substantially relate to the circumstances of the particular job or licensed activity.

History: 2007 c. 159.

111.36 Sex, sexual orientation; exceptions and special cases. (1) Employment discrimination because of sex includes, but is not limited to, any of the following actions by any employer, labor organization, employment agency, licensing agency or other person:

(a) Discriminating against any individual in promotion, compensation paid for equal or substantially similar work, or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment or licensing on the basis of sex where sex is not a bona fide occupational qualification.

(b) Engaging in sexual harassment; or explicitly or implicitly making or permitting acquiescence in or submission to sexual harassment a term or condition of employment; or making or permitting acquiescence in, submission to or rejection of sexual harassment the basis or any part of the basis for any employment decision affecting an employee, other than an employment decision that is disciplinary action against an employee for engaging in sexual harassment in violation of this paragraph; or permitting sexual harassment to have the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee’s work performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Under this paragraph, substantial interference with an employee’s work performance or creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment is established when the conduct is such that a reasonable person under the same circumstances as the employee would consider the conduct sufficiently severe or pervasive to interfere substantially with the person’s work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

(2) Engaging in harassment that consists of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct directed at another individual because of that individual’s gender, other than the conduct described in par. (b), and that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment or has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with that individual’s work performance. Under this paragraph, substantial interference with an employee’s work performance or creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment is established when the conduct is such that a reasonable person under the same circumstances as the employee would consider the conduct sufficiently severe or pervasive to interfere substantially with the person’s work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

(3) Discriminating against any woman on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, maternity leave or related medical conditions by engaging in any of the actions prohibited under s. 111.322, including, but not limited to, actions concerning fringe benefit programs covering illnesses and disability.

(d) 1. For any employer, labor organization, licensing agency or employment agency or other person to refuse to hire, employ, admit or license, or to bar or terminate from employment, membership or licensure any individual, or to discriminate against an individual in promotion, compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment because of the individual’s sexual orientation; or

2. For any employer, labor organization, licensing agency or employment agency or other person to discharge or otherwise discriminate against any person because he or she has opposed any discriminatory practices under this paragraph or because he or she has made a complaint, testified or assisted in any proceeding under this paragraph.

(2) For the purposes of this subchapter, sex is a bona fide occupational qualification if all of the members of one sex are physically incapable of performing the essential duties required by a job, or if the essence of the employer’s business operation would be undermined if employees were not hired exclusively from one sex.

(3) For purposes of sexual harassment claims under sub. (1) (b), an employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency is presumed liable for an act of sexual harassment by that employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency or by any of its employees or members, if the act occurs while the complaining employee is at his or her place of employment or is performing duties relating to his or her employment, if the complaining employee informs the employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency of the act, and if the employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency fails to take appropriate action within a reasonable time.

History: 1981 c. 334 ss. 7m, 22; 1981 c. 391, 1993 s. 427.

Federal law may be looked to in interpreting sub. (1) (b) and (br). Under federal law “hostile environment” sexual harassment is actionable if it is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of employment and create an abusive working environment. Kannenberg v. LRBC, 213 Wis. 2d 373, 571 N.W.2d 165 (Cl. App. 1997), 97-0224. The exclusion of contraceptives from an employer or college or university sponsored benefits program that otherwise provides prescription drug coverage violates Wisconsin law prohibiting sexual discrimination in employment and in higher education, ss. 111.31 to 111.395, 36.12, and 38.23. OAG 1-04.

Emotional distress injury due to one-on-the-job sexual harassment was exclusively compensable under s.102.03. Zabkowicz v. West Bend Co., Division of Dart Industries, Inc. 789 F. 2d 540 (1986).


111.365 Communication of opinions; exceptions and special cases. (1) Employment discrimination because of declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters includes all of the following:

(a) Discharging or otherwise discriminating against an employee because the employee declines to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or to participate in any communication with the employer or with an agent, representative, or designee of the employer, the primary purpose purpose of which is to communicate the opinion of the employer about religious matters or political matters.

(b) Threatening to discharge or otherwise discriminate against an employee as a means of requiring the employee to attend a meeting or participate in a communication described in par. (a).

(2) Notwithstanding s. 111.322, it is not employment discrimination because of declining to attend a meeting or to participate in any communication about religious matters or political matters for an employer to refuse to hire or employ an individual, to suspend or terminate the employment of an individual, or to discriminate against an individual in promotion, in compensation, or in terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because the individual...
111.365 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

individuals decline to attend a meeting or to participate in a communic-

dation described in sub. (1) (a) if any of the following applies:

(a) The employer is a religious association not organized for private

profit or an organization or corporation that is primarily

owned or controlled by such a religious association and the pri-

mary purpose of the meeting or communication is to communicate

the employer’s religious beliefs, tenets, or practices.

(b) The employer is a political organization, including a politi-
cal party or any other organization that engages, in substantial part,
in political activities, and the primary purpose of the meeting or

communication is to communicate the employer’s political ten-
ets or purposes.

(c) The primary purpose of the meeting or communication is to

communicate information about religious matters or political

matters that the employer is required by law to communicate and

no information is communicated about those matters beyond what

is legally required.

(3) This section and s. 111.322 do not limit any of the follow-
ing:

(a) The application of s. 11.1207.

(b) The right of an employer’s executive, managerial, or

administrative personnel to discuss issues relating to the operation of

the employer’s program, business, or enterprise, including

issues arising under this section.

(c) The right of an employer to offer meetings or other commu-
nications about religious matters or political matters for which

attendance or participation is strictly voluntary.

History: 2009 a. 290; 2015 a. 117.

111.37 Use of honesty testing devices in employment

situations. (1) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) “Employer”, notwithstanding s. 111.32 (6), means any per-

son acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in

relation to an employee or prospective employee. “Employer”,

notwithstanding s. 111.32 (6), does not include the federal govern-
ment.

(b) “Lie detector” means a polygraph, deceptograph, voice

stress analyzer, psychological stress evaluator or other similar

device, whether mechanical or electrical, that is used, or the

results of which are used, to render a diagnostic opinion about the

honesty or dishonesty of an individual.

(c) “Polygraph” means an instrument that fulfills all of the fol-

lowing requirements:

1. Records continuously, visually, permanently and simulta-

neously any changes in cardiovascular, respiratory and electro-
dermal patterns as minimum instrumentation standards.

2. Is used, or the results of which are used, to render a diagnostic

opinion about the honesty or dishonesty of an individual.

(2) PROHIBITIONS ON LIE DETECTOR USE. Except as provided in

subs. (5) and (6), no employer may do any of the following:

(a) Directly or indirectly require, request, suggest or cause an

employee or prospective employee to take or submit to a lie detec-
tor test.

(b) Use, accept, refer to or inquire about the results of a lie de-

dector test of an employee or prospective employee.

(c) Discharge, discipline, discriminate against or deny

employment or promotion to, or threaten to take any such action

against, any of the following:

1. An employee or prospective employee who refuses,
declines or fails to take or submit to a lie detector test.

2. An employee or prospective employee on the basis of the

results of a lie detector test.

(d) Discharge, discipline, discriminate against or deny

employment or promotion to, or threaten to take any such action

against, an employee or prospective employee for any of the fol-

lowing reasons:

1. The employee or prospective employee has filed a com-

plaint or instituted or caused to be instituted a proceeding under

this section.

2. The employee or prospective employee has testified or is

about to testify in a proceeding under this section.

3. The employee or prospective employee, on behalf of that

employee, prospective employee or another person, has exercised

any right under this section.

(3) NOTICE OF PROTECTION. The department shall prepare and

distribute a notice setting forth excerpts from, or summaries of,

the pertinent provisions of this section. Each employer that adminis-
ters lie detector tests, or that has lie detector tests administered, to

its employees shall post and maintain that notice in conspicuous

places on its premises where notices to employees and applicants

for employment are customarily posted.

(4) DEPARTMENT’S DUTIES AND POWERS. (a) The department

shall do all of the following:

1. Promulgate rules that are necessary under this section.

2. Cooperate with regional, local and other agencies and

cooperate with, and furnish technical assistance to, employment

agencies other than this state, employers and labor organizations

to aid in enforcing this section.

3. Make investigations and inspections and require the keep-
ing of records necessary for the administration of this section.

(b) For the purpose of any hearing or investigation under this

section, the department may issue subpoenas.

(5) EXEMPTIONS. (a) Except as provided in sub. (6), this sec-
tion does not prohibit an employer from requesting an employee

to submit to a polygraph test if all of the following conditions apply:

1. The test is administered in connection with an ongoing

investigation involving economic loss or injury to the employer’s

business, including theft, embezzlement, misappropriation and

unlawful industrial espionage or sabotage.

2. The employee had access to the property that is the subject

of the investigation under subd. 1.

3. The employer has a reasonable suspicion that the employee

was involved in the incident or activity under investigation.

4. The employer executes a statement, provided to the exam-

inee before the test, that sets forth with particularity the specific

incident or activity being investigated and the basis for testing par-

ticular employees; that is signed by a person, other than a poly-

graph examiner, authorized legally to bind the employer; that is

retained by the employer for at least 3 years; and that identifies

the specific economic loss or injury to the business of the employer,

indicates that the employee had access to the property that is the

subject of the investigation and describes the basis of the employ-

er’s reasonable suspicion that the employee was involved in the

incident or activity under investigation.

(b) Except as provided in sub. (6), this section does not prohibit

an employer from administering polygraph tests, or from having

polygraph tests administered, on a prospective employee who, if

hired, would perform the employer’s primary business purpose if

the employer’s primary business purpose is providing security

personnel, armored car personnel or personnel engaged in the

design, installation and maintenance of security alarm systems

and if the employer protects any of the following:

1. Facilities, materials or operations that have a significant

impact on the public health, safety or welfare of this state or the

national security of the United States, including facilities engaged

in the production, transmission or distribution of electric or

nuclear power; public water supply facilities; shipments or stor-
age of radioactive or other toxic waste materials; and public trans-

portation.

2. Currency, negotiable securities, precious commodities or

instruments and proprietary information.
(bm) Except as provided in sub. (6), this section does not prohibit a Wisconsin law enforcement agency from administering a polygraph test, or from having a polygraph test administered, on a prospective employee.

(c) Except as provided in sub. (6), this section does not prohibit an employer that is authorized to manufacture, distribute or dispense a controlled substance included in schedule I, II, III, IV or V under ch. 961 from administering a polygraph test, or from having a polygraph test administered, if the test is administered to a prospective employee who would have direct access to the manufacture, storage, distribution or sale of the controlled substance or to a current employee if the test is administered in connection with an ongoing investigation of criminal or other misconduct that involves, or potentially involves, loss or injury to the manufacture, distribution or dispensing of the controlled substance by that employer and the employee had access to the person or property that is the subject of the investigation.

(6) RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF EXEMPTIONS. (a) The exemption under sub. (5) (a) does not apply if an employee is discharged, disciplined, denied employment or promotion or otherwise discriminated against on the basis of an analysis of a polygraph test chart or a refusal to take a polygraph test without additional supporting evidence. The evidence required by sub. (5) (a) may serve as additional supporting evidence.

(b) The exemptions under sub. (5) (b) to (c) do not apply if an analysis of a polygraph test chart is used, or a refusal to take a polygraph test is used, as the sole basis upon which an adverse employment action described in par. (a) is taken against an employee or prospective employee.

(c) The exemptions under sub. (5) (a) to (c) do not apply unless all of the following requirements are fulfilled:

1. Throughout all phases of the test the examinee is permitted to end the test at any time; the examinee is not asked questions in a manner that degrades, or needlessly intrudes on, the examinee; the examinee is not asked any question about religious beliefs or affiliations, political beliefs or affiliations, sexual behavior, beliefs or opinions on racial matters, or about beliefs, affiliations, opinions, or lawful activities regarding unions or labor organizations; and the examiner does not conduct the test if there is sufficient written evidence provided by a physician that the examinee is suffering from a medical or psychological condition or undergoing treatment that might cause abnormal responses during the testing.

2. Before the test is administered the prospective examinee is provided with reasonable oral and written notice of the date, time and location of the test, and of the examinee’s right to obtain and consult with legal counsel or an employee representative before each phase of the test; is informed orally and in writing of the nature and characteristics of the tests and of the instruments involved; is informed orally and in writing whether or not the testing area contains a 2-way mirror, a camera or any other device through which the test can be observed; is informed orally and in writing whether or not any device other than the polygraph, including any device for recording or monitoring the test, will be used; is informed orally and in writing that the employer or the examinee may, after so informing the examinee, make a recording of the test; is read and signs a written notice informing the examinee that the examinee cannot be required to take the test as a condition of employment, that any statement made during the test may constitute additional supporting evidence for the purposes of an adverse employment action under par. (a), of the limitations on the use of a polygraph test under this subsection, of the legal rights and remedies available to the examinee under this section and ss. 905.065 and 942.06, of the legal rights and remedies available to the examinee if the polygraph test is not conducted in accordance with this section and of the legal rights and remedies of the employer under this section; is provided an opportunity to review all questions to be asked during the test; and is informed of the right to end the test at any time.

3. The examiner does not ask the examinee any question during the test that was not presented in writing for review to the examinee before the test.

4. Before any adverse employment action, the employer interviews the examinee on the basis of the results of the test; provides the examinee written copies of any opinion or conclusion rendered as a result of the test, the questions asked during the test and the corresponding charted responses; and offers the examinee the opportunity to explain any questionable responses or to retake the examination or both. If the subsequent responses or the reexamination clarify any questionable response, the results of the initial tests shall not be reported further and shall be removed, corrected or clarified in the employee’s personnel records under s. 103.13 (4).

5. The examiner does not conduct and complete more than 5 polygraph tests on any day and does not conduct any polygraph test that lasts for less than 90 minutes.

6. The test is administered at a reasonable time and location.

7. No person other than the examinee may disclose information obtained during a polygraph test, except that a polygraph examiner may disclose information acquired from a polygraph test to the examinee or any other person specifically designated in writing by the examinee.

3. Maintains all opinions, reports, charts, written questions, lists and other records relating to the test for at least 3 years after administration of the test.

7. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION. No person other than the examinee may disclose information obtained during a polygraph test, except that a polygraph examiner may disclose information acquired from a polygraph test to the examinee or any other person specifically designated in writing by the examinee.

8. ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS. (a) In addition to the rights, remedies and procedures provided by ss. 111.375 and 111.39, any employer who violates this section may be required to forfeit not more than $10,000.

(b) The rights, remedies and procedures provided by this section may not be waived by contract or otherwise, unless that waiver is part of a written settlement agreed to and signed by the parties to an action or complaint under this section.


111.371 Local ordinance; collective bargaining agreements. Section 111.37 does not do any of the following:

1. Prevent a county, city, village or town from adopting an ordinance that prohibits honesty testing, restricts the use of honesty testing to a greater extent than s. 111.37 or provides employees with more rights and remedies with respect to honesty testing than are provided under s. 111.37.

2. Supersede, preempt or prohibit provisions of a collective bargaining agreement that prohibit honesty testing, restrict the use of honesty testing to a greater extent than s. 111.37 or provide employees with more rights and remedies with respect to honesty testing than are provided under s. 111.37.


111.372 Use of genetic testing in employment situations. (1) No employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency may directly or indirectly:

(a) Solicit, require or administer a genetic test to any person as a condition of employment, labor organization membership or licensure.
(b) Affect the terms, conditions or privileges of employment, labor organization membership or licensure or terminate the employment, labor organization membership or licensure of any person who obtains a genetic test. 

(2) Except as provided in sub. (4), no person may sell to or interpret for an employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency a genetic test of an employee, labor organization member or licensee or of a prospective employee, labor organization member or licensee. 

(3) Any agreement between an employer, labor organization, employment agency or licensing agency and another person offering employment, labor organization membership, licensure or any pay or benefit to that person in return for taking a genetic test is prohibited. 

(4) This section does not prohibit the genetic testing of an employee who requests a genetic test and who provides written and informed consent to taking a genetic test for any of the following purposes: 

(a) Investigating a worker’s compensation claim under ch. 102. 

(b) Determining the employee’s susceptibility or level of exposure to potentially toxic chemicals or potentially toxic substances in the workplace, if the employer does not terminate the employee, or take any other action that adversely affects any term, condition or privilege of the employee’s employment, as a result of the genetic test. 

History: 1991 a. 117. 


111.375 Department to administer. (1) This subchapter shall be administered by the department. The department may make, amend and rescind such rules as are necessary to carry out this subchapter. The department or the commission may, by such agents or agencies as it designates, conduct in any part of this state any proceeding, hearing, investigation or inquiry necessary to the performance of its functions. The department shall preserve the anonymity of any employee who is the aggrieved party in a complaint of discrimination in promotion, compensation or terms and conditions of employment, of unfair honesty testing or of unfair genetic testing against his or her present employer until a determination as to probable cause has been made, unless the department determines that the anonymity will substantially impede the investigation. 

(2) This subchapter applies to each agency of the state. 


Cross-reference: See also ch. DWD 218, Wis. adm. code. 

Administrative remedies available under the fair employment act, subch. II of ch. 111, are the exclusive remedies for violations. The act does not provide a remedy for emotional distress resulting from discriminatory firing. Bachand v. Connecticut General Life Insurance Co. 101 Wis. 2d 617, 305 N.W.2d 149 (Cl. App. 1981). 

111.38 Investigation and study of discrimination. Except as provided under s. 111.375 (2), the department shall: 

(1) Investigate the existence, character, causes and extent of discrimination in this state and the extent to which the same is susceptible of elimination. 

(2) Study the best and most practicable ways of eliminating any discrimination found to exist, and formulate plans for the elimination thereof by education or other practicable means. 

(3) Publish and disseminate reports embodying its findings and the results of its investigations and studies relating to discrimination and ways and means of reducing or eliminating it. 

(4) Confer, cooperate with and furnish technical assistance to employers, labor unions, educational institutions and other public or private agencies in formulating programs, educational and otherwise, for the elimination of discrimination. 

(5) Make specific and detailed recommendations to the interested parties as to the methods of eliminating discrimination. 

(6) Transmit to the legislature from time to time recommendations for any legislation which may be deemed desirable in the light of the department’s findings as to the existence, character and causes of any discrimination. 

History: 1977 c. 196; 1981 c. 334 ss. 18, 25 (2); Stats. 1981 s. 111.38. 

111.39 Powers and duties of department. Except as provided under s. 111.375 (2), the department shall have the following powers and duties in carrying out this subchapter: 

(1) The department may receive and investigate a complaint charging discrimination, discriminatory practices, unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing in a particular case if the complaint is filed with the department no more than 300 days after the alleged discrimination, unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing occurred. The department may give publicity to its findings in the case. 

(2) In carrying out this subchapter the department and its duly authorized agents are empowered to hold hearings, subpoena witnesses, take testimony and make investigations in the manner provided in s. 103.005. The department or its duly authorized agents may privilege witnesses testifying before them under the provisions of this subchapter against self-incrimination. 

(3) The department shall dismiss a complaint if the person filing the complaint fails to respond within 20 days to any correspondence from the department concerning the complaint and if the correspondence is sent by certified mail to the last-known address of the person. 

(4) (a) The department shall employ such examiners as are necessary to hear and decide complaints of discrimination and to assist in the effective administration of this subchapter. The examiners may make findings and orders under this section. 

(b) If the department finds probable cause to believe that any discrimination has been or is being committed, that unfair honesty testing has occurred or is occurring or that unfair genetic testing has occurred or is occurring, it may endeavor to eliminate the practice by conference, conciliation or persuasion. If the department does not eliminate the discrimination, unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing, the department shall issue and serve a written notice of hearing, specifying the nature of the discrimination that appears to have been committed or unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing that has occurred, and requiring the person named, in this section called the “respondent”, to answer the complaint at a hearing before an examiner. The notice shall specify a time of hearing not less than 30 days after service of the complaint and a place of hearing within either the county of the respondent’s residence or the county in which the discrimination, unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing appears to have occurred. The testimony at the hearing shall be recorded or taken down by a reporter appointed by the department. 

(c) If, after hearing, the examiner finds that the respondent has engaged in discrimination, unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing, the examiner shall make written findings and order such action by the respondent as will effectuate the purpose of this subchapter, with or without back pay. If the examiner awards any payment to an employee because of a violation of s. 111.321 by an individual employed by the employer, under s. 111.32 (6), the employer of that individual is liable for the payment. If the examiner finds a respondent violated s. 111.322 (2m), the examiner shall award compensation in lieu of reinstatement if requested by all parties and may award compensation in lieu of reinstatement if requested by any party. Compensation in lieu of reinstatement for a violation of s. 111.322 (2m) may not be less than 500 times nor more than 1,000 times the hourly wage of the person discriminated against when the violation occurred. Back pay liability may not accrue from a date more than 2 years prior to the filing of a complaint with the department. Interim earnings or amounts earnable with reasonable diligence by the person discriminated against or subjected to unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing shall operate to reduce back pay otherwise allowable. Amounts received by the person discriminated against or subject to the unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing as unemployment benefits or welfare payments shall not reduce the back pay
otherwise allowable, but shall be withheld from the person discriminated against or subject to unfair honesty testing or unfair genetic testing and immediately paid to the unemployment reserve fund or, in the case of a welfare payment, to the welfare agency making the payment.

(d) The department shall serve a certified copy of the findings and order on the respondent, the order to have the same force as other orders of the department and be enforced as provided in s. 103.005. Any person aggrieved by noncompliance with the order may have the order enforced specifically by suit in equity. If the examiner finds that the respondent has not engaged in discrimination, unfair honesty testing, or unfair genetic testing as alleged in the complaint, the department shall serve a certified copy of the examiner’s findings on the complainant, together with an order dismissing the complaint.

(5) (a) Any respondent or complainant who is dissatisfied with the findings and order of the examiner may file a written petition with the department for review by the commission of the findings and order.

(b) If no petition is filed within 21 days from the date that a copy of the findings and order of the examiner is mailed to the last-known address of the respondent the findings and order shall be considered final for purposes of enforcement under sub. (4) (d).

(c) If a timely petition is filed, the commission, on review, may either affirm, reverse or modify the findings or order in whole or in part or set aside the findings and order and remand to the department for further proceedings. Such actions shall be based on a review of the evidence submitted.

(d) If the commission is satisfied that a respondent or complainant has been prejudiced because of exceptional delay in the receipt of a copy of any findings and order it may extend the time another 21 days for filing the petition with the department.

(e) On motion, the commission may set aside, modify or reverse any final decision of the commission within one year from entry of such decision and may be enforced as provided under this subchapter.


Cross-reference: See also LIRC and ch. DWD 218, Wis. adm. code.

A department order that was broader in scope than the nature of the discrimination set forth in the notice of hearing was overbroad. Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Co. v. DILHR, 62 Wis. 2d 392, 215 N.W.2d 443 (1972).

An employer found to have discriminated against a female employee with respect to required length of pregnancy leave and applicable employee benefits was denied administrative review of the notice of termination hearing as required by s. 111.36 (3) (a) (now s. 111.39 (4) (b)) and s. 227.09, 1971 stat., because: 1) the notice received by the employer merely charged "an act of discrimination due to sex;" 2) the commission's decision that the discriminatory act was a refusal to refuse the employment as soon as she was able to return to work; 3) DILHR characterized the complaint as involving only length of the required leave; and 4) the discriminatory aspects of the required pregancy leave and applicable benefits were a constitutent separate legal issues. Wisconsin Telephone Co. v. DILHR, 68 Wis. 2d 345, 228 N.W.2d 649 (1975).

A court should not use ch. 227 or s. 752.35 to circumvent the policy under s. 111.36. A proposed rule that would prohibit departmental employees from making public any information obtained under s. 111.36 [now s. 111.39] prior to the time an adjudicatory hearing takes place, if used as a blanket to prohibit persons from inspecting or copying public records, is to be applied as indicated by the high court. 66 Atty. Gen. 28.

A department order may proceed in a matter despite a settlement between the parties if the agreement does not eliminate the discrimination. The department may approve the settlement between the parties if the agreement does not provide full back pay if the agreement will eliminate the unlawful practice or act. 66 Atty. Gen. 28.

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, to establish constructive discharge, the plaintiff must show that an abuse of working environment became so intolerable that resignation qualified as a fitting response. Unless the plaintiff quits in reasonable response to an employer-sanctioned action directly related to his or her employment and defended against a claim that the plaintiff had installed an accessible and effective policy for reporting and investigating sexual harassment complaints; and 2) the plaintiff unreasonably failed to use that preventive or remedial statute. Pennsylvania State Police v. Sudan, 542 U.S. 119, 120, 125 S. Ct. 2240 (2004).

A court should not use ch. 227 or s. 752.35 to circumvent the policy under s. 111.36. A valid offer of reinstatement terminates the accrual of back pay. The commission erroneously rejected the employer’s offer to be sufficient to prevent prejudgment interest should be awarded on back pay. Anderson v. LIRC, 111 Wis. 2d 245, 330 N.W.2d 594 (1983).

A valid offer of reinstatement terminates the accrual of back pay. The commission erroneously rejected the employer’s offer to be sufficient to prevent prejudgment interest should be awarded on back pay. Anderson v. LIRC, 111 Wis. 2d 245, 330 N.W.2d 594 (1983).

Sub. (1) is a statute of limitations. As such it is an affirmative defense that may be waived by the plaintiff. LIRC, 113 Wis. 2d 109, 335 N.W.2d 412 (App. 1983).

Under s. 111.36 (3) (b) (now s. 111.39 (4) (a)) the department may award attorney fees to a prevailing complainant. Watkins v. LIRC, 117 Wis. 2d 753, 345 N.W.2d 482 (1984).
from the effect upon the parties immediately concerned and creates an emergency justifying action which adequately protects the general welfare.

The application of the open meetings law to duties of WERC is discussed. 68 Atty. Gen. 171.

111.51 Definitions. When used in this subchapter:
(1) “Arbitrators” refers to the arbitrators provided for in this subchapter.
(2) “Collective bargaining” means collective bargaining or similar to the kind provided for by subch. I.
(3) “Commission” means the employment relations commission.
(4) “Essential service” means furnishing water, light, heat, gas, electric power, public passenger transportation or communication, or any one or more of them, to the public in this state.
(5) (a) “Public utility employer” means any employer, other than the state or any political subdivision thereof, engaged in the business of furnishing water, light, heat, gas, electric power, public passenger transportation or communication, or any one or more of them, to the public in this state; and shall be considered to include a rural electrification cooperative association engaged in the business of furnishing any one or more of such services or utilities to its members in this state.

(b) Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted or construed to mean that rural electrification cooperative associations are brought under or made subject to ch. 196 or other laws creating, governing or controlling public utilities, it being the intent of the legislature to specifically exclude rural electrification cooperative associations from the provisions of such laws.
(c) This subchapter does not apply to railroads nor railroad employees.


111.52 Settlement of labor disputes through collective bargaining and arbitration. It shall be the duty of public utility employers and their employees in public utility operations to exert every reasonable effort to settle labor disputes by the making of agreements through collective bargaining between the parties, and by maintaining the agreements when made, and to prevent, if possible, the collective bargaining process from reaching a state of impasse and stalemate.

111.53 Appointment of conciliators and arbitrators. Within 30 days after July 25, 1947, the commission shall appoint a panel of persons to serve as conciliators or arbitrators under this subchapter. No person shall serve as a conciliator or arbitrator in the same dispute. Each person appointed to said panels shall be a resident of this state, possessing, in the judgment of the commission, the requisite experience and judgment to qualify such person to perform honestly and to the best of the appointee’s ability the duties of conciliator or arbitrator, as the case may be. Any appointee may be removed by the commission at any time or may resign his or her position at any time by notice in writing to the commission. Any vacancy in the panels shall be filled by the commission within 30 days after such vacancy occurs. Such conciliators and arbitrators shall be paid reasonable compensation for services and for necessary expenses, in an amount to be fixed by the commission, such compensation and expenses to be paid out of the appropriation made to the commission by s. 20.425 upon such authorizations as the commission may prescribe.

History: 1993 a. 492.

111.54 Conciliation. If in any case of a labor dispute between a public utility employer and its employees, the collective bargaining process reaches an impasse and stalemate, with the result that the employer and the employees are unable to effect a settlement thereof, then either party to the dispute may petition the commission to appoint a conciliator from the panel, provided for by s. 111.53. Upon the filing of such petition, the commission shall consider the same, and if in its opinion, the collective bargaining process, notwithstanding good faith efforts on the part of both sides to such dispute, has reached an impasse and stalemate and such dispute, if not settled, will cause or is likely to cause the interruption of an essential service, the commission shall appoint a conciliator from the panel to attempt to effect the settlement of such dispute. The conciliator so named shall expeditiously meet with the disputing parties and shall exert every reasonable effort to effect a prompt settlement of the dispute.

111.55 Conciliator unable to effect settlement; appointment of arbitrators. If a conciliator named under s. 111.54 is unable to effect a settlement of a labor dispute between a public utility employer and its employees within a 15–day period after the conciliator’s appointment, the conciliator shall report that fact to the commission. The commission, if it believes that a continuation of the dispute will cause or is likely to cause the interruption of an essential service, shall submit to the parties the names of either 3 or 5 persons from the panel provided for in s. 111.53. Each party shall alternately strike one name from such list of persons. The person or persons left on the list shall be appointed by the commission as the arbitrator or arbitrators to hear and determine such dispute.


111.56 Existing state of affairs to be maintained. During the pendency of proceedings under this subchapter existing wages, hours, and conditions of employment shall not be changed by action of either party without the consent of the other.

History: 1979 c. 110 s. 60 (9).

111.57 Arbitrator to hold hearings. (1) The arbitrator shall promptly hold hearings and shall have the power to administer oaths and compel the attendance of witnesses and the furnishing by the parties of such information as may be necessary to a determination of the issue or issues in dispute. Both parties to the dispute shall have the opportunity to be present at the hearing, both personally and by counsel, and to present such oral and documentary evidence as the arbitrator shall deem relevant to the issue or issues in controversy.

(2) It shall be the duty of the arbitrator to make written findings of fact, and to promulgate a written decision and order, upon the issue or issues presented in each case. In making such findings the arbitrator shall consider only the evidence in the record. When a valid contract is in effect defining the rights, duties and liabilities of the parties with respect to any matter in dispute, the arbitrators shall have power only to determine the proper interpretation and application of contract provisions which are involved.

(3) (a) If there is no contract between the parties, or if there is a contract but the parties have begun negotiations looking to a new contract or amendment of the existing contract, and wage rates or other conditions of employment under the proposed new or amended contract are in dispute, the factors, among others, to be given weight by the arbitrator in arriving at decision, shall include all of the following:

1. A comparison of wage rates or other conditions of employment of the utility in question with prevailing wage rates or other conditions of employment in the local operating area involved.

2. A comparison of wage rates or other working conditions with wage rates or other working conditions maintained for the same or similar work of workers exhibiting like or similar skills under the same or similar working conditions in the local operating area involved.

3. The value of the service to the consumer in the local operating area involved.

4. The overall compensation presently received by the employees, having regard not only to wages for time actually worked but also to wages for time not worked, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, vacation, holidays, and
other excused time, and all benefits received, including insurance and pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, and the continuity and stability of employment enjoyed by the employees.

(d) In addition to considering the factors under par. (a), if a public utility employer has more than one plant or office and some or all of the employer’s plants or offices are found by the arbitrator to be located in separate areas with different characteristics, consideration shall be given to the establishment of separate wage rates or a schedule of wage rates and separate conditions of employment for plants and offices in different areas.

(e) The enumeration of factors under pars. (a) and (d) shall not be construed as precluding the arbitrator from taking into consideration other factors not confined to the local labor market area that are normally or traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours, and working conditions through voluntary collective bargaining or arbitration between the parties.

111.58 Standards for arbitration. The arbitrator shall not make any award which would infringe upon the right of the employer to manage the employer’s business or which would interfere with the internal affairs of the union.

History: 1993 a. 492.

111.59 Filing order with clerk of circuit court; period effective; retroactivity. (1) In this section, “order” means the findings, decision and order of the arbitrator.

(2) The arbitrator shall hand down his or her order within 30 days after his or her appointment; except that the parties may agree to extend, or the commission may for good cause extend the period for not to exceed an additional 30 days. If the arbitrators do not agree, then the decision of the majority shall constitute the order in the case. The arbitrator shall furnish to each of the parties and to the public service commission a copy of the order. A certified copy thereof shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the circuit court of the county wherein the dispute arose or where the majority of the employees involved in the dispute resides.

(3) Unless the order is reversed upon a petition for review filed pursuant to ss. 111.60, the order, together with any other agreements that the parties may themselves have reached, shall become binding upon, and shall control the relationship between the parties from the date on which the order is filed with the clerk of the circuit court, as provided in sub. (2). The order shall continue effective for one year from that date, but the order may be changed by mutual consent or agreement of the parties. No order of the arbitrators relating to wages or rates of pay shall be retroactive to a date before the date of the termination of any contract which may have existed between the parties, or, if there was no prior contract, to a date before the day on which the demands involved in the dispute were presented to the other party. The question whether or not new contract provisions or amendments to an existing contract are retroactive to the terminating date of a present contract, amendments or part thereof, shall be matter for collective bargaining or decision by the arbitrator.


111.60 Judicial review of order of arbitrator. (1) Either party to the dispute may, within 15 days from the date such order is filed with the clerk of the court, petition the court for a review of such order on the ground that:

(a) The parties were not given reasonable opportunity to be heard;

(b) The arbitrator exceeded the arbitrator’s powers;

(c) The order is not supported by the evidence; or

(d) The order was procured by fraud, collusion or other unlawful means.

(2) A summons to the other party to the dispute shall be issued as provided by law in other civil cases; and either party shall have the same rights to a change of venue from the county, or to a change of judge, as provided by law in other civil cases.

(3) The judge of the circuit court shall review the order solely upon the grounds for review hereinabove set forth and shall affirm, reverse, modify or remand such order to the arbitrator as to any issue or issues for such further action as the circumstances require.

History: 1993 a. 492.

111.61 Commission to establish rules. The commission shall establish appropriate rules and regulations to govern the conduct of conciliation and arbitration proceedings under this subchapter.

111.62 Strikes, work stoppages, slowdowns, lockouts, unlawful; penalty. It shall be unlawful for any group of employees of a public utility employer acting in concert to call a strike or to go out on strike, or to cause any work stoppage or slowdown which would cause an interruption of an essential service; it shall also be unlawful for any public utility employer to lock out the employer’s employees when such action would cause an interruption of essential service; and it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to instigate, to induce, to conspire with, or to encourage any other person or persons to engage in any strike or lockout or slowdown or work stoppage which would cause an interruption of an essential service. Any violation of this section by any member of a group of employees acting in concert or by any employer or by any officer of an employer acting for such employer, or by any other individual, shall constitute a misdemeanor.

History: 1993 a. 492.

111.63 Enforcement. The commission shall enforce compliance with this subchapter and to that end may file an action in the circuit court of the county in which any violation of this subchapter occurs to restrain and enjoin the violation and to compel the performance of the duties imposed by this subchapter. In any action described in this section, ss. 103.505 to 103.61 do not apply.


111.64 Construction. (1) Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to require any individual employee to render labor or service without the employee’s consent, or to make illegal the quitting of the employee’s labor or service or the withdrawal from the employee’s place of employment unless done in concert or agreement with others. No court shall have power to issue any process to compel an individual employee to render labor or service or to remain at the employee’s place of employment without the employee’s consent. It is the intent of this subchapter only to forbid employees of a public utility employer to engage in a strike or to engage in a work slowdown or stoppage in concert, and to forbid a public utility employer to lock out the employer’s employees, where such acts would cause an interruption of essential service.

(2) All laws and parts of laws in conflict herewith are to the extent of such conflict concerning the subject matter dealt with in this subchapter supplanted by the provisions of this subchapter.

History: 1993 a. 492.

SUBCHAPTER IV
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, Wis. adm. code.

111.70 Municipal employment. (1) Definitions. As used in this subchapter:

(a) “Collective bargaining” means the performance of the mutual obligation of a municipal employer, through its officers and agents, and the representative of its municipal employees in a collective bargaining unit, to meet and confer at reasonable times, in good faith, with the intention of reaching an agreement, or to resolve questions arising under such an agreement, with respect to wages, hours, and conditions of employment for public safety employees or transit employees and with respect to wages...
for general municipal employees, and with respect to a require-
ment of the municipal employer for a municipal employee to per-
form law enforcement and fire fighting services under s. 60.553,
61.66, or 62.13 (2e), except as provided in sub. (4) (mb) and (mc)
and s. 40.81 (3) and except that a municipal employer shall not
meet and confer with respect to any proposal to diminish or
abridge the rights guaranteed to any public safety employees
under ch. 164. Collective bargaining includes the reduction of any
agreement reached to a written and signed document.

(b) “Collective bargaining unit” means a unit consisting of
municipal employees that is determined by the commission under
sub. (4) (d) 2. a. to be appropriate for the purpose of collective bar-
gaining.

(c) “Commission” means the employment relations commis-

(cm) “Consumer price index change” means the average
annual percentage change in the consumer price index for all
urban consumers, U.S. city average, as determined by the federal
department of labor, for the 12 months immediately preceding the
current date.

(d) “Craft employee” means a skilled journeyman craftsman,
including the skilled journeyman craftsman’s apprentices and
helpers, but shall not include employees not in direct line of pro-
gression in the craft.

(e) “Election” means a proceeding conducted by the commis-
sion in which the employees in a collective bargaining unit cast a
secret ballot for collective bargaining representatives, or for any
other purpose specified in this subchapter.

(f) “Fair–share agreement” means an agreement between a
municipal employer and a labor organization that represents pub-
lc safety employees or transit employees under which all or any
of the public safety employees or transit employees in the collect-
tive bargaining unit are required to pay their proportionate share
of the cost of the collective bargaining process and contract
administration measured by the amount of dues uniformly
required of all members.

(fm) “General municipal employee” means a municipal
employee who is not a public safety employee or a transit
employee.

(g) “Labor dispute” means any controversy concerning wages,
hours and conditions of employment, or concerning the represen-
tation of persons in negotiating, maintaining, changing or seeking
to arrange wages, hours and conditions of employment.

(h) “Labor organization” means any employee organization in
which employees participate and which exists for the purpose, in
whole or in part, of engaging in collective bargaining with munici-
pal employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages,
hours or conditions of employment.

(i) “Municipal employee” means any individual employed by
a municipal employer other than an independent contractor,
supervisor, or confidential, managerial or executive employee.

(j) “Municipal employer” means any city, county, village,
town, metropolitan sewerage district, school district, long–term
care district, local cultural arts district created under subch. V of
ch. 229, or any other political subdivision of the state, or instru-
mentality of one or more political subdivisions of the state, that
engages the services of an employee and includes any person act-
ing on behalf of a municipal employer within the scope of the per-
son’s authority, express or implied.

(k) “Person” means one or more individuals, labor organiza-
tions, associations, corporations or legal representatives.

(L) “Professional employee” means:
1. Any employee engaged in work:
   a. Predominantly intellectual and varied in character as
   opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or physical work;
   b. Involving the consistent exercise of discretion and judg-
      ment in its performance;
   c. Of such a character that the output produced or the result
      accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period
      of time;
   d. Requiring knowledge of an advanced type in a field of sci-
   ence or learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of
   specialized intellectual instruction and study in an institution of
   higher education or a hospital, as distinguished from a general
   academic education or from an apprenticeship or from training in
   the performance of routine mental, manual or physical process; or

2. Any employee who:
   a. Has completed the courses of specialized intellectual
   instruction and study described in subd. 1. d.;
   b. Is performing related work under the supervision of a pro-
   fessional person to qualify to become a professional employee as
   defined in subd. 1.

(m) “Prohibited practice” means any practice prohibited under
this subchapter.

(mm) “Public safety employee” means any municipal
employee who is employed in a position that, on July 1, 2011, is
one of the following:
1. Classified as a protective occupation participant under any
   of the following:
   a. Section 40.02 (48) (am) 9., 10., 13., 15., or 22.
   b. A provision that is comparable to a provision under subd.
      1. a. that is in a county or city retirement system.
2. An emergency medical service provider for emergency
   medical services departments.

(n) “Referendum” means a proceeding conducted by the com-
mission in which public safety employees or transit employees in
a collective bargaining unit may cast a secret ballot on the question
of authorizing a labor organization and the employer to continue
a fair–share agreement.

(ne) “School district employee” means a municipal employee
who is employed to perform services for a school district.

(nn) “Strike” includes any strike or other concerted stoppage
of work by municipal employees, and any concerted slowdown or
other concerted interruption of operations or services by munici-
pal employees, or any concerted refusal to work or perform their
usual duties as municipal employees, for the purpose of enforcing
demands upon a municipal employer.

(o) “Supervisor” means:
1. As to other than municipal and county fire fighters, any
   individual who has authority, in the interest of the municipal
   employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, dis-
   charge, assign, reward or discipline other employees, or to adjust
   their grievances or effectively to recommend such action, if in
   connection with the foregoing the exercise of such authority is not
   in a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of inde-
   pendent judgment.
2. As to fire fighters employed by municipalities with more
   than one fire station, the term “supervisor” shall include all offi-
   cers above the rank of the highest ranking officer at each single
   station. In municipalities where there is but one fire station, the
   term “supervisor” shall include only the chief and the officer in
   rank immediately below the chief. No other fire fighter shall be
   included under the term “supervisor” for the purposes of this sub-
   chapter.

(p) “Transit employee” means a municipal employee who is
determined to be a transit employee under sub. (4) (bm).

(1p) COUNTY EMPLOYEES IN A COUNTY WITH A POPULATION
OF 750,000 OR MORE. With respect to municipal employees who
are employed by a county with a population of 750,000 or more, the
county executive is responsible for the municipal employer func-
tions under this subchapter.

(2) RIGHTS OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES. Municipal employees
have the right of self–organization, and the right to form, join, or
assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through repre-
sentatives of their own choosing, and to engage in lawful, concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection. Municipal employees have the right to refrain from any and all such activities. A general municipal employee has the right to refrain from paying dues while remaining a member of a collective bargaining unit. A public safety employee or a transit employee, however, may be required to pay dues in the manner provided in a fair−share agreement; a fair−share agreement covering a public safety employee or a transit employee must contain a provision requiring the municipal employer to deduct the amount of dues as certified by the labor organization from the earnings of the employee affected by the fair−share agreement and to pay the amount deducted to the labor organization. A fair−share agreement covering a public safety employee or transit employee is subject to the right of the municipal employer or a labor organization to petition the commission to conduct a referendum. Such petition must be supported by proof that at least 30 percent of the employees in the collective bargaining unit desire that the fair−share agreement be terminated. Upon so finding, the commission shall conduct a referendum. If the continuation of the agreement is not supported by at least the majority of the eligible employees, it shall terminate. The commission shall declare any fair−share agreement suspended upon such conditions and for such time as the commission decides whenever it finds that the labor organization involved has refused on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, creed, or sex to receive as a member any public safety employee or transit employee of the municipal employer in the bargaining unit involved, and such agreement is subject to this duty of the commission. Any of the parties to such agreement or any public safety employee or transit employee covered by the agreement may come before the commission, as provided in s. 111.07, and ask the performance of this duty.

Cross−reference: See also ch. ERC 15, Wis. adm. code.

(3) PROHIBITED PRACTICES AND THEIR PREVENTION. (a) It is a prohibited practice for a municipal employer individually or in concert with others:
1. To interfere with, restrain or coerce municipal employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed in sub. (2).
2. To initiate, create, dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization or contribute financial support to it, but the municipal employer is not prohibited from reimbursing its employees at their prevailing wage rate for the time spent conferring with the employees, officers or agents.
3. To encourage or discourage a membership in any labor organization by discrimination in regard to hiring, tenure, or other terms or conditions of employment; but the prohibition shall not apply to a fair−share agreement that covers public safety employees or transit employees.
4. To refuse to bargain collectively with a representative of a majority of its employees in an appropriate collective bargaining unit. Such refusal includes action by the employer to issue or seek to obtain contracts, including those provided for by statute, with individuals in the collective bargaining unit while collective bargaining, mediation, or fact−finding concerning the terms and conditions of a new collective bargaining agreement is in progress, unless such individual contracts contain express language providing that the contract is subject to amendment by a subsequent collective bargaining agreement. Where the employer has a good faith doubt as to whether a labor organization claiming the support of a majority of its employees in an appropriate bargaining unit does in fact have that support, it may file with the commission a petition requesting an election to that claim. An employer shall not be deemed to have refused to bargain until an election has been held and the results thereof certified to the employer by the commission. The violation shall include, though not be limited thereby, to the refusal to execute a collective bargaining agreement previously agreed upon.
5. To violate any collective bargaining agreement previously agreed upon by the parties with respect to wages, hours and conditions of employment affecting public safety employees or transit employees, including an agreement to arbitrate questions arising as to the meaning or application of the terms of a collective bargaining agreement or to accept the terms of such arbitration award, where previously the parties have agreed to accept such award as final and binding upon them or to violate any collective bargaining agreement affecting general municipal employees, that was previously agreed upon by the parties with respect to wages.
6. To deduct labor organization dues from the earnings of a public safety employee or a transit employee, unless the municipal employer has been presented with an individual order therefor, signed by the employee personally, and terminable by at least the end of any year of its life or earlier by the public safety employee or transit employee giving at least 30 days’ written notice of such termination to the municipal employer and to the representative organization, except when a fair−share agreement is in effect.
7m. To refuse or otherwise fail to implement an arbitration decision lawfully made under sub. (4) (cg).
8. After a collective bargaining agreement expires and before another collective bargaining agreement takes effect, to fail to follow any grievance arbitration agreement in the expired collective bargaining agreement.
9. If the collective bargaining unit contains a public safety employee or transit employee, after a collective bargaining agreement expires and before another collective bargaining agreement takes effect, to fail to follow any fair−share agreement in the expired collective bargaining agreement.
(b) It is a prohibited practice for a municipal employee, individually or in concert with others:
1. To coerce or intimidate a municipal employee in the enjoyment of the employee’s legal rights, including those guaranteed in sub. (2).
2. To coerce, intimidate or induce any officer or agent of a municipal employer to interfere with any of its employees in the enjoyment of their legal rights, including those guaranteed in sub. (2), or to engage in any practice with regard to its employees which would constitute a prohibited practice if undertaken by the officer or agent on the officer’s or agent’s own initiative.
3. To refuse to bargain collectively with the duly authorized officer or agent of a municipal employer, provided it is the recognized or certified exclusive collective bargaining representative of employees in an appropriate collective bargaining unit. Such refusal to bargain shall include, but not be limited to, the refusal to execute a collective bargaining agreement previously agreed upon.
4. To violate any collective bargaining agreement previously agreed upon by the parties with respect to wages, hours and conditions of employment affecting municipal employees, including an agreement to arbitrate questions arising as to the meaning or application of the terms of a collective bargaining agreement or to accept the terms of such arbitration award, where previously the parties have agreed to accept such awards as final and binding upon them.
5. To coerce or intimidate an independent contractor, supervisor, confidential, managerial or executive employee, officer or agent of the municipal employer, to induce the person to become a member of the labor organization of which employees are members.
6m. To refuse or otherwise fail to implement an arbitration decision lawfully made under sub. (4) (cg).
7. After a collective bargaining agreement expires and before another collective bargaining agreement takes effect, to fail to follow any grievance arbitration agreement in the expired collective bargaining agreement.
(c) It is a prohibited practice for any person to do or cause to be done on behalf of or in the interest of municipal employers or municipal employees, or in connection with or to influence the
outcome of any controversy as to employment relations, any act prohibited by par. (a) or (b).

(d) The duty to bargain does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 12, Wis. adm. code.

(3g) WAGE DEDUCTION PROHIBITION. A municipal employer may not deduct labor organization dues from the earnings of a general municipal employee or supervisor.

(4) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION. The commission shall conduct any election under this subsection by secret ballot and shall adhere to the following provisions relating to bargaining in municipal employment in addition to other powers and duties provided in this subsection:

(a) Prevention of prohibited practices. Section 111.07 shall govern procedure in all cases involving prohibited practices under this subsection except that wherever the term “unfair labor practices” appears in s. 111.07 the term “prohibited practices” shall be substituted.

(b) Failure to bargain. Whenever a dispute arises between a municipal employer and a union of its employees concerning the duty to bargain on any subject, the dispute shall be resolved by the commission on petition for a declaratory ruling. The decision of the commission shall be issued within 15 days of submission and shall have the effect of an order issued under s. 111.07. The filing of a petition under this paragraph shall not prevent the inclusion of the same allegations in a complaint involving prohibited practices in which it is alleged that the failure to bargain on the subjects of the declaratory ruling is part of a series of acts or pattern of conduct prohibited by this chapter.

Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 14 and 19, Wis. adm. code.

(bm) Transit employee determination. The commission shall determine that any municipal employee is a transit employee if the commission determines that the municipal employer who employs the municipal employee would lose federal funding under 49 USC 5333 (b) if the municipal employee is not a transit employee.

(c) Methods for peaceful settlement of disputes; public safety employees. 1. ‘Mediation.’ The commission may function as a mediator in labor disputes involving a collective bargaining unit containing a public safety employee. Such mediation may be carried on by a person designated to act by the commission upon request of one or both of the parties or upon initiation of the commission. The function of the mediator is to encourage voluntary settlement by the parties but no mediator has the power of compulsion.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 13, Wis. adm. code.

2. ‘Arbitration.’ Parties to a dispute pertaining to the meaning or application of the terms of a written collective bargaining agreement involving a collective bargaining unit containing a public safety employee may agree in writing to have the commission or any other appropriate agency serve as arbitrator or may designate any other competent, impartial and disinterested person to so serve.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 16, Wis. adm. code.

3. ‘Fact-finding.’ Unless s. 111.77 applies, if a dispute involving a collective bargaining unit containing a public safety employee has not been settled after a reasonable period of negotiation and after the settlement procedures, if any, established by the parties have been exhausted, and the parties are deadlock with respect to any dispute between them arising in the collective bargaining process, either party, or the parties jointly, may petition the commission, in writing, to initiate fact-finding, and to make recommendations to resolve the deadlock, as follows:

a. Upon receipt of the petition to initiate fact-finding, the commission shall make an investigation with or without a formal hearing, to determine whether a deadlock in fact exists. After its investigation the commission shall certify the results thereof. If the commission decides that fact-finding should be initiated, it shall appoint a qualified, disinterested person or 3−member panel, when jointly requested by the parties, to function as a fact finder.

b. The fact finder appointed under subd. 3. a. may establish dates and place of hearings which shall be where feasible, and shall conduct the hearings pursuant to rules established by the commission. Upon request, the commission shall issue subpoenas for hearings conducted by the fact finder. The fact finder may administer oaths. Upon completion of the hearing, the fact finder shall make written findings of fact and recommendations for solution of the dispute and shall cause the same to be served on the parties and the commission. Cost of fact−finding proceedings shall be divided equally between the parties. At the time the fact finder submits a statement of his or her costs to the parties, the fact finder shall submit a copy of the statement to the commission at its Madison office.

c. Nothing in this subdivision prohibits any fact finder appointed under subd. 3. a. from endeavoring to mediate the dispute, in which the fact finder is involved, at any time prior to the issuance of the fact finder’s recommendations.

d. Within 30 days of the receipt of the fact finder’s recommendations under subd. 3. b., or within the time mutually agreed upon by the parties, each party shall give notice to the other party, in writing as to its acceptance or rejection, in whole or in part, of the fact finder’s recommendations and transmit a copy of the notice to the commission at its Madison office.

Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 14 and 40, Wis. adm. code.

(ecg) Methods for peaceful settlement of disputes; transit employees. 1. ‘Notice of commencement of contract negotiation.’ To advise the commission of the commencement of contract negotiations involving a collective bargaining unit containing transit employees, whenever either party requests the other to reopen negotiations under a binding collective bargaining agreement, or the parties otherwise commence negotiations if no collective bargaining agreement exists, the party requesting negotiations shall immediately notify the commission in writing. Upon failure of the requesting party to provide notice, the other party may provide notice to the commission. The notice shall specify the expiration date of the existing collective bargaining agreement, if any, and shall provide any additional information the commission may require in a form provided by the commission.

2. ‘Presentation of initial proposals; open meetings.’ The meetings between parties may involve a collective bargaining agreement or proposed collective bargaining agreement under this subchapter that involve a collective bargaining unit containing a transit employee and that are held to present initial bargaining proposals, along with supporting rationale, are open to the public. Each party shall submit its initial bargaining proposals to the other party in writing. Failure to comply with this subdivision does not invalidate a collective bargaining agreement under this subchapter.

3. ‘Mediation.’ The commission or its designee shall function as mediator in labor disputes involving transit employees upon request of one or both of the parties, or upon initiation of the commission. The function of the mediator is to encourage voluntary settlement by the parties. No mediator has the power of compulsion.

4. ‘Grievance arbitration.’ Parties to a dispute pertaining to the meaning or application of the terms of a written collective bargaining agreement involving a collective bargaining unit containing a transit employee may agree in writing to have the commission or any other appropriate agency serve as arbitrator or may designate any other competent, impartial, and disinterested person to serve as an arbitrator.

5. ‘Voluntary impasse resolution procedures.’ In addition to the other impasse resolution procedures provided in this paragraph, a municipal employer that employs a transit employee and labor organization may at any time, as a permissive subject of bargaining, agree in writing to a dispute settlement procedure, including binding interest arbitration, which is acceptable to the parties.

Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 14, 15, 19, and 40, Wis. adm. code.

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for resolving an impasse over terms of any collective bargaining agreement under this subchapter. The parties shall file a copy of the agreement with the commission. If the parties agree to any form of binding interest arbitration, the arbitrator shall give weight to the factors enumerated under subds. 7. and 7g.

6. ‘Interest arbitration.’ a. If in any collective bargaining unit containing transit employees a dispute has not been settled after a reasonable period of negotiation and after mediation by the commission under subd. 3. and other settlement procedures, if any, established by the parties have been exhausted, and the parties are deadlocked with respect to any dispute between them over wages, hours, or conditions of employment to be included in a new collective bargaining agreement, either party, or the parties jointly, may petition the commission, in writing, to initiate compulsory, final, and binding arbitration, as provided in this paragraph. At the time the petition is filed, the petitioning party shall submit in writing to the other party and the commission its preliminary final offer containing its latest proposals on all issues in dispute. Within 14 calendar days after the date of that submission, the other party shall submit in writing its preliminary final offer on all disputed issues to the petitioning party and the commission. If a petition is filed, the petitioning party shall submit in writing to the parties to present supporting arguments for their complete final offers in writing and submit copies to the commission when the petition is filed.

am. Upon receipt of a petition under subd. 6. a. to initiate arbitration, the commission shall determine, with or without a formal hearing, whether arbitration should be commenced. If in determining whether an impasse exists the commission finds that the procedures under this paragraph have not been complied with and compliance would tend to result in a settlement, it may order compliance before ordering arbitration. The validity of any arbitration award or collective bargaining agreement is not affected by failure to comply with these procedures. Prior to the close of the investigation each party shall submit in writing to the commission its single final offer containing its final proposals on all issues in dispute that are subject to interest arbitration under this subdivision. If a party fails to submit a single, ultimate final offer, the commission shall use the last written position of the party. Such final offers may include only mandatory subjects of bargaining, except that a permissive subject of bargaining may be included by a party if the other party does not object and is then treated as a mandatory subject. At that time, the parties shall continue to submit to the commission a single final offer containing its final proposals on all issues in dispute that are subject to interest arbitration under this subdivision. If a party fails to submit a single, ultimate final offer, the commission shall use the last written position of the party. Such final offers may include only mandatory subjects of bargaining, except that a permissive subject of bargaining may be included by a party if the other party does not object and is then treated as a mandatory subject.

b. The arbitrator shall adopt without further modification the final offer of the party that has submitted a final offer containing its final proposals on all issues in dispute. If the parties joint final offer containing its final proposals on all issues in dispute. If the parties joint.

c. The arbitrator or arbitration panel shall consider and shall give greater weight to the factors enumerated under subd. 7. and 7g. In making any decision under the arbitration procedures under this paragraph, the arbitrator or arbitration panel shall consider and shall give greater weight to the factors enumerated under subd. 7. and 7g.

7. ‘Factor given greatest weight.’ In making any decision under the arbitration procedures under this paragraph, the arbitrator or arbitration panel shall consider and shall give the greatest weight to the economic conditions in the jurisdiction of the municipal employer. The arbitrator or arbitration panel shall give an accounting of the consideration of this factor in the arbitrator’s or panel’s decision.

7g. ‘Factor given greater weight.’ In making any decision under the arbitration procedures under this paragraph, the arbitrator or arbitration panel shall consider and shall give greater weight to any state law or directive lawfully issued by a state legislative or administrative officer, body, or agency that places limitations on expenditures that may be made or revenues that may be collected by a municipal employer than to any of the factors specified in subd. 7e.

7r. ‘Other factors considered.’ In making any decision under the arbitration procedures under this paragraph, the arbitrator or arbitration panel shall give weight to the following factors:

a. The lawful authority of the municipal employer.

b. Stipulations of the parties.
c. The interests and welfare of the public and the financial ability of the unit of government to meet the costs of any proposed settlement.

d. Comparison of wages, hours and conditions of employment of the transit employees involved in the arbitration proceedings with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of other employees performing similar services.

e. Comparison of the wages, hours and conditions of employment of the transit employees involved in the arbitration proceedings with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of other employees generally in public employment in the same community and in comparable communities.

f. Comparison of the wages, hours and conditions of employment of the transit employees involved in the arbitration proceedings with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of other employees in private employment in the same community and in comparable communities.

g. The average consumer prices for goods and services, commonly known as the cost of living.

h. The overall compensation presently received by the transit employees, including direct wage compensation, vacation, holidays, and excused time, insurance and pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, the continuity and stability of employment, and all other benefits received.

i. Changes in any of the foregoing circumstances during the pendency of the arbitration proceedings.

j. Such other factors, not confined to the foregoing, which are normally or traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours and conditions of employment through voluntary collective bargaining, mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or otherwise between the parties, in the public service or in private employment.

8. ‘Rule making.’ The commission shall adopt rules for the conduct of all arbitration proceedings under subd. 6., including, but not limited to, rules for:

a. The appointment of tripartite arbitration panels when requested by the parties.

b. The expeditious rendering of arbitration decisions, such as waivers of briefs and transcripts.

c. The removal of individuals who have repeatedly failed to issue timely decisions from the commission’s list of qualified arbitrators.

d. Proceedings for the enforcement of arbitration decisions.

8m. ‘Term of agreement; reopening of negotiations.’ Except for the initial collective bargaining agreement between the parties and except as the parties otherwise agree, every collective bargaining agreement covering transit employees shall be for a term of 2 years, but in no case may a collective bargaining agreement for any collective bargaining unit consisting of transit employees subject to this paragraph be for a term exceeding 3 years. No arbitration award involving transit employees may contain a provision for reopening of negotiations during the term of a collective bargaining agreement, unless both parties agree to such a provision.

The requirement for agreement by both parties does not apply to a provision for reopening of negotiations with respect to any portion of an agreement that is declared invalid by a court or administrative agency or rendered invalid by the enactment of a law or promulgation of a federal regulation.

9. ‘Application.’ Chapter 788 does not apply to arbitration proceedings under this paragraph.

(cross-reference) See also chs. ERC 32 and 33, Wis. adm. code.

(d) Selection of representatives and determination of appropriate units for collective bargaining. 1. A representative chosen for the purposes of collective bargaining by a majority of the public safety employees or transit employees voting in a collective bargaining unit shall be the exclusive representative of all employees in the unit for the purpose of collective bargaining. A representative chosen for the purposes of collective bargaining by at least 51 percent of the general municipal employees in a collective bargaining unit shall be the exclusive representative of all employees in the unit for the purpose of collective bargaining. Any individual employee, or any minority group of employees in any collective bargaining unit, shall have the right to present grievances to the municipal employer in person or through representatives of their own choosing, and the municipal employer shall confer with the employee in relation thereto, if the majority representative has been afforded the opportunity to be present at the conferences. Any adjustment resulting from these conferences may not be inconsistent with the conditions of employment established by the majority representative and the municipal employer.

2. (a) The commission shall determine the appropriate collective bargaining unit for the purpose of collective bargaining and shall whenever possible avoid fragmentation by maintaining as few collective bargaining units as practicable in keeping with the size of the total municipal workforce. The commission may

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decide whether, in a particular case, the municipal employees in the same or several departments, divisions, institutions, crafts, professions, or other occupational groupings constitute a collective bargaining unit. Before making its determination, the commission may provide an opportunity for the municipal employees concerned to determine, by secret ballot, whether they desire to be established as a separate collective bargaining unit. The commission may not decide, however, that any group of municipal employees constitutes an appropriate collective bargaining unit if the group includes both professional employees and nonprofessional employees, unless a majority of the professional employees vote for inclusion in the unit. The commission may not decide that any group of municipal employees constitutes an appropriate collective bargaining unit if the group includes both school district employees and general municipal employees who are not school district employees. The commission may not decide that any group of municipal employees constitutes an appropriate collective bargaining unit if the group includes both public safety employees and general municipal employees, if the group includes both transit employees and general municipal employees, or if the group includes both transit employees and public safety employees. The commission may not decide that any group of municipal employees constitutes an appropriate collective bargaining unit if the group includes both craft employees and noncraft employees unless a majority of the craft employees vote for inclusion in the unit. The commission shall place the professional employees, or if the group includes both transit employees and general municipal employees, if the group includes both transit employees and public safety employees.”

Additionally, the text includes a section on how to handle a situation where an election is inconclusive or if a representative is decertified under subd. 2. a. It states that any election held under subd. 2. a. shall be conducted by secret ballot taken in such a manner as to show separately the wishes of the employees voting as to the unit they prefer. A collective bargaining unit shall be subject to termination or modification as provided in this subchapter. Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the conduct of a separate collective bargaining unit if the group includes both craft employees and noncraft employees unless a majority of the craft employees vote for inclusion in the unit. The commission shall place the professional employees, or if the group includes both transit employees and general municipal employees, if the group includes both transit employees and public safety employees.”

Furthermore, the text includes a section on how the commission shall certify the results in writing to the municipal interested parties. The findings of the commission, on which a certification is based, shall be conclusive unless reviewed as provided by s. 111.07 (8). Whenever the result of an election conducted pursuant to subd. 3. is inconclusive, the commission, on request of any party to the proceeding, may conduct a runoff election. Any such request must be made within 30 days from the date of certification. In a runoff election the commission may drop from the ballot the name of the candidate or choice receiving the least number of votes.

The text also includes a section on how the commission shall certify the results of an election conducted pursuant to subd. 3. is inconclusive, the commission, on request of any party to the proceeding, may conduct a runoff election. Any such request must be made within 30 days from the date of certification. In a runoff election the commission may drop from the ballot the name of the candidate or choice receiving the least number of votes.

Questions as to representation may be raised by petition of the municipal employer or any municipal employee or any representative thereof. Where it appears by the petition that a situation exists requiring prompt action so as to prevent or terminate an emergency, the commission shall act upon the petition forthwith. The fact that an election has been held shall not prevent the holding of another election among the same group of employees, if it appears to the commission that sufficient reason for another election exists.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 11, Wis. adm. code.

(jm) Binding arbitration, first class cities. This paragraph shall apply only to members of a police department employed by a city of the 1st class. If the representative of members of the police department, as determined under par. (d), and representatives of the city reach an impasse on the terms of the agreement, the dispute shall be resolved in the following manner:

1. Either the representative of the members of the police department or the representative of the city may petition the commission for appointment of an arbitrator to determine the terms of the agreement relating to the wages, hours and working conditions of the members of the police department and other matters subject to arbitration under subd. 4.

2. The commission shall conduct a hearing on the petition, and upon a determination that the parties have reached an impasse on matters relating to wages, hours and conditions of employment or other matters subject to arbitration under subd. 4. on which there is no mutual agreement, the commission shall appoint an arbitrator to determine those terms of the agreement on which there is no mutual agreement. The commission may appoint any person it deems qualified, except that the arbitrator may not be a resident of the city which is party to the dispute.

3. Within 14 days of the arbitrator’s appointment, the arbitrator shall conduct a hearing to determine the terms of the agreement relating to wages, hours and working conditions and other matters subject to arbitration under subd. 4. The arbitrator may subpoena witnesses at the request of either party or on the arbitrator’s own motion. All testimony shall be given under oath. The arbitrator shall take judicial notice of all economic and social data presented by the parties which is relevant to the wages, hours and working conditions of the police department members or other matters subject to arbitration under subd. 4. The other party shall have an opportunity to examine and respond to such data. The rules of evidence applicable to a contested case, as defined in s. 227.01 (3), shall apply to the hearing before the arbitrator.

4. In determining those terms of the agreement on which there is no mutual agreement and on which the parties have negotiated to impasse, as determined by the commission, the arbitrator, without restriction because of enumeration, shall have the power to:

- Set all items of compensation, including base wages, longevity pay, health, accident and disability insurance programs, pension programs, including amount of pension, relative contributions, and all eligibility conditions, the terms and conditions of overtime compensation and compensatory time, vacation pay, and vacation eligibility, sickness pay amounts, and sickness pay

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 70 and 71, Wis. adm. code.
117.70 EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

eligibility, life insurance, uniform allowances and any other similar item of compensation.

b. Determine regular hours of work, what activities shall constitute overtime work and all standards and criteria for the assignment and scheduling of work.

c. Determine a seniority system, and how seniority shall affect wages, hours and working conditions.

d. Determine a promotional program.

e. Determine criteria for merit increases in compensation and the procedures for applying such criteria.

f. Determine all work rules affecting the members of the police department, except those work rules created by law.

g. Establish any educational program for the members of the police department deemed appropriate, together with a mechanism for financing the program.

h. Establish a system for resolving all disputes under the agreement, including final and binding third-party arbitration.

i. Establish a system for administration of the collective bargaining agreement between the parties by an employee of the police department who is not directly accountable to the chief of police or the board of fire and police commissioners in matters relating to that administration.

j. Establish a system for conducting interrogations of members of the police department that is limited to the hours between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. on working days, as defined in s. 227.01 (14), if the interrogations could lead to disciplinary action, demotion, or dismissal, but one that does not apply if the interrogation is part of a criminal investigation.

4w. In determining the proper compensation to be received by members of the police department under subd. 4., the arbitrator shall give greater weight to the economic conditions in the 1st class city than the arbitrator gives to the factors under subd. 5. The arbitrator shall give an accounting of the consideration of this factor in the arbitrator’s decision.

5. In determining the proper compensation to be received by members of the police department under subd. 4., in addition to the factor under subd. 4w., the arbitrator shall utilize:

a. The most recently published U.S. bureau of labor statistics “Standards of Living Budgets for Urban Families, Moderate and Higher Level”, as a guideline to determine the compensation necessary for members to enjoy a standard of living commensurate with their needs, abilities and responsibilities; and

b. Increases in the cost of living as measured by the average annual increases in the U.S. bureau of labor statistics “Consumer Price Index” since the last adjustment in compensation for those members.

6. In determining all noncompensatory working conditions and relationships under subd. 4., including methods for resolving disputes under the labor agreement, the arbitrator shall consider the patterns of employee–employer relationships generally prevailing between technical and professional employees and their employers in both the private and public sectors of the economy where those relationships have been established by a labor agreement between the representative of those employees and their employer.

7. All subjects described in subd. 4. shall be negotiable between the representative of the members of the police department and the city.

8. Within 30 days after the close of the hearing, the arbitrator shall issue a written decision determining the terms of the agreement between the parties which were not the subject of mutual agreement and on which the parties negotiated in good faith to impasse, as determined by the commission, and which were the subject of the hearing under this paragraph. The arbitrator shall state reasons for each determination. Each proposition or fact accepted by the arbitrator must be established by a preponderance of the evidence.

9. Subject to subds. 11. and 12. within 14 days of the arbitrator’s decision, the parties shall reduce to writing the total agreement composed of those items mutually agreed to between the parties and the determinations of the arbitrator. The document shall be signed by the arbitrator and the parties, unless either party seeks judicial review of the determination pursuant to subd. 11.

10. All costs of the arbitration hearing, including the arbitrator’s fee, shall be borne equally by the parties.

11. Within 60 days of the arbitrator’s decision, either party may petition the circuit court for Milwaukee County to set aside or enforce the arbitrator’s decision. If the decision was within the subject matter jurisdiction of the arbitrator as set forth in subd. 4., the court must enforce the decision, unless the court finds by a clear preponderance of the evidence that the decision was procured by fraud, bribery or collusion. The court may not review the sufficiency of the evidence supporting the arbitrator’s determination of the terms of the agreement.

12. Within 30 days of a final court judgment, the parties shall reduce the agreement to writing and with the arbitrator execute the agreement pursuant to subd. 9.

13. Subsequent to the filing of a petition before the commission pursuant to subd. 1. and prior to the execution of an agreement pursuant to subd. 9., neither party may unilaterally alter any term of the wages, hours and working conditions of the members of the police department or any other matter subject to arbitration under subd. 4.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 31, Wis. adm. code.

(L) Strikes prohibited. Nothing contained in this subchapter constitutes a grant of the right to strike by any municipal employee or labor organization, and such strikes are hereby expressly prohibited.

(mb) Prohibited subjects of bargaining: general municipal employees. The municipal employer is prohibited from bargaining collectively with a collective bargaining unit containing a general municipal employee with respect to any of the following:

1. Any factor or condition of employment except wages, which includes only total base wages and excludes any other compensation, which includes, but is not limited to, overtime, premium pay, merit pay, performance pay, supplemental compensation, pay schedules, and automatic pay progressions.

2. Except as provided in s. 66.0506 or 118.245, whichever is applicable, any proposal that does any of the following:

a. If there is an increase in the consumer price index change, provides for total base wages for authorized positions in the proposed collective bargaining agreement that exceeds the total base wages for authorized positions 180 days before the expiration of the previous collective bargaining agreement by a greater percentage than the consumer price index change.

b. If there is a decrease or no change in the consumer price index change, provides for any change in total base wages for authorized positions in the proposed collective bargaining agreement from the total base wages for authorized positions 180 days before the expiration of the previous collective bargaining agreement.

(mbb) For purposes of determining compliance with par. (mb), the commission shall provide, upon request, to a municipal employer or to any representative of a collective bargaining unit containing a general municipal employee, the consumer price index change during any 12-month period. The commission may get the information from the department of revenue.

(mc) Prohibited subjects of bargaining: public safety employees. The municipal employer is prohibited from bargaining collectively with a collective bargaining unit containing a public safety employee with respect to any of the following:

5. If the collective bargaining unit contains a public safety employee who is initially employed on or after July 1, 2011, the
requirement under ss. 40.05 (1) (b), 59.875, and 62.623 that the municipal employer may not pay, on behalf of that public safety employee any employee required contributions or the employee share of required contributions, and the impact of this requirement on the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of that public safety employee. If a public safety employee is initially employed by a municipal employer before July 1, 2011, this subdivision does not apply to that public safety employee if he or she is employed as a public safety employee by a successor municipal employer in the event of a combined department that is created on or after that date.

6. Except for the employee premium contribution, all costs and payments associated with health care coverage plans and the design and selection of health care coverage plans by the municipal employer for public safety employees, and the impact of such costs and payments and the design and selection of the health care coverage plans on the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of the public safety employee.

(p) Permissive subjects of collective bargaining; public safety and transit employees. A municipal employer is not required to bargain with public safety employees or transit employees on subjects reserved to management and direction of the governmental unit except insofar as the manner of exercise of such functions affects the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of the public safety employees or of the transit employees in a collective bargaining unit.

(5) PROCEDURES. Municipal employers, jointly or individually, may employ a qualified person to discharge the duties of labor negotiator and to represent such municipal employers, jointly or individually, in conferences and negotiations under this section. In cities of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd class any member of the city council, including the mayor, who resigns therefrom may, during the term for which the member is elected, be eligible to the position of labor negotiator under this subsection, which position during said term has been created by or the selection to which is vested in such city council, and s. 66.0501 (2) shall be deemed inapplicable thereto.

(7m) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF; PENALTIES; CIVIL LIABILITY. (a) Injunction; prohibited strike. At any time after the commencement of a strike which is prohibited under sub. (4) (L), the municipal employer or any citizen directly affected by such strike may petition the circuit court for an injunction to immediately terminate the strike. If the court determines that the strike is prohibited under sub. (4) (L), it shall issue an order immediately enjoining the strike, and in addition shall impose the penalties provided in par. (c).

(c) Penalties. 1. ‘Labor organizations.’ a. Any labor organization that represents public safety employees or transit employees which violates sub. (4) (L) may not collect any dues under a collective bargaining agreement or under a fair-share agreement from any employee covered by either agreement for a period of one year. At the end of the period of suspension, any such agreement shall be reinstated unless the labor organization is no longer authorized to represent the public safety employees or transit employees covered by the collective bargaining agreement or fair-share agreement or the agreement is no longer in effect.

b. Any labor organization which violates sub. (4) (L) after an injunction has been issued shall be required to forfeit $2 per member per day, but not more than $10,000 per day. Each day of continued violation constitutes a separate offense.

2. ‘Individuals.’ Any individual who violates sub. (4) (L) after an injunction against a strike has been issued shall be fined $10. Each day of continued violation constitutes a separate offense. After the injunction has been issued, any municipal employee who is absent from work because of purported illness is presumed to be on strike unless the illness is verified by a written report from a physician to the municipal employer. The court shall order that any fine imposed under this subdivision be paid by means of a salary deduction at a rate to be determined by the court.

4. ‘Contempt of court.’ The penalties provided in this paragraph do not preclude the imposition by the court of any penalty for contempt provided by law.

(d) Compensation forfeited. No municipal employee may be paid wages or salaries by the municipal employer for the period during which he or she engages in any strike.

(8) SUPERVISORY UNITS. (a) This section, except sub. (4) (cg) and (cm), applies to law enforcement supervisors employed by a 1st class city. This section, except sub. (4) (cm) and (jm), applies to law enforcement supervisors employed by a county having a population of 500,000 or more. For purposes of such application, the terms “municipal employee” and “public safety employee” include such a supervisor.

(b) This subchapter does not preclude law enforcement supervisors employed by municipal employers other than 1st class cities and counties having a population of 500,000 or more from firing supervisors from organizing in separate units of supervisors for the purpose of negotiating with their municipal employers.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 11, Wis. adm. code.

The commission shall by rule establish procedures for certification of such units of supervisors and the levels of supervisors to be included in the units. Supervisors may not be members of the same bargaining unit of which their subordinates are members. The commission may require that any agreement entered into by the representative of any supervisory unit shall be an organization that is a separate local entity from the representative of the nonsupervisory municipal employees, but such requirement does not prevent affiliation by a supervisory representative with the same parent state or national organization as the nonsupervisory municipal employee representative.

(9) POWERS OF CHIEF OF POLICE. Nothing in s. 62.50 grants the chief of police in cities of the 1st class any authority which diminishes or in any other manner affects the rights of municipal employees who are members of a police department employed by a city of the 1st class under this section or under any collective bargaining agreement which is a part of the city of the 1st class and a labor organization representing the members of its police department.


NOTE: 2011 Wisconsin Act 10, made significant changes to this section, effective July 1, 2011.

A collective bargaining provision that releases only teacher members of a majority union from in-service days to attend, with pay, a state convention of the union is discriminatory, but the school board can deny compensation to minority union members who attend a regional convention of their union, if the board does so in good faith. Ashland Board of Education v. WERC, 52 Wis. 2d 625, 191 N.W.2d 242 (1971).

A school district may discharge teachers who engage in a strike. There is a meaningful distinction between governmental employees and nongovernmental employees. The strike ban imposed on public employees is based upon a valid classification and the legislation creating it is not an unconstitutional denial of equal protection. Hortonville Education Association v. Joint School District No. 1, 66 Wis. 2d 469, 225 N.W.2d 658. Reversed on other grounds 425 U.S. 462, 96 L. Ed 2d 941, 96 S. Ct. 2341 (1976).

A letter sent to city employees by the mayor and council members during a representation election campaign that coercively and erroneously warned employees that striking would mean wage rates and fringe benefits, also constituted a prohibited labor practice under sub. (3) (a) 1.; “benign generalities” contained elsewhere in the legislation creating it is not an unconstitutional denial of equal protection. WERC v. City of Evansville, 69 Wis. 2d 140, 230 N.W.2d 688 (1975).

Although employees seeking to enforce the terms of a collective bargaining agreement from any employee covered by either agreement for a period of one year, the plans were not prohibited by this labor practice under sub. (3) (a) 1.; “benign generalities” contained elsewhere in the letter were insufficient to overcome its specific threats. A 2nd letter, which predicted a substantial loss in benefits and freedom of action, cited the cost of union dues, and emphasized wage rates and fringe benefits, also constituted a prohibited labor practice. An employer may not camouflage threats under the guise of predictions, and the statement in context were intended as threats and accepted as such by the employees. WERC v. City of Evansville, 69 Wis. 2d 140, 230 N.W.2d 688 (1975).

The board of education of a city school district was a proper party and had the capacity to maintain an action to enjoin a strike by district teachers. WERC v. Rapids Joint School District No. 1, Wisconsin Rapids Education Association, 70 Wis. 2d 292, 234 N.W.2d 289 (1975).
the fine under sub. (7), 1973 stats., [now sub. (7m) (c) 2.] applicable to employees violating an injunction against a strike by municipal employees, to be paid by said defendant, is inapplicable to a labor association composed of such employees.


Managerial employees are those who participate in the formulation, determination, and implementation of the employer’s policies or otherwise possess effective authority over the employer’s resources. City of Milwaukee v. WERC, 71 Wis. 2d 709, 239 N.W.2d 63 (1976).

A QEO under sub. (4) (d) 2. a. determining the voting unit and directing that an election be held was not revocable under ch. 227. City of West Allis v. WERC, 72 Wis. 2d 268, 240 N.W.2d 416 (1976).

Mandatory subjects of collective bargaining under sub. (1) (d) [now sub. (1) (j)] below are those on which the employer and employee are: 1) those primarily related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment; and 2) the impact of the establishment of educational policies affecting wages, hours, and conditions of employment. Beloit Education Association v. WERC, 73 Wis. 2d 739, 240 N.W.2d 594 (1976).

A grievance was arbitrable under the “discharge and nonrenewal” clause of a bargaining agreement when the contract offered by the board was signed by the teacher after deleting the title “probationary contract” and the board did not accept this counteroffer or offer the teacher a 2nd contract. Jefferson Jt. School District No. 10 v. Jef- ferson Education Association, 78 Wis. 2d 94, 253 N.W.2d 536 (1977).

Collective bargaining is required regarding provisions primarily related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment, but not is not required for decisions primarily related to the formulation or management of public policy. Unified School District No. 1 v. Racine County Com’ rs, 81 Wis. 2d 89, 259 N.W.2d 724 (1974).

A labor contract under sub. 111.70 may limit the scope of the police chief’s discretion under s. 62.13 (4) (a). Glendale Professional Policemen’s Association v. Glendale, 83 2d 928, 234 N.W.2d 594 (1975).

In applying the doctrine of primary jurisdiction, the trial court did not abuse its discretion by transferring a case involving a prohibited practice under sub. (3) (a) 1. to the commission after all constitutional issues had been resolved. Browne v. Milwau- kee Board of School Directors, 63 Wis. 2d 401, 265 N.W.2d 559 (1978).

Under sub. (3) (a) 6. a municipal employer may deduct union dues from the paycheck of a majority union member. Milwaukee Federation of Teachers, Local No. 257 v. City of Milwaukee, 112 Wis. 2d 38, 335 N.W.2d 266 (1983).

The layoff of public employees due to budget cuts was not a mandatory subject of bargaining. City of Brookfield v. WERC, 87 Wis. 2d 819, 275 N.W.2d 723 (1979).

The question of primary jurisdiction arises only when an agency and a court have jurisdiction over a subject of a matter of dispute. The decision for the court is whether it should exercise its discretion to retain the case. McEwen v. Pierce County, 90 Wis. 2d 648, 281 N.W.2d 469 (1979).

Under sub. (3) (a) 6. the “fair-share” provision of a successor collective bargaining agreement was applied retroactively to a hiatus between agreements. Berns v. WERC, 94 Wis. 2d 214, 287 N.W.2d 829 (App. 1979).

Arbitration proceedings were not subject to a 60-day statute requiring decisions. Blackhawk Teachers’ Federation v. WERC, 109 Wis. 2d 415, 326 N.W.2d 247 (App. 1982).


WERC did not abuse its discretion by finding no community of interest between professional teachers and student interns. Unit fragmentation under s. 111.70 (4) (d) 2. a. and b. 6. Arrowhead United Teachers v. WERC, 116 Wis. 2d 580, 342 N.W.2d 709 (1984).

A school board’s anti-nepotism policy was a mandatory subject of bargaining. School District of Drummond v. WERC, 121 Wis. 2d 126, 558 N.W.2d 285 (1997).

Because school supervisory employees are not subject to a collective bargaining agreement, a decision from the paychecks of nonunion supervisors was not authorized. Perry v. Milwaukee Federation of Teachers, Local No. 115, 123 Wis. 2d 264, 325 N.W.2d 594 (1982).

Mediation–arbitration under s. 111.70 (4) (m) is a constitutional delegation of legis- lative authority. Milwaukee County v. District Court 48, 109 Wis. 2d 14, 325 N.W.2d 350 (1982).

A contract provision stating that a teacher speaking or writing as a citizen shall be free from administrative and school censorship and discipline was primarily related to an employer’s determination of the best type of employee and was a mandatory subject of bargaining. Blackhawk Teachers’ Federation v. WERC, 109 Wis. 2d 415, 326 N.W.2d 247 (App. 1982).

The negotiation for wages, hours, and terms of employment for a position created by the city of Kenosha was a mandatory subject of bargaining. Blackhawk Teachers’ Federation v. WERC, 112 Wis. 2d 38, 331 N.W.2d 667 (Ct. Ap. 1984).

Whether a subject is a mandatory, permissive, or prohibited subject of bargaining, including finding a particular contract provision constitutionally prohibited, is for the determination of WERC. Milwaukee Board of School Directors v. WERC, 163 Wis. 2d 393, 477 N.W.2d 163 (Ct. Ap. 1991).

“Arbitration decision” in sub. (3) (a) 7. 1989 stats., encompasses all items incorpo- rated into a resultant collective bargaining agreement, including those not in dispute. The failure to implement an “arbitration decision” arises when an employer fails to implement the terms of the award into the current agreement. Ctm. App. 321 or to give retroac- tive effect to economic items in a retroactive contract. Sack County v. WERC, 165 Wis. 2d 406, 477 N.W.2d 267 (1991).
Right to strike and compulsory arbitration: panacea or placebo? Coughlin, Rader, 58 MLR 205.

Wisconsin's municipal labor law: A need for change. Mulcahy and Ruesch, 64 MLR 103 (1980).


The school decisionmaker — authority of school board to dismiss striking teachers. 1977 WLR 521.

Final offer mediation—arbitration and the limited right to strike: Wisconsin's new municipal employment bargaining law. 1979 WLR 167.

Union security in the private sector: Defining political expenditures related to collective bargaining. 1980 WLR 134.


111.7 General provisions. (1) The commission may adopt reasonable rules relative to the exercise of its powers and authority and proper rules to govern its proceedings and to regulate the conduct of all elections and hearings. The commission shall, upon request, provide a transcript of a proceeding to any party to the proceeding for a fee, established by rule, by the commission at a uniform rate per page. All transcript fees shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.425 (1) (i).

(2) The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a complaint alleging that a prohibited practice has been committed under s. 111.70 (3). The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission act as an arbitrator to resolve a dispute involving the interpretation or application of a collective bargaining agreement under s. 111.70 (4) (c) (1) (d) (3) (m), or (cm) 4. The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for a request that the commission initiate fact-finding under s. 111.70 (4) (c) 3. The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for a request that the commission act as a mediator under s. 111.70 (4) (c) 1., (cg) 3., or (cm) 3. The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for a request that the commission initiate compulsory, final and binding arbitration under s. 111.70 (4) (cg) 6. or (jm) or 111.77 (3). For the performance of commission actions under ss. 111.70 (4) (c) 1., 2. and 3., 111.70 (4) (cm) 4. and 6. (cm) 3. or the performance of commission actions involving a complaint alleging that a prohibited practice has been committed under s. 111.70 (3), the commission shall require that the party to the dispute equally share in the payment of the fee and, for the performance of commission actions involving a complaint alleging that a prohibited practice has been committed under s. 111.70 (3), the commission shall require that the party filing the complaint pay the entire fee. If any party has paid a filing fee requesting the commission to act as a mediator for a labor dispute and the parties do not enter into a voluntary settlement of the dispute, the commission may not subsequently assess or collect a filing fee to initiate fact-finding or arbitration to resolve the same labor dispute. If any request for the performance of commission actions concerns issues arising as a result of more than one unrelated event or occurrence, each such separate event or occurrence shall be treated as a separate request. The commission shall promulgate rules establishing a schedule of filing fees to be paid under this subsection. Fees required to be paid under this subsection shall be paid at the time of filing the complaint or the request for fact-finding, mediation or arbitration. A complaint or request for fact-finding, mediation or arbitration is not filed until the date such fee or fees are paid, except that the commission of the respondent party to pay the filing fee for having the commission initiate compulsory, final and binding arbitration under s. 111.70 (4) (cg) 6. or (jm) or 111.77 (3) may not prohibit the commission from initiating such arbitration. The commission may initiate collection proceedings against the respondent party for the payment of the filing fee. Fees collected under this subsection shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.425 (1) (i).

(4m) The commission shall collect on a systematic basis information on the operation of the arbitration law under s. 111.70 (4) (cg). The commission shall report on the operation of the law to the legislature on an annual basis. The report shall be submitted to the chief clerk of each house of the legislature for distribution to the legislature under s. 13.172 (2).
(5m) The commission shall, on a regular basis, provide training programs to prepare individuals for service as arbitrators or arbitration panel members under s. 111.70 (4) (cg). The commission shall engage in appropriate promotional and recruitment efforts to encourage participation in the training programs by individuals throughout the state, including at least 10 residents of each congressional district. The commission may also provide training programs to individuals and organizations on other aspects of collective bargaining, including on areas of management and labor cooperation directly or indirectly affecting collective bargaining. The commission may charge a reasonable fee for participation in the programs.

(6) This subsection may be cited as “Municipal Employment Relations Act”.


111.77 Settlement of disputes. Municipal employers and public safety employees, as provided in sub. (8), have the duty to bargain collectively in good faith including the duty to refrain from strikes or lockouts and to comply with the following:

(1) If a contract is in effect, the duty to bargain collectively means that a party to such contract shall not terminate or modify such contract unless the party desiring such termination or modification:

(a) Serves written notice upon the other party to the contract of the proposed termination or modification 15 days prior to the expiration date thereof or, if the contract contains no expiration date, 60 days prior to the time it is proposed to make such termination or modification. This paragraph shall not apply to negotiations initiated or occurring in 1971.

(b) Offers to meet and confer with the other party for the purpose of negotiating a new contract or a contract containing the proposed modifications.

(c) Notifies the commission within 90 days after the notice provided for in par. (a) of the existence of a dispute.

(d) Continues in full force and effect without resorting to strike or lockout all terms and conditions of the existing contract for a period of 60 days after such notice is given or until the expiration date of the contract, whichever occurs later.

(e) Participates in mediation sessions by the commission or its representatives if specifically requested to do so by the commission.

(f) Participates in procedures, including binding arbitration, agreed to between the parties.

(2) If there has never been a contract in effect, the union shall notify the commission within 30 days after the first demand upon the employer of the existence of a dispute provided no agreement is reached by that time, and in such case sub. (1) (b), (e) and (f) shall apply.

(3) Where the parties have no procedures for disposition of a dispute and an impasse has been reached, either party may petition the commission to initiate compulsory, final and binding arbitration of the dispute. If in determining whether an impasse has been reached the commission finds that any of the procedures set forth in sub. (1) have not been complied with and that compliance would tend to result in a settlement, it may require such compliance as a prerequisite to ordering arbitration. If after such procedures have been complied with or the commission has determined that compliance would not be productive of a settlement and the commission determines that an impasse has been reached, it shall issue an order requiring arbitration. The commission shall in connection with the order for arbitration submit a panel of 5 arbitrators from which the parties may alternately strike names until a single name is left, who shall be appointed by the commission as arbitrator, whose expenses shall be shared equally between the parties. Arbitration proceedings under this section shall not be interrupted or terminated by reason of any prohibited practice charge filed by either party at any time.

(4) There shall be 2 alternative forms of arbitration:

(a) Form 1. The arbitrator shall have the power to determine all issues in dispute involving wages, hours and conditions of employment.

(b) Form 2. The commission shall appoint an investigator to determine the nature of the impasse. The commission’s investigator shall advise the commission in writing, transmitting copies of such advice to the parties of each issue which is known to be in dispute. Such advice shall also set forth the final offer of each party as it is known to the investigator at the time that the investigation is closed. Neither party may amend its final offer thereafter, except with the written agreement of the other party. The arbitrator shall select the final offer of one of the parties and shall issue an award incorporating that offer without modification.

(5) The proceedings shall be pursuant to form 2 unless the parties shall agree prior to the hearing that form 1 shall control.

(6) (am) In reaching a decision, the arbitrator shall give greater weight to the economic conditions in the jurisdiction of the municipal employer than the arbitrator gives to the factors under par. (bm). The arbitrator shall give an accounting of the consideration of this factor in the arbitrator’s decision.

(bm) In reaching a decision, in addition to the factors under par. (am), the arbitrator shall give weight to the following factors:

1. The lawful authority of the employer.

2. Stipulations of the parties.

3. The interests and welfare of the public and the financial ability of the unit of government to meet these costs.

4. Comparison of the wages, hours and conditions of employment of the employees involved in the arbitration proceeding with the wages, hours and conditions of employment of other employees performing similar services and with other employees generally:

a. In public employment in comparable communities.

b. In private employment in comparable communities.

5. The average consumer prices for goods and services, commonly known as the cost of living.

6. The overall compensation presently received by the employees, including direct wage compensation, vacation, holidays and excused time, insurance and pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, the continuity and stability of employment, and all other benefits received.

7. Changes in any of the foregoing circumstances during the pendency of the arbitration proceedings.

8. Such other factors, not confined to the foregoing, which are normally or traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours and conditions of employment through voluntary collective bargaining, mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or otherwise between the parties, in the public service or in private employment.

(7) Proceedings, except as specifically provided in this section, shall be governed by ch. 788.

(a) This section applies to public safety employees who are supervisors employed by a county having a population of 500,000 or more. For purposes of such application, the term “municipal employee” includes such a supervisor.

(b) This section shall not apply to members of a police department employed by a 1st class city nor to any city, village or town having a population of less than 2,500.

(9) Section 111.70 (4) (e) 3., (cg), and (cm) does not apply to arbitrations covered by this section.


Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 30, Wis. adm. code.

Arbitration under sub. (4) (b), which requires the arbitrator to select the final offer of one of the parties and then issue an award incorporating that offer “without modification,” does not preclude restatement or alteration of the offer to comprise a proper, final arbitration award finally disposing of the controversy. Manitowoc v. Manitowoc Police Dept. 70 Wis. 2d 1006, 236 N.W.2d 231 (1975).
the arbitrator must weigh the criteria suggested by sub. (6). Manitowoc v. Manitowoc Police Dept. 70 Wis. 2d 1006, 236 N.W.2d 231 (1975). Sub. (4) (b) permits amendment of a final offer after an arbitration petition is filed but before an investigation is closed, even if the amendment includes proposals that were not negotiated before the filing of the petition. City of Sheboygan v. WERC, 125 Wis. 2d 1, 370 N.W.2d 800 (Ct. App. 1985). The holding of Manitowoc on what constitutes “without modification” is discussed. La Crosse Professional Police Association v. City of LaCrosse, 212 Wis. 2d 90, 568 N.W.2d 20 (Ct. App. 1997), 96–2741.

Right to strike and compulsory arbitration: panacea or placebo? Coughlin, Rader, 58 MLR 205.

SUBCHAPTER V

STATE EMPLOYMENT LABOR RELATIONS

111.81 Definitions. In this subchapter:

(1) “Collective bargaining” means the performance of the mutual obligation of the state as an employer, by its officers and agents, and the representatives of its employees, to meet and confer at reasonable times, in good faith, with respect to the subjects of bargaining provided in s. 111.91 (1), with respect to public safety employees, and to the subjects of bargaining provided in s. 111.91 (3), with respect to general employees, with the intention of reaching an agreement, or to resolve questions arising under such an agreement. The duty to bargain, however, does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession. Collective bargaining includes the reduction of any agreement reached to a written and signed document.

(2) “Collective bargaining unit” means a unit established under s. 111.825.

(3) “Commission” means the employment relations commission.

(3n) “Consumer price index change” means the average annual percentage change in the consumer price index for all urban consumers, U.S. city average, as determined by the federal department of labor, for the 12 months immediately preceding the current date.

(4) “Craft employee” means a skilled journeyman craftsman, including the skilled journeyman craftsman’s apprentices and helpers, but shall not include employees not in direct line of progression in the craft.

(5) “Division” means the division of personnel management in the department of administration.

(6) “Election” means a proceeding conducted by the commission in which the employees in a collective bargaining unit cast a secret ballot for collective bargaining representatives, or for any other purpose specified in this subchapter.

(7) “Employee” includes:

(a) Any state employee in the classified service of the state, as defined in s. 230.08, except limited term employees, sessional employees, project employees, supervisors, management employees and individuals who are privy to confidential matters affecting the employer–employee relationship, as well as all employees of the commission.

(ar) Any employee who is employed by the University of Wisconsin System, except an employee who is assigned to the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and except faculty, and except academic staff under s. 36.15.

(at) Any employee who is employed by the University of Wisconsin System and assigned to the University of Wisconsin–Madison except faculty and except academic staff under s. 36.15.

(b) Program, project or teaching assistants employed by the University of Wisconsin System, except supervisors, management employees and individuals who are privy to confidential matters affecting the employer–employee relationship.
(1) or (8), primarily for the benefit of the university, faculty or academic staff supervisor or a granting agency. “Project assistant” or “program assistant” does not include a graduate student who does work which is primarily for the benefit of the student’s own learning and research and which is independent or self-directed. 

(15r) “Public safety employee” means any individual under s. 40.02 (48) (am) 7. or 8.

(16) “Referendum” means a proceeding conducted by the commission in which public safety employees in a collective bargaining unit may cast a secret ballot on the question of directing the labor organization and the employer to enter into a fair-share or maintenance of membership agreement or to terminate such an agreement.

(17) “Representative” includes any person chosen by an employee to represent the employee.

(17m) “Research assistant” means a graduate student enrolled in the University of Wisconsin System who is receiving a stipend to conduct research that is primarily for the benefit of the student’s own learning and research and which is independent or self-directed, but does not include students provided fellowships, scholarships, or traineeships which are distributed through other titles such as advanced opportunity fellow, fellow, scholar, or trainee, and does not include students with either an F−1 or a J−1 visa issued by the federal department of state.

(18) “Strike” includes any strike or other concerted stoppage of work by employees, and any concerted slowdown or other concerted interruption of operations or services by employees, or any concerted refusal to work or perform their usual duties as employees of the state.

(19) “Supervisor” means any individual whose principal work is different from that of the individual’s subordinates and who has authority, in the interest of the employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, layoff, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward or discipline employees, or to adjust their grievances, or to authoritatively recommend such action, if the individual’s exercise of such authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.

(19m) “Teaching assistant” means a graduate student enrolled in the University of Wisconsin System who is regularly assigned teaching and related responsibilities, other than manual or clerical responsibilities, under the supervision of a member of the faculty as defined in s. 36.05 (8).

(20) “Unfair labor practice” means any unfair labor practice specified in s. 111.84.


111.815 Duties of state. (1) In the furtherance of this subchapter, the state shall be considered as a single employer and employment relations policies and practices throughout the state service shall be as consistent as practicable. The division shall negotiate and administer collective bargaining agreements. To coordinate the employer position in the negotiation of agreements, the division shall maintain close liaison with the legislature relative to the negotiation of agreements and the fiscal ramifications of those agreements. Except with respect to the collective bargaining units specified in s. 111.825 (1r) and (1t), the division is responsible for the employer functions of the executive branch under this subchapter, and shall coordinate its collective bargaining activities with operating state agencies on matters of agency concern. The legislative branch shall act upon those portions of tentative agreements negotiated by the division that require legislative action. With respect to the collective bargaining units specified in s. 111.825 (1r), the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System is responsible for the employer functions under this subchapter.

(2) The administrator of the division shall, together with the appointing authorities or their representatives, represent the state in its responsibility as an employer under this subchapter except with respect to negotiations in the collective bargaining units specified in s. 111.825 (1r) and (1t). Except as provided in s. 36.115 (7), the administrator of the division shall establish and maintain, wherever practicable, consistent employment relations policies and practices throughout the state service.

(3) With regard to collective bargaining activities involving employees who are assistant district attorneys, the administrator of the division shall maintain close liaison with the secretary of administration.

History: 1971 c. 270; 1995 a. 27; 2011 a. 10.

111.825 Collective bargaining units. (1) It is the legislative intent that in order to foster meaningful collective bargaining, units must be structured in such a way as to avoid excessive fragmentation whenever possible. In accordance with this policy, collective bargaining units for employees in the classified service of the state are structured on a statewide basis with one collective bargaining unit for each of the following occupational groups:

(a) Administrative support.
(b) Blue collar and nonbuilding trades.
(c) Building trades crafts.
(cm) Law enforcement.
(d) Security and public safety.
(e) Technical.
(f) Professional:
   1. Fiscal and staff services.
   2. Research, statistics and analysis.
   3. Legal.
   5. Patient care.
   6. Social services.
   7. Education.
   8. Engineering.
   (g) Public safety employees.

(1r) Except as provided in sub. (2), collective bargaining units for employees who are employed by the University of Wisconsin System, other than employees who are assigned to the University of Wisconsin−Madison, are structured with one collective bargaining unit for each of the following occupational groups:

(a) Administrative support.
(b) Blue collar and nonbuilding trades.
(c) Building trades crafts.
(cm) Law enforcement.
(d) Security and public safety.
(e) Technical.  
(eb) The program, project and teaching assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.  
(ec) The program, project and teaching assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Green Bay, La Crosse, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Stevens Point, Stout, Superior and Whitewater.  
(ef) Instructional staff employed by the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System who provide services for a charter school established by contract under s. 118.40 (2r) (cm), 2013 stats.  
(eh) Research assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.  
(ei) Research assistants of the Universities of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Green Bay, La Crosse, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Stevens Point, Stout, Superior, and Whitewater.  
(em) The program, project, and teaching assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.  
(er) Research assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.  
(f) Professional:  
1. Fiscal and staff services.  
2. Research, statistics, and analysis.  
3. Legal.  
5. Patient care.  
6. Social services.  
7. Education.  
8. Engineering.  
(11) Except as provided in sub. (2), collective bargaining units for employees employed by the University of Wisconsin System and assigned to the University of Wisconsin-Madison are structured with one collective bargaining unit for each of the following occupational groups:  
(a) Administrative support.  
(b) Blue collar and nonbuilding trades.  
(c) Building trades crafts.  
(cm) Law enforcement.  
(d) Security and public safety.  
(e) Technical.  
(em) The program, project, and teaching assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.  
(er) Research assistants of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.  
(f) Professional:  
1. Fiscal and staff services.  
2. Research, statistics, and analysis.  
3. Legal.  
5. Patient care.  
6. Social services.  
7. Education.  
8. Engineering.  
(2) Collective bargaining units for employees in the unclassified service of the state shall be structured with one collective bargaining unit for each of the following groups:  
(d) Assistant district attorneys.  
(e) Attorneys employed in the office of the state public defender.  
(3) The commission shall assign employees to the appropriate collective bargaining units set forth in subs. (1), (1r), (1t), and (2).  
(4) Any labor organization may petition for recognition as the exclusive representative of a collective bargaining unit specified in sub. (1), (1r), (1t), or (2) in accordance with the election procedures set forth in s. 111.83, provided the petition is accompanied by a 30 percent showing of interest in the form of signed authorization cards. Each additional labor organization seeking to appear on the ballot shall file petitions within 60 days of the date of filing of the original petition and prove, through signed authorization cards, that at least 10 percent of the employees in the collective bargaining unit want it to be their representative.  
(5) Although supervisors are not considered employees for purposes of this subchapter, the commission may consider a petition for a statewide collective bargaining unit of professional supervisors or a statewide unit of nonprofessional supervisors in the classified service, but the representative of supervisors may not be affiliated with any labor organization representing employees. For purposes of this subsection, affiliation does not include membership in a national, state, county or municipal federation of national or international labor organizations. The certified representative of supervisors who are not public safety employees may not bargain collectively with respect to any matter other than wages as provided in s. 111.91 (3), and the certified representative of supervisors who are public safety employees may not bargain collectively with respect to any matter other than wages and fringe benefits as provided in s. 111.91 (1).  
(6) (a) The commission shall assign only an employee of the department of administration, department of transportation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, or board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System who engages in the detection and prevention of crime, who enforces the laws and who is authorized to make arrests for violations of the laws; an employee of the department of administration, department of transportation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, or board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System who provides technical law enforcement support to such employees; and an employee of the department of transportation who engages in motor vehicle inspection or operator’s license examination to a collective bargaining unit under sub. (1) (cm), (1r) (cm), or (1t) (cm), whichever is appropriate.  
(b) The commission may assign only a public safety employee to the collective bargaining unit under sub. (1) (g).  
(7) Notwithstanding sub. (3), if on July 1, 2015, an employee of the University of Wisconsin System is assigned to a collective bargaining unit under sub. (1) or (2) (a), (b), (c), (g), (h), or (i) [sub. (1) or s. 111.825 (2) (a), (b), (c), (g), (h), or (i), 2013 stats., the commission shall assign the person to the corresponding collective bargaining unit under sub. (1r) or (1t), whichever is appropriate. Except as otherwise provided in this subchapter, the commission may not assign any other persons to the collective bargaining units under sub. (1r) or (1t).  
NOTE: The correct cross-reference is shown in brackets. Corrective legislation is pending.  
History: 1985 a. 29; 1985 a. 42 ss. 4 to 6, 8, 18; 1985 a. 332; 1987 a. 331; 1989 a. 31; 1995 a. 27, 251, 324; 1997 a. 24; 2001 a. 16; 2005 a. 253; 2009 a. 28; 2011 a. 10, 32; 2013 a. 20 ss. 2365m, 9448; 2013 a. 166; 2015 a. 55; s. 35.17 correction in 7.  
Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 27, Wis. adm. code.  
111.83 Representatives and elections. (1) Except as provided in sub. (5), a representative chosen for the purposes of collective bargaining by at least 51 percent of the general employees in a collective bargaining unit shall be the exclusive representative of all of the employees in such unit for the purposes of collective bargaining. A representative chosen for the purposes of collective bargaining by a majority of the public safety employees voting in a collective bargaining unit shall be the exclusive representative of all of the employees in such unit for the purposes of collective bargaining. Any individual employee, or any minority group of employees in any collective bargaining unit, may present grievances to the employer in person, or through representatives of their own choosing, and the employer shall confer with the employee or group of employees in relation thereto if the majority
representative has been afforded the opportunity to be present at the conference. Any adjustment resulting from such a conference may not be inconsistent with the conditions of employment established by the majority representative and the employer.

(2) Whenever the commission decides to permit employees to determine for themselves whether they desire to establish themselves as a collective bargaining unit, such determination shall be conducted by secret ballot. In such instances, the commission shall cause the balloting to be conducted so as to show separately the wishes of the employees in the voting group involved as to the determination of the collective bargaining unit.

(3) (a) Whenever a question arises concerning the representation of employees in a collective bargaining unit the commission shall determine the representative thereof by taking a secret ballot of the employees if the election has not been previously determined by the administrator of the division. There shall be included on any ballot for the election of representatives the names of all labor organizations having an interest in representing the employees participating in the election as indicated in petitions filed with the commission. The name of any existing representative shall be included on the ballot without the necessity of filing a petition. The commission may exclude from the ballot one or more employees if the election, stands deprived of his or her rights under this subchapter by reason of a prior adjudication of his or her having engaged in an unfair labor practice. The ballot shall be so prepared as to permit a vote against representation by anyone named on the ballot. The commission’s certification of the results of any election is conclusive as to the findings included therein unless reviewed under s. 111.07 (8).

(b) Annually, no later than December 1, the commission shall conduct an election to certify the representative of a collective bargaining unit that contains a general employee. There shall be included on the ballot the names of all labor organizations having an interest in representing the employees participating in the election. The commission may exclude from the ballot one or more employees if the election, stands deprived of his or her rights under this subchapter by reason of a prior adjudication of his or her having engaged in an unfair labor practice. The commission shall certify any representative that receives at least 51 percent of the votes of all of the general employees in the collective bargaining unit. If no representative receives at least 51 percent of the votes of all of the general employees in the collective bargaining unit, the commission shall decertify the current representative and the employees shall be nonrepresented. Notwithstanding s. 111.825 (1r) (ec), the results of all elections held pursuant to this subsection which employees in the collective bargaining unit have voted to participate in collective bargaining shall be effective on the day that the succeeding collective bargaining unit vote to participate in collective bargaining, the employees at that institution shall become a part of that collective bargaining unit.

(c) The commission shall decertify the current representative and the employees shall be nonrepresented. Notwithstanding s. 111.825 (1r) (ec), the results of all elections held pursuant to this subsection which employees in the collective bargaining unit have voted to participate in collective bargaining shall be effective on the day that the succeeding collective bargaining unit vote to participate in collective bargaining, the employees at that institution shall become a part of that collective bargaining unit.

(d) If at an election held under par. (b), at least 51 percent of the employees in the collective bargaining unit at all institutions in which the choice to participate in collective bargaining receives at least 51 percent of the eligible votes elect to be represented by a single labor organization, that labor organization shall be the exclusive representative for all employees in that collective bargaining unit, except those excluded under par. (c).

(e) (b) Upon filing of a petition with the commission indicating a showing of interest of at least 30 percent of the employees at an institution who are included within a collective bargaining unit to be represented by a labor organization, the commission shall hold an election in which the employees in that unit at that institution may vote on the representation of the labor organization named in any such petition shall be included on the ballot. Within 60 days of the time that an original petition is filed, another petition may be filed with the commission indicating a showing of interest of at least 10 percent of the employees at the same institution who are included in the same collective bargaining unit to be represented by another labor organization, in which case the name of that labor organization shall be included on the ballot. If more than one original petition is filed within a 30–day period concerning employees in the collective bargaining unit specified in s. 111.825 (1r) (ec), the results of all elections held pursuant to the petitions shall be announced by the commission at the same time. The ballot shall be prepared in accordance with sub. (3), except as otherwise provided in this subsection.

(f) (c) Notwithstanding s. 111.825 (1r) (ec), the employees at any institution included within the collective bargaining unit at which no petition is filed and no election is held or at which votes indicate, by a majority of those voting in an election, a desire not to participate in collective bargaining are not considered to be a part of that collective bargaining unit.

(g) (d) If at an election held under par. (b), at least 51 percent of the employees in the collective bargaining unit at all institutions in which the choice to participate in collective bargaining receives at least 51 percent of the eligible votes do not elect to be represented by a single labor organization, the commission may hold one or more runoff elections under sub. (4) until one representative receives at least 51 percent of the eligible votes.

(h) (e) If at an election held under par. (b), at least 51 percent of the employees in the collective bargaining unit at all institutions in which the choice to participate in collective bargaining receives at least 51 percent of the eligible votes elect to be represented by a single labor organization, the commission shall decertify the current representative and the employees shall be nonrepresented. Notwithstanding s. 111.825 (1r) (ec), the results of all elections held pursuant to this subsection which employees in the collective bargaining unit have voted to participate in collective bargaining shall be effective on the day that the succeeding collective bargaining unit vote to participate in collective bargaining, the employees at that institution shall become a part of that collective bargaining unit.

(i) (f) If a petition is filed under sub. (6) for the discontinuance of existing representation indicating a showing of interest by 30 percent of the total number of employees at all institutions at which employees in the collective bargaining unit have voted to become a part of the unit, the commission shall hold an election on that question at all such institutions. If a petition is filed under sub. (6) indicating a showing of interest by 30 percent of the employees at one or more, but not all, of the institutions at which employees in the collective bargaining unit have voted to become

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a part of the unit, the commission shall hold an election on that question only at the institution or institutions at which the showing is made. In such an election, the only question appearing on the ballot shall be whether the employees desire to participate in collective bargaining.

(i) If a petition is filed under sub. (6) for a change of existing representation, the commission shall hold an election on the question in accordance with par. (b), except that participation shall be limited to employees at those institutions included in the collective bargaining unit who have previously voted to become a part of the unit. Runoff elections shall be held, as provided in par. (e), whenever necessary. At any such election, if a majority of the total number of employees included in the collective bargaining unit at all institutions at which employees have voted to become a part of the unit elect not to participate in collective bargaining, regardless of the result of the vote at any single institution, no representative may be certified by the commission to represent the employees at any institution within that collective bargaining unit, unless a new petition and election is held under par. (b). However, if a majority of the total number of employees included in the collective bargaining unit at all institutions at which employees have voted to become a part of the unit elect to participate in collective bargaining, but a majority of the employees at one or more of the institutions elect not to participate in collective bargaining, then only the employees at those institutions electing not to participate shall not be considered a part of that collective bargaining unit.

(6) While a collective bargaining agreement between a labor organization and an employer is in force under this subchapter, a petition for an election in the collective bargaining unit to which the agreement applies may only be filed during October in the calendar year prior to the expiration of that agreement. An election held under that petition may be held only if the petition is supported by proof that at least 30 percent of the employees in the collective bargaining unit desire a change or discontinuance of existing representation. Within 60 days of the time that an original petition is filed, another petition may be filed supported by proof that at least 10 percent of the employees in the same collective bargaining unit desire a different representative. If a majority of the employees in the collective bargaining unit vote for a change or discontinuance of representation by any named representative, the decision takes effect upon expiration of any existing collective bargaining agreement between the employer and the existing representative.

(7) Notwithstanding subs. (1), (3) and (6) and s. 111.825 (4), if on July 1, 2015, there is a representative recognized or certified to represent the employees in any of the collective bargaining units specified in s. 111.825 (1) (a) to (f), that representative shall become the representative of the employees in the corresponding collective bargaining units specified in s. 111.825 (1r) (a) to (f) or (1t) (a) to (f), whichever is appropriate, without the necessity of filing a petition or conducting an election, subject to the right of any person to file a petition under this section during October 2014 or at any subsequent time when sub. (6) applies.

History: 1971 c. 270; 1975 c. 238; 1985 a. 42; 1989 a. 336; 1995 a. 27; 2003 a. 33; 2009 a. 28; 2011 a. 10, 32; 2013 a. 20 ss. 236sm, 9448; 2013 a. 166; 2015 a. 35; s. 317 correction in (2).

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 21, Wis. adm. code.


111.84 Unfair labor practices. (1) It is an unfair labor practice for an employer individually or in concert with others:

(a) To interfere with, restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed in s. 111.82.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, to initiate, create, dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor or employee organization or contribute financial support to it. Except as provided in ss. 40.02 (22) (e) and 40.23 (1) (f) 4., no change in any law affecting the Wisconsin retirement system under ch. 40 and no action by the employer that is authorized by such a law constitutes a violation of this paragraph unless an applicable collective bargaining agreement covering a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g) specifically prohibits the change or action. No such change or action affects the continuing duty to bargain collectively with a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g) regarding the Wisconsin retirement system under ch. 40 to the extent required by s. 111.91 (1). It is not an unfair labor practice for the employer to reimburse an employee at his or her prevailing wage rate for the time spent during the employee’s regularly scheduled hours conferring with the employer’s officers or agents and for attendance at commission or court hearings necessary for the administration of this subchapter.

(c) To encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization by discrimination in regard to hiring, tenure or other terms or conditions of employment. This paragraph does not apply to fair-share or maintenance of membership agreements.

(d) To refuse to bargain collectively on matters set forth in s. 111.91 (1) or (3), whichever is appropriate, with a representative of a majority of its employees in an appropriate collective bargaining unit. Where the employer has a good faith doubt as to whether a labor organization claiming the support of a majority of its employees in appropriate collective bargaining unit does in fact have that support, it may file with the commission a petition requesting an election as to that claim. It is not deemed to have refused to bargain until an election has been held and the results thereof certified to it by the commission. A violation of this paragraph includes, but is not limited to, the refusal to execute a collective bargaining agreement previously orally agreed upon.

(e) To violate any collective bargaining agreement previously agreed upon by the parties with respect to wages, hours and conditions of employment affecting employees, including an agreement to arbitrate or to accept the terms of an arbitration award, where previously the parties have agreed to accept such award as final and binding upon them.

(f) To deduct labor organization dues from the earnings of a public safety employee, unless the employer has been presented with an individual order therefor, signed by the public safety employee personally, and terminable by at least the end of any year of its life or earlier by the public safety employee giving at least 30 but not more than 120 days’ written notice of such termination to the employer and to the representative labor organization, except if there is a fair-share or maintenance of membership agreement in effect. The employer shall give notice to the labor organization of receipt of such notice of termination.

(g) To use any moneys received for any purpose to discourage, to train any supervisor, management employee, or other employee to discourage, or to contract with any person for the purposes of discouraging employees in the exercise of their rights guaranteed under s. 111.82.

(2) It is an unfair labor practice for an employee individually or in concert with others:

(a) To coerce or intimidate an employee in the enjoyment of the employee’s legal rights, including those guaranteed under s. 111.82.

(b) To coerce, intimidate or induce any officer or agent of the employer to interfere with any of the employer’s employees in the enjoyment of their legal rights including those guaranteed under s. 111.82 or to engage in any practice with regard to its employees which would constitute an unfair labor practice if undertaken by the officer or agent on the officer’s or agent’s own initiative.

(c) To refuse to bargain collectively on matters set forth in s. 111.91 (1) or (3), whichever is appropriate, with the duly authorized officer or agent of the employer which is the recognized or certified exclusive collective bargaining representative of
employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (a) in an appropriate collective bargaining unit or with the certified exclusive collective bargaining representative of employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (ar) to (f) in an appropriate collective bargaining unit. Such refusal to bargain shall include, but not be limited to, the refusal to execute a collective bargaining agreement previously orally agreed upon.

(d) To violate the provisions of any written agreement with respect to terms and conditions of employment affecting employees, including an agreement to arbitrate or to accept the terms of an arbitration award, where previously the parties have agreed to accept such awards as final and binding upon them.

(e) To engage in, induce or encourage any employees to engage in a strike, or a concerted refusal to work or perform their usual duties as employees.

(f) To coerce or intimidate a supervisory employee, officer or agent of the employer, working at the same trade or profession as the employer’s employees, to induce the person to become a member of or act in concert with the labor organization of which the employee is a member.

(3) It is an unfair labor practice for any person to do or cause to be done on behalf of or in the interest of employers or employees, or in connection with or to influence the outcome of any controversy as to employment relations, any act prohibited by sub. (1) or (2).

(4) Any controversy concerning unfair labor practices may be submitted to the commission as provided in s. 111.07, except that the commission shall fix hearing on complaints involving alleged violations of sub. (2) (e) within 3 days after filing of such complaints, and notice shall be given to each party interested by service on the party personally, or by telegram, advising the party of the nature of the complaint and of the date, time and place of hearing thereon. The commission may in its discretion appoint a substitute tribunal to hear unfair labor practice charges by either appointing a 3-member panel or submitting a 7-member panel to the parties and allowing each to strike 2 names. Such panel shall report its finding to the commission for appropriate action.


Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 22, Wis. adm. code.

The state’s determination of an employee, in part because of the employee’s participation in union activities, violated the state employment labor relations act (SELRA), subch. V, ch. 111. State v. WERC, 122 Wis. 2d 132, 361 N.W.2d 660 (1985).

111.84 Wage deduction prohibition. The employer may not deduct labor organization dues from a general employee’s earnings.

History: 2011 a. 10.

The creation of this section by 2011 Wis. Act 10 did not equalize protection or free speech protections. Wisconsin Education Association Council v. Walker, 705 P.3d 640 (2013).

111.85 Fair–share and maintenance of membership agreements. (1) (a) No fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement covering public safety employees may become effective unless authorized by a referendum. The commission shall order a referendum whenever it receives a petition supported by proof that at least 30 percent of the public safety employees in a collective bargaining unit desire that a fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement be entered into between the employer and a labor organization. A petition may specify that a referendum is requested on a maintenance of membership agreement only, in which case the ballot shall be limited to that question.

(b) For a fair–share agreement to be authorized, at least two-thirds of the eligible public safety employees voting in a referendum shall vote in favor of the agreement. For a maintenance of membership agreement to be authorized, at least a majority of the eligible public safety employees voting in a referendum shall vote in favor of the agreement. In a referendum on a fair–share agreement, if less than two-thirds but more than one-half of the eligible public safety employees vote in favor of the agreement, a maintenance of membership agreement is authorized.

(c) If a fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement is authorized in a referendum, the employer shall enter into such an agreement with the labor organization named on the ballot in the referendum. Each fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement shall contain a provision requiring the employer to deduct the amount of dues as certified by the labor organization from the earnings of the public safety employees affected by the agreement and to pay the amount so deducted to the labor organization. Unless the parties agree to an earlier date, the agreement shall take effect 60 days after certification by the commission that the referendum vote authorized the agreement. The employer shall be held harmless against any claims, demands, suits and other forms of liability made by public safety employees or local labor organizations which may arise for actions taken by the employer in compliance with this section. All such lawful claims, demands, suits and other forms of liability are the responsibility of the labor organization entering into the agreement.

(d) Under each fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement, a public safety employee who has religious convictions against dues payments to a labor organization based on teachings or tenets of a church or religious body of which he or she is a member shall, on request to the labor organization, have his or her dues paid to a charity mutually agreed upon by the public safety employee and the labor organization. Any dispute concerning this paragraph may be submitted to the commission for adjudication.

(2) (a) Once authorized, a fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement covering public safety employees shall continue in effect, subject to the right of the employer or labor organization concerned to petition the commission to conduct a new referendum. Such petition must be supported by proof that at least 30 percent of the public safety employees in the collective bargaining unit desire that the fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement be discontinued. Upon so finding, the commission shall conduct a new referendum. If the continuance of the fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement is approved in the referendum by at least the percentage of eligible voting public safety employees required for its initial authorization, it shall be continued in effect, subject to the right of the employer or labor organization to later initiate a further vote following the procedure provided in this subsection. If the continuation of the agreement is not supported in any referendum, it is deemed terminated at the conclusion of the collective bargaining agreement, or one year from the date of the certification of the result of the referendum, whichever is earlier.

(b) The commission shall declare any fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement suspended upon such conditions and for such time as the commission decides whenever it finds that the labor organization involved has refused on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation or creed to receive as a member any public safety employee in the collective bargaining unit involved, and the agreement shall be made subject to the findings and orders of the commission. Any of the parties to the agreement, or any public safety employee covered thereby, may come before the commission, as provided in s. 111.07, and petition the commission to make such a finding.

(3) A stipulation for a referendum executed by an employer and a labor organization may not be filed until after the representation election has been held and the results certified.

(4) The commission may, under rules adopted for that purpose, appoint as its agent an official of a state agency whose public safety employees are entitled to vote in a referendum to conduct a referendum provided for herein.

(5) Notwithstanding sub. (1), if on July 1, 2015, there is a fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement in effect in any of the collective bargaining units specified in s. 111.825 (1) (a) to (f), that fair–share or maintenance of membership agreement shall

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apply to the corresponding collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1r) (a) to (f) or (11) (a) to (f), whichever is appropriate, without the necessity of filing a petition or conducting a referendum, subject to the right of the employees in each collective bargaining unit to file a petition requesting a referendum under sub. (2) (a).

History: 1971 c. 270; 1981 c. 112; 1983 a. 160; 1985 a. 42; 1995 a. 27; 2011 a. 10, 33; 2013 a. 20 s. 2565m, 9446; 2013 a. 166 s. 35.17 correction in (5).

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 26, Wis. adm. code.

The constitutional requirements of a union’s collection of agency fees under a fair-share agreement include: 1) an adequate explanation of the basis of the fee; 2) a reasonably prompt opportunity to challenge the amount of the fee before an impartial decisionmaker; and 3) an escrow for the amounts reasonably in dispute. Browne v. WERC, 169 Wis. 2d 79, 485 N.W.2d 376 (1992).

111.86 Grievance arbitration. (1) Parties to the dispute pertaining to the interpretation of a collective bargaining agreement may agree in writing to have the commission or any other appointing state agency serve as arbitrator or may designate any other competent, impartial and disinterested persons to so serve. Such arbitration proceedings shall be governed by ch. 788.

(2) The division shall charge a state department or agency the employer’s share of the cost related to grievance arbitration under sub. (1) for any arbitration that involves one or more employees of the state department or agency. Each state department or agency so charged shall pay the amount that the division charges from the appropriation account or accounts used to pay the salary of the grievant. Funds received under this subsection shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.505 (1) (ks).

History: 1971 c. 270; 1979 c. 32 s. 92 (15); 1985 a. 42; 1995 a. 27; 2003 a. 33; 2015 a. 55.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 23, Wis. adm. code.

111.87 Mediation. The commission may appoint any competent, impartial, disinterested person to act as mediator in any labor dispute either upon its own initiative or upon the request of one of the parties. It is the function of such mediator to bring the parties together voluntarily under such favorable auspices as will tend to effectuate settlement of the dispute, but neither the mediator nor the commission shall have any power of compulsion in mediation proceedings.

History: 1971 c. 270.

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 24, Wis. adm. code.

111.88 Fact-finding. (1) If a dispute has not been settled after a reasonable period of negotiation and after the settlement procedures, if any, established by the parties have been exhausted, the representative which has been certified by the commission after an election, or, in the case of a representative of employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (a), has been duly recognized by the employer, as the exclusive representative of employees in an appropriate collective bargaining unit, and the employer, its officers and agents, after a reasonable period of negotiation, are deadlocked with respect to any dispute between them arising in the collective bargaining process, the parties jointly, may petition the commission, in writing, to initiate fact-finding under this section, and to make recommendations to resolve the deadlock.

(2) Upon receipt of a petition to initiate fact-finding, the commission shall make an investigation with or without a formal hearing, to determine whether a deadlock in fact exists. After its investigation, the commission shall certify the results thereof. If the commission decides that fact-finding should be initiated, it shall appoint a qualified, disinterested person or 3-member panel, when jointly requested by the parties, to function as a fact finder.

(3) The fact finder may establish dates and place of hearings and shall conduct the hearings under rules established by the commission. Upon request, the commission shall issue subpoenas for hearings conducted by the fact finder. The fact finder may administer oaths. Upon completion of the hearing, the fact finder shall make written findings of fact and recommendations for solution of the dispute and shall cause the same to be served on the parties and the commission. In making findings and recommendations, the fact finder shall take into consideration other pertinent factors the principles vital to the public interest in efficient and economical governmental administration. Cost of fact-finding proceedings shall be divided equally between the parties. At the time the fact finder submits a statement of his or her costs to the parties, the fact finder shall submit a copy thereof to the commission at its Madison office.

(4) Nothing herein shall be construed as prohibiting any fact finder from endeavoring to mediate the dispute at any time prior to the issuance of the fact finder’s recommendation.

(5) Within 30 days of the receipt of the fact finder’s recommendations or within such time period mutually agreed upon by the parties, each party shall advise the other, in writing, as to the party’s acceptance or rejection, in whole or in part, of the fact finder’s recommendations and, at the same time, send a copy of such notification to the commission at its Madison office. Failure to comply with this subsection, by the state employer or employee representative, constitutes a violation of s. 111.84 (1) (d) or (2) (c).


Cross-reference: See also chs. ERC 25 and 40, Wis. adm. code.

111.89 Strike prohibited. (1) Upon establishing that a strike is in progress, the employer may either seek an injunction or file an unfair labor practice charge with the commission under s. 111.84 (2) (e) or both. It is the responsibility of the division to decide whether to seek an injunction or file an unfair labor practice charge. The existence of an administrative remedy does not constitute grounds for denial of injunctive relief.

(2) The occurrence of a strike and the participation therein by an employee do not affect the rights of the employer, in law or in equity, to deal with the strike, including:

(a) The right to impose discipline, including discharge, or suspension without pay, of any employee participating therein;

(b) The right to cancel the reinstatement eligibility of any employee engaging therein; and

(c) The right of the employer to request the imposition of fines, either against the labor organization or the employee engaging therein, or to sue for damages because of such strike activity.


111.90 Management rights. Nothing in this subchapter shall interfere with the right of the employer, in accordance with this subchapter to:

(1) Carry out the statutory mandate and goals assigned to a state agency by the most appropriate and efficient methods and means and utilize personnel in the most appropriate and efficient manner possible.

(2) Manage the employees of a state agency; hire, promote, transfer, assign or retain employees in positions within the agency; and in that regard establish reasonable work rules.

(3) Suspend, demote, discharge or take other appropriate disciplinary action against the employee for just cause; or to lay off employees in the event of lack of work or funds or under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient and nonproductive.

History: 1971 c. 270; 1995 a. 27; 2011 a. 10.

111.91 Subjects of bargaining. (1) (a) Except as provided in sub. (b), with regard to a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g), matters subject to collective bargaining to the point of impasse are wage rates, consistent with sub. (2), the assignment and reassignment of classifications to pay ranges, determination of an incumbent’s pay status resulting from position reallocation or reclassification, and pay adjustments upon temporary assignment of classified public safety employees to duties of a higher classification or downward reallocations of a classified public safety employee’s position; fringe benefits consistent with sub. (2); hours and conditions of employment.
(b) The employer is not required to bargain with a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g) on management rights under s. 111.90, except that procedures for the adjustment or settlement of grievances or disputes arising out of any type of disciplinary action referred to in s. 111.90 (3) shall be a subject of bargaining.

(c) The employer is prohibited from bargaining with a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g) on matters contained in sub. (2).

(cm) Except as provided in sub. (2) and ss. 40.02 (22) (e) and 40.23 (1) (f) 4., all laws governing the Wisconsin retirement system under ch. 40 and all actions of the employer that are authorized under any such law which apply to nonrepresented individuals employed by the state shall apply to similarly situated public safety employees, unless otherwise specifically provided in a collective bargaining agreement that applies to the public safety employees.

(d) In the case of a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g), demands relating to retirement and group insurance shall be submitted to the employer at least one year prior to commencement of negotiations.

(2) The employer is prohibited from bargaining with a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g) with respect to any of the following:

(a) The mission and goals of state agencies as set forth in the statutes.

(b) Policies, practices and procedures of the civil service merit system relating to:

1. Original appointments and promotions specifically including recruitment, examinations, certification, policies with respect to probationary periods and appointments, but not including transfers between positions allocated to classifications that are assigned to the same pay range or an identical pay range in a different pay schedule, within the same collective bargaining unit or another collective bargaining unit represented by the same labor organization.

2. The job evaluation system specifically including position classification and reclassification, position qualification standards, establishment and abolition of classifications, and allocation and reallocation of positions to classifications; and the determination of an incumbent’s status, other than pay status, resulting from position reallocations.

(c) Disciplinary actions and position abandonments governed by s. 230.34 (1) (a), (am) and (ar), except as provided in those paragraphs.

(d) Amendments to this subchapter.

(e) Matters related to grants made by the department of transportation under s. 85.107 (3) (b).

(f) Family leave and medical leave rights below the minimum afforded under s. 103.10. Nothing in this paragraph prohibits the employer from bargaining on rights to family leave or medical leave which are more generous to the employee than the rights provided under s. 103.10.

(fm) If the collective bargaining unit contains a public safety employee who is employed on or after July 1, 2011, the requirement under s. 40.05 (1) (b) that the employer may not pay, on behalf of that public safety employee, any employee required contributions or the employee share of required contributions and the impact of this requirement on the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of that public safety employee.

(gm) Reemployment rights of employees under s. 230.32 (7).

(gr) The right of an employee to take leave to participate in an emergency service operation of the Civil Air Patrol under s. 321.66 (2) (a).

(gu) The right of a public safety employee, who is an employee, as defined in s. 103.88 (1) (d), and who is a fire fighter, emergency medical services practitioner, emergency medical responder, or ambulance driver for a volunteer fire department or fire company, a public agency, as defined in s. 256.15 (1) (n), or a nonprofit corporation, as defined in s. 256.01 (12), to respond to an emergency as provided under s. 103.88 (2).

(h) The rights of employees to have retirement benefits computed under s. 40.30.

(i) Honesty testing requirements that provide fewer rights and remedies to employees than are provided under s. 111.37.

(im) Employer access to the social networking Internet site of an employee that provides fewer rights and remedies to employees than are provided under s. 995.55.

(j) Creditable service to which s. 40.285 (2) (a) 4. applies.

(k) Compliance with the health benefit plan requirements under ss. 632.746 (1) (10) and 632.747.

(kc) Compliance with the insurance requirements under s. 631.95.

(km) The definition of earnings under s. 40.02 (22).

(L) The maximum benefit limitations under s. 40.31.

(m) The limitations on contributions under s. 40.32.

(n) The provision to employees of the health insurance coverage required under s. 632.895 (1) to (8), (10), (11m), (14), and (16).

(bm) The requirements related to providing coverage for a dependent under s. 632.885 and to continuing coverage for a dependent student on a medical leave of absence under s. 632.895 (15).

(o) The requirements related to coverage of and prior authorization for treatment of an emergency medical condition under s. 632.85.

(p) The requirements related to coverage of drugs and devices under s. 632.853.

(q) The requirements related to experimental treatment under s. 632.855.

(qm) The requirements under s. 632.89 relating to coverage of treatment for nervous and mental disorders and alcoholism and other drug problems.

(r) The requirements under s. 609.10 related to offering a point-of-service option plan.

(s) The requirements related to internal grievance procedures under s. 632.83 and independent review of certain health benefit plan determinations under s. 632.835.

(3) The employer is prohibited from bargaining with a collective bargaining unit containing a general employee with respect to any of the following:

(a) Any factor or condition of employment except wages, which includes only total base wages and excludes any other compensation, which includes, but is not limited to, overtime, premium pay, merit pay, performance pay, supplemental compensation, pay schedules, and automatic pay progressions.

(b) Unless the electors in a statewide referendum approve a total base wages increase that exceeds the total base wages expenditure described in this paragraph, any proposal that does any of the following:

1. If there is an increase in the consumer price index change, provides for total base wages for authorized positions in the proposed collective bargaining agreement that exceeds the total base wages for authorized positions 180 days before the expiration of the previous collective bargaining agreement by a greater percentage than the consumer price index change.

2. If there is a decrease or no change in the consumer price index change, provides for any change in total base wages for authorized positions in the proposed collective bargaining agreement from the total base wages for authorized positions 180 days before the expiration of the previous collective bargaining agreement.

(3q) For purposes of determining compliance with sub. (3), the commission shall provide, upon request, to the employer or to any representative of a collective bargaining unit containing a general employee, the consumer price index change during any
12–month period. The commission may get the information from the department of revenue.

(4) The administrator of the division, in connection with the development of tentative collective bargaining agreements to be submitted under s. 111.92 (1) (a) 1., shall endeavor to obtain tentative agreements with each recognized or certified labor organization representing employees or supervisors of employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (a) and with each certified labor organization representing employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (b) to (e) which do not contain any provision for the payment to any employee of a cumulative or noncumulative amount of compensation in recognition of or based upon the period of time an employee has been employed by the state.


The effective date of state employees’ collective bargaining agreements is a mandatory subject of bargaining. Department of Administration v. WERC, 90 Wis. 2d 426, 280 N.W.2d 150 (1979).

Matters that affect the separate interests of bargaining units, such as the interest in not losing work to another unit, are not conditions of employment under s. 111.93 (1). Sub. (2) 2, prohibit bargaining regarding job classification and allocation, will not be overridden by permitting the loss of bargaining unit work on account of a position reallocation to be bargained, grievable, or arbitrated. WERC v. Wisconsin Building Trades Negotiating Committee, 2003 WI App 178, 266 Wis. 2d 512, 669 N.W.2d 499, 102 Wis. 2d 262.

Unfair labor practices and collective bargaining regarding pensions as to state employees discussed. 64 Atty. Gen. 18.

111.915 Labor proposals. The administrator of the division shall notify and consult with the joint committee on employment relations, in such form and detail as the committee requests, regarding substantial changes in wages, employee benefits, personnel management, and program policy contract provisions to be included in any contract proposal to be offered to any labor organization by the state or to be agreed to by the state before such proposal is actually offered or accepted.

History: 1977 c. 196; 2003 a. 33; 2015 a. 55.

111.92 Agreements. (1) 1. Any tentative agreement reached between the division and any labor organization representing a collective bargaining unit specified in s. 111.825 (1) or (2)  (d) or (e) shall, after official ratification by the labor organization, be submitted by the division to the joint committee on employment relations, which shall hold a public hearing before determining its approval or disapproval.

2. Any tentative agreement reached between the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, acting for the state, and any labor organization representing a collective bargaining unit specified in s. 111.825 (1) shall, after official ratification by the labor organization, be submitted by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin to the joint committee on employment relations, which shall hold a public hearing before determining its approval or disapproval.

3. Any tentative agreement reached between the University of Wisconsin–Madison, acting for the state, and any labor organization representing a collective bargaining unit specified in s. 111.825 (1) shall, after official ratification by the labor organization, be submitted by the University of Wisconsin–Madison to the joint committee on employment relations, which shall hold a public hearing before determining its approval or disapproval.

4. If the committee approves a tentative agreement under subd. 1., 2., or 3., it shall introduce in a bill or companion bills, to be put on the calendar or referred to the appropriate scheduling committee of each house, that portion of the tentative agreement which requires legislative action for implementation, such as salary and wage adjustments, changes in fringe benefits, and any proposed amendments, deletions or additions to existing law. Such bill or companion bills are not subject to ss. 13.093 (1), 13.50 (6) (a) and (b) and 16.47 (2). The committee may, however, submit suitable portions of the tentative agreement to appropriate legislative committees for advisory recommendations on the proposed terms. The committee shall accompany the introduction of such proposed legislation with a message that informs the legislature of the committee’s concurrence with the matters under consideration and which recommends the passage of such legislation without change. If the joint committee on employment relations does not approve the tentative agreement, it shall be returned to the parties for renegotiation. If the legislature does not adopt without change that portion of the tentative agreement introduced by the joint committee on employment relations, the tentative agreement shall be returned to the parties for renegotiation.

(c) Any tentative agreement reached between the governing board of the charter school established by contract under s. 118.40 (2) (cm), 2013 stats., acting for the state, and any labor organization representing a collective bargaining unit specified in s. 111.825 (1r) (ef) shall, after official ratification by the labor organization and approval by the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Parkside, be executed by the parties.

(2) No portion of any tentative agreement shall become effective separately.

(3) (a) Agreements covering a collective bargaining unit specified under s. 111.825 (1) (g) shall coincide with the fiscal year or biennium.

(b) No agreements covering a collective bargaining unit containing a general employee may be for a period that exceeds one year, and each agreement must coincide with the fiscal year. Agreements covering a collective bargaining unit containing a general employee may not be extended.

(4) It is the declared intention under this subchapter that the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements and their approval by the parties should coincide with the overall fiscal planning and processes of the state.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of the statutes, all compensation adjustments for employees shall be effective on the beginning date of the pay period nearest the statutory or administrative date.


Matters within the scope of bargaining under s. 111.91, agreed to by the department of administration and a state employee union, are not effective until submitted as tentative agreements to and approved by the joint committee on employment relations. 67 Atty. Gen. 38.

111.93 Effect of labor organization; status of existing benefits and rights. (1) If no collective bargaining agreement exists between the employer and a labor organization representing classified employees in a collective bargaining unit for which a representative is recognized or certified, employees in the unit shall retain the right of appeal under s. 230.44.

(2) All civil service and other applicable statutes concerning wages, fringe benefits, hours and conditions of employment apply to employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (a) who are not included in collective bargaining units for which a representative is recognized or certified and to employees specified in s. 111.81 (7) (b) who are not included in a collective bargaining unit for which a representative is certified.

(3) Except as provided in ss. 7.33 (4), 40.05, 40.80 (3), 111.91 (1) (cm), 230.35 (2d) and (3) 6., and 230.88 (2) (b), all of the following apply:

(a) If a collective bargaining agreement exists between the employer and a labor organization representing employees in a collective bargaining unit under s. 111.825 (1) (g), the provisions of that agreement shall supersede the provisions of civil service and other applicable statutes, as well as rules and policies of the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System, related to wages, fringe benefits,
hours, and conditions of employment whether or not the matters contained in those statutes, rules, and policies are set forth in the collective bargaining agreement.

(b) If a collective bargaining agreement exists between the employer and a labor organization representing general employees in a collective bargaining unit, the provisions of that agreement shall supersede the provisions of civil service and other applicable statutes, as well as rules and policies of the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System, related to wages, whether or not the matters contained in those statutes, rules, and policies are set forth in the collective bargaining agreement.  

Matters that affect the separate interests of bargaining units, such as the interest in not losing work to another unit, are not conditions of employment under sub. (3).  

111.935 Representatives and elections for research assistants.  (1) In this section, “authorization card” means a signed card that employees complete to indicate their preferences regarding collective bargaining.  

(2) Notwithstanding s. 111.83 (2), the commission shall establish a procedure whereby research assistants may determine whether to form themselves into collective bargaining units under s. 111.825 (1r) (eh), (eti), or (er) or (1l) (er) by authorization cards in lieu of secret ballot.  The procedure shall provide that once a majority of research assistants have indicated their preference on the authorization cards to form themselves into a collective bargaining unit, the collective bargaining unit is established.  

111.94 Rules, transcripts, training programs, fees.  (1) The commission may adopt reasonable and proper rules relative to the exercise of its powers and authority and proper rules to govern its proceedings and to regulate the conduct of all elections and hearings.  The commission shall, upon request, provide a transcript of a proceeding to any party to the proceeding for a fee, established by rule, by the commission at a uniform rate per page.  All transcript fees shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.425 (1) (i).  

(2) The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a complaint alleging that an unfair labor practice has been committed under s. 111.84.  The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission act as an arbitrator to resolve a dispute involving the interpretation or application of a collective bargaining agreement under s. 111.86.  The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission initiate fact-finding under s. 111.88.  The commission shall assess and collect a filing fee for filing a request that the commission act as a mediator under s. 111.87.  For the performance of commission actions under s. 111.86, 111.87 and 111.88, the commission shall require that the parties to the dispute equally share in the payment of the fee and, for the performance of commission actions involving a complaint alleging an unfair labor practice has been committed under s. 111.84, the commission shall require that the party filing the complaint pay the entire fee.  If any party has paid a filing fee requesting the commission to act as a mediator for a labor dispute and the parties do not enter into a voluntary settlement of the labor dispute, the commission may not subsequently assess or collect a filing fee to initiate fact-finding to resolve the same labor dispute.  If any request concerns issues arising as a result of more than one unrelated event or occurrence, each such separate event or occurrence shall be treated as a separate request.  The commission shall promulgate rules establishing a schedule of filing fees to be paid under this subsection.  Fees required to be paid under this subsection shall be paid at the time of filing the complaint or the request for fact-finding, mediation or arbitration.  A complaint or request for fact-finding, mediation or arbitration is not filed until the date such fee or fees are paid.  Fees collected under this subsection shall be credited to the appropriation account under s. 20.425 (1) (i).  

(3) The commission may provide training programs to individuals and organizations on collective bargaining, including on areas of management and labor cooperation directly or indirectly affecting collective bargaining, and may charge a reasonable fee for participation in the programs.  

Cross-reference: See also ch. ERC 50, Wis. adm. code.  