

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 20C-0543-INS

IN THE MATTER OF COMMISSION ACTION AGAINST THE CERTIFICATE(S) AND PERMIT(S) OF MOTOR CARRIERS CONCERNING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PURSUANT TO § 40-10.1-112, C.R.S., AND RULE 4 CCR 723-6-6008 OF THE RULES REGULATING TRANSPORTATION BY MOTOR VEHICLES.

**RECOMMENDED DECISION OF
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
CONOR F. FARLEY
REVOKING AUTHORITIES AND PERMITS**

Mailed Date: February 1, 2021

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I. SUMMARY

1. Except as discussed, this Recommended Decision grants the relief sought in the Public Utilities Commission Staff's (Staff or Commission Staff) Complaints against the motor-carrier Respondents listed in Appendix A to this Recommended Decision, revoking Respondents' authorities and permits based on the failure to keep currently effective proof of financial responsibility on file with the Commission. This Recommended Decision also provides avenues for Respondents listed in Appendix A to avoid revocation by taking action before this Recommended Decision becomes effective, and dismisses the Complaints against two Respondents.

II. STATEMENT, FINDINGS, LAW, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Background.

2. Commission Staff instituted the cases in this proceeding by "Order of Summary Suspension and Complaint and Notice of Hearing" against the motor carrier-Respondents¹ (Complaints) on December 21, 2020. Hearing Exhibit 2.

3. The Complaints against each of the Respondents allege that the Commission received notice from the Respondents' insurance or surety carriers that the Respondents' insurance or surety coverage will be cancelled as specifically identified in each Complaint. *Id.* The Complaints further notify Respondents that their authorities or permits have been, or will be, summarily suspended on the date specified in each Complaint and informs Respondents that a hearing will be held on January 13, 2021, at 12:00 p.m., by video-conference to determine whether

¹ This proceeding involves numerous Respondents against whom the Commission initiated Complaints by sending them each an "Order of Summary Suspension and Complaint and Notice of Hearing." Hearing Exhibit 2. Each of those Complaints is assigned a unique "Case No." which specifies the grounds unique to each Respondent. And, each of those case numbers are part of this single proceeding.

their authorities or permits should be permanently revoked for failing to maintain proper evidence of insurance or surety coverage with the Commission. Hearing Exhibits 2-3.

4. On January 12, 2021, Staff filed a Notice Concerning the Service of Exhibits 1-5 for the January 13, 2021 Show Cause Hearing on Respondents (Notice). In the Notice, Staff stated that it served Hearing Exhibits 1 through 5 on Respondents by e-mail on January 12, 2021.

5. As noticed in the Complaints, on January 13, 2021, at approximately 12:00 p.m., the undersigned Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) held the hearing on the Complaints by video-conference. Ms. Marquita Riley appeared and testified on behalf of Commission Staff; counsel also appeared on behalf of Commission Staff. Danny R. Fish of Mr. Quick Fix Emergency Roadside Assistance (Mr. Quick Fix), Jarred Scott of Keeping it Moving, LLC (Keeping It Moving), Santiago John Medina of Executive Transportation of Denver, doing business as Celebrity Limousine LLC, Hector Gomez of AJ Moving LLC (AJ Moving), and Richard Gallegos of Broncos Towing, LLC appeared, and the ALJ permitted them to represent their corporate entities after they satisfied the test in Rule 1201 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.² Messrs. Fish, Scott, and Gomez testified. During the hearing, Hearing Exhibits 1 through 5 were admitted into evidence.

B. Factual Findings.

6. Ms. Riley is a Program Assistant with the Commission's Transportation Unit. She is responsible for reviewing Commission records and coordinating with other Commission Staff to commence proceedings against motor carriers to suspend and revoke their permits and authorities when they do not have currently effective proof of insurance or surety coverage on file with the Commission. Ms. Riley assisted with initiating this proceeding against Respondents

² 4 Code of Colorado Regulations (CCR) 723-1.

because the Commission received notice from each of the Respondents' insurance or surety carriers of the imminent cancellation of their insurance or surety coverage. Hearing Exhibits 1-3.

7. Ms. Riley testified that on December 8, 2020, Hearing Exhibits 1 through 5 were served on Respondents who remained out of compliance as of that date at their e-mail addresses on file with the Commission. *See* Notice. She also explained that the Respondents provided those e-mail addresses to the Commission.

8. Ms. Riley explained that the Commission served the Complaints and Attachment A to the Complaints upon the Respondents by United States mail on December 21, 2020, at the addresses, and upon the persons identified as designated agents for the Respondents, as provided in the Commission's files. Hearing Exhibits 1-4.

9. Respondents provided the Commission the addresses and identities of their designated agents that were used to serve the Complaints in this proceeding. The Certificate of Service for the Complaints demonstrates that the Commission served the Respondents by mailing the Complaints addressed as indicated in the "Hearing Cycle Listing" Hearing Exhibit 4. The referenced Hearing Cycle Listing is Hearing Exhibit 1. *See* Hearing Exhibits 1 and 4. Hearing Exhibit 1 includes the Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 and their designated agents and addresses on file with the Commission on December 21, 2020.

10. On January 12, 2021, Ms. Riley searched Commission records to determine whether any Respondents had taken action since December 21, 2020, eliminating the requirement to revoke their permits, such as filing proof of financial responsibility with the Commission, cancelling their permits, or filing an application seeking to suspend a permit. Ms. Riley identified several Respondents who had come into compliance with their financial responsibility obligations after service of the Complaints on December 21, 2020. Hearing Exhibit 5 is the updated list of

Respondents who remained out of compliance with the Commission's financial responsibility requirements as of January 13, 2021.³

11. On the morning of the hearing, Ms. Riley again reviewed Commission records to determine if any Respondents in Hearing Exhibit 5 took action to eliminate the need to revoke their permits. She learned that the following carriers came into compliance with their financial responsibility requirements since December 21, 2020: ATW Tours, Inc. (Permit Nos. LL-03606 and ORC-00238) and Vector Moving (Permit No. HHG-00540). For these reasons, Mr. Riley asks for the Complaints against ATW Tours, Inc. (ATW Tours) and Vector Moving be dismissed. Ms. Riley asks that the permits and authorities of the remainder of the Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 be revoked for failing to meet their financial responsibility obligations.

12. Mr. Fish testified that he provided payment for the December installment of insurance for Mr. Quick Fix through a broker on December 15, 2020. Mr. Fish does not understand why the Commission received notice of the cancellation of Mr. Quick Fix's insurance. Mr. Fish has not been able to speak with the insurance broker to which he provided the payment on December 15, 2020, because the broker's office is closed due to COVID-19. He agreed to follow-up with Ms. Riley after the hearing to determine the appropriate next steps for his company.

13. Mr. Scott testified that he has kept up to date on payments for the insurance required for Keeping It Moving. However, the insurance carrier notified him on January 5, 2021, that the insurance carrier would no longer provide cargo insurance to Keeping It Moving. Mr. Scott testified that he is actively seeking a new carrier to provide cargo insurance to Keeping It Moving

³ In contrast, Hearing Exhibit 1 is the list of carriers who were non-compliant when the Commission issued the Complaints on November 23, 2020. As the difference in the numbers of carriers listed in Hearing Exhibits 1 and 5 make evident, many carriers came into compliance since the Commission issued the Complaints. All the carriers listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 are listed in Hearing Exhibit 1.

and that he would follow-up with Ms. Riley after the hearing to determine the appropriate next steps for his company.

14. Mr. Gomez testified that AJ Moving has not been operating due to the typical slowdown in business during the winter, COVID-19, and the fact that his employees are currently working other seasonal jobs. Mr. Gomez stated that he planned to reopen AJ Moving in early February. Mr. Gomez said that he would contact Ms. Riley about the options for his company, including the possibility of canceling the permit for AJ Moving during the period that AJ Moving is closed and then re-applying for a permit when AJ Moving becomes operational.

D. Applicable Law.

1. Financial Responsibility Requirements and the Commission's Authority to Revoke Permits and Authorities.

15. Generally, motor carriers holding a Commission permit, authority, or certificate must maintain and file evidence of financial responsibility with the Commission in such sum, for such protection, and in such form as the Commission deems necessary to adequately safeguard the public interest.⁴ Motor carriers must ensure their insurance or surety coverage is kept continuously effective during the life of a certificate or permit to operate.⁵ Commission Rule 6008, 4 CCR 723-6, identifies the amount, type of protection, and form for the insurance or surety coverage that motor carriers must maintain at all times in order to safeguard the public interest.

16. Specifically, motor carriers must obtain and keep motor vehicle liability insurance or surety bond coverage in force at all times.⁶ In addition to motor vehicle liability coverage, towing carriers and household goods movers must maintain and keep cargo liability insurance or

⁴ § 40-10.1-107(1), C.R.S. (2020); Rule 6008 of the Rules Regulating Transportation by Motor Vehicle, 4 CCR 723-6.

⁵ § 40-10.1-107(3), C.R.S.

⁶ Rule 6008(a)(I), 4 CCR 723-6.

surety bond coverage in force at all times.⁷ Towing carriers must obtain and keep worker's compensation insurance in force at all times; and towing carriers providing storage must obtain and keep garage keeper's liability insurance in force at all times.⁸ And, in addition to motor vehicle liability and cargo liability coverage, household good movers must obtain and keep general liability insurance or surety coverage in force at all times.⁹

17. Motor carriers are responsible for maintaining and filing evidence of the required financial responsibility coverage with the Commission.¹⁰ They must ensure their insurance or surety coverage is kept continuously effective during the life of a certificate or permit to operate.¹¹ Insurers and sureties must notify the policy or bond holder *and* the Commission when terminating a policy or bond at least 30 days before the effective date of termination; failing that, termination is not valid.¹² As a result, the Commission receives notice from insurance or surety carriers about imminent policy or bond terminations for motor carriers licensed by the Commission.¹³

18. Notice of cancellation from a motor carrier's insurance or surety carrier is evidence that the motor carrier no longer has proof of financial responsibility on file with the Commission.¹⁴ Failure to have proof of current and effective insurance or surety coverage on file with the Commission creates a rebuttable presumption that the carrier is in violation of the financial responsibility requirements.¹⁵

⁷ Rule 6008(a)(I) and (III), 4 CCR 723-6.

⁸ Rule 6008(a)(IV) and (V), 4 CCR 723-6.

⁹ Rule 6008(a)(VI), 4 CCR 723-6.

¹⁰ § 40-10.1-107(1), C.R.S., and Rule 6008(a), 4 CCR 723-6.

¹¹ § 40-10.1-107(3), C.R.S.

¹² § 40-10.1-107(4), C.R.S.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Rule 6008(e), 4 CCR 723-6.

¹⁵ *Id.*

19. Section 40-10.1-112(1)(a) and (c), C.R.S., provide that a Commission-issued authority or permit may be suspended, revoked, altered, or amended if it is established to the satisfaction of the Commission at a properly-noticed hearing that the holder of that authority or permit has violated Article 10.1, Title 40 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, or any applicable Commission rule. Rules 6009 and 6011, 4 CCR 723-6, also provide the Commission authority to revoke a permit or authority in the circumstances here.

2. Notice and Service Requirements.

20. The Commission must provide Respondents with notice of the Complaints against them, including sufficient facts to adequately advise Respondents of the relief sought and how they are alleged to have violated the law, as well as the time affixed for a hearing on the Complaints.¹⁶ Such notice must be served upon the Respondents, which may be accomplished by mail.¹⁷

21. Regulated motor carriers must provide the Commission “its designation of the name, mailing address, and physical address of a Person upon whom service may be made of any lawful notice, order, process, or demand.”¹⁸ That person is the motor carrier’s designated agent upon whom the Commission may serve complaints and other notices.¹⁹ And, regulated motor carriers are responsible for updating the Commission on changes to their designated agent, including the agent’s mailing and email addresses, within two days of the change.²⁰ Service on a motor carrier’s designated agent on file with the Commission is service upon the carrier and is

¹⁶ §§ 40-10.1-112(1) and 40-6-108, C.R.S.; Rule 1302(h), 4 CCR 723-1 of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure; *see also* § 24-4-105(2), C.R.S.

¹⁷ § 40-6-108(3), C.R.S.; Rule 1205(a) and (d), 4 CCR 723-1; *see also* § 24-4-104(10), C.R.S.

¹⁸ Rule 6006(a), 4 CCR 723-6.

¹⁹ *Id.*; Rule 1205(a) and (d), 4 CCR 723-1.

²⁰ Rule 6006(b), 4 CCR 723-6.

“prima facie evidence” that the carrier received notice.²¹ A certificate of service issued by the Commission’s Director is *prima facie* evidence that service has been obtained.²²

22. In addition, Commission Rule 1205(a) requires that a person filing any pleading or other document with the Commission must serve all other parties; the same rule allows parties to serve pleadings and documents by e-mail.

3. Burden of Proof.

23. Staff carries the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence to demonstrate that the allegations in the Complaints are true and that the Complaints were properly served on each of the Respondents.²³ The preponderance standard requires the fact finder to determine whether the existence of a contested fact is more probable than its non-existence.²⁴ A party has met this burden of proof when the evidence, on the whole, tips in favor of that party.²⁵

E. Findings, Analysis, and Conclusions.

24. The evidence was undisputed. The ALJ concludes that Staff demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence that it properly served the Complaints and Attachment A thereto upon each of the Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 by mailing them to the designated agents on file with the Commission for each of the Respondents. Hearing Exhibits 1 through 5; § 40-6-108(3), C.R.S.; Rules 1205(a) and (d) and 1302(g)(II)(e), 4 CCR 723-1; and Rule 6006(a) and (c), 4 CCR 723-6.

25. The ALJ finds that the Complaints and Attachment A thereto comply with the relevant notice requirements because they: (a) inform Respondents that the Commission has

²¹ Rule 6006(c) and (d), 4 CCR 723-6.

²² § 40-6-108(3), C.R.S.

²³ § 24-4-105(7), C.R.S.; Rule 1500, 4 CCR 723-1.

²⁴ *Swain v. Colorado Dep’t of Revenue*, 717 P.2d 507, 508 (Colo. App. 1985).

²⁵ *Schocke v. State, Dep’t of Revenue*, 719 P.2d 361, 363 (Colo. App. 1986).

received insurance or surety cancellation notices for each Respondent and the effective date of such cancellation; (b) advise Respondents that their authorities or permits are summarily suspended as of the coverage cancellation date; (c) notify Respondents that they may not conduct operations under their authorities or permits after the coverage cancellation and summary suspension date; (d) inform Respondents that the Commission has initiated a proceeding to permanently revoke their permits or authorities for failing to maintain and provide proof of effective insurance or surety coverage; (e) notify Respondents of the date, time, and means to attend the remote hearing on the Complaints at which Respondents have an opportunity to present data, views, and arguments; and (f) advise Respondents of the legal authority for the Complaints and relief sought.²⁶

26. In addition, the ALJ concludes that on January 12, 2021, Staff served Hearing Exhibits 1 to 5 on Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 at the e-mail addresses provided by Respondents. As such, Respondents had the opportunity to review those exhibits before or during the hearing.²⁷ Exhibits were also displayed on the video-conference screen during the hearing and were available to download during the hearing.

27. The ALJ concludes that Staff established by a preponderance of the evidence that the Commission received notice from the insurance or surety providers for the motor carriers identified in Hearing Exhibit 5 that their insurance or surety coverage was or will be cancelled or terminated.²⁸ This creates the rebuttable presumption that the relevant Respondent carriers are in violation of their respective financial responsibility requirements.²⁹

²⁶ Hearing Exhibits 1, 2, and 4. *See* Rule 6009(e), 4 CCR 723-6; §§ 40-6-108 and 24-4-105(2), C.R.S.

²⁷ *See* Rule 1205(a), 4 CCR 723-1; *see* Notice and Exhibit A to Notice; Hearing Exhibit 5.

²⁸ *See* Hearing Exhibit 2.

²⁹ *See* Rule 6008(e), 4 CCR 723-6.

28. Except for ATW Tours and Vector Moving, the undisputed evidence established that the Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 are out of compliance with their respective financial responsibility requirements set forth in § 40-10.1-107(3), C.R.S., and Rule 6008, 4 CCR 723-6. The ALJ finds that Staff established by a preponderance of the evidence that the Commission's records do not show a currently effective level of financial responsibility, including but not limited to motor vehicle liability, general liability, garage keeper's liability coverage, worker's compensation coverage, and cargo liability coverage in such form and in such manner as required by § 40-10.1-107, C.R.S., and Rule 6008 for the Respondents identified in Hearing Exhibit 5, except ATW Tours and Vector Moving. Staff met its burden of proof to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the allegations in the Complaints are true as to the Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5, except for ATW Tours and Vector Moving.

29. Because ATW Tours and Vector Moving have come into compliance with their financial responsibility requirements, the Complaints against them will be dismissed and their permits will not be revoked.

30. As to the remaining Respondents in Hearing Exhibit 5, because they have failed to meet their financial responsibility obligations, their authorities and permits should be revoked.³⁰ This includes Mr. Quick Fix, Keeping It Moving, and AJ Moving. The ALJ sympathizes with their situations. However, as long as they have effective permits to operate, they must meet their financial responsibility obligations by maintaining effective insurance or surety. The Commission's only means of performing its important duty to the public to ensure that persons who hold active motor carrier authority meet their financial responsibility obligations is to require documentation of carriers' current and effective insurance or surety furnished in a uniform format

³⁰ Hearing Exhibit 5 is attached to this Recommended Decision as Appendix A.

to the Commission. The holder of the authority is responsible for ensuring that documentation is provided to the Commission.³¹ Except as discussed, Respondents listed in Hearing Exhibit 5 have failed to do so. This warrants revocation of their permits or authorities.

31. However, as explained at the hearing, Respondents may take action before the effective date of this Decision to avoid revocation. First, carriers may avoid revocation by coming into compliance with their financial responsibility requirements and ensuring that proof of this is furnished in the form and manner required by the Commission before the effective date of this Decision. The Complaints against carriers who take this action before the effective date of this Decision will be dismissed, and their permits will not be revoked.

32. In addition, limited regulation carriers,³² household goods movers, towing carriers, and hazardous materials carriers who submit a form to cancel their permits or authorities before the effective date of this Decision may avoid revocation of their permits. The Complaints against carriers who take this action before the effective date of this Decision will be dismissed, and their permits will not be revoked. Permit cancellation forms are available on the Commission's website at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3u7jb_duOQ2QWlrMFlvUDJoNjQ/view?,authuser=0.

33. Fully regulated intrastate carriers, including common carriers operating a shuttle service, sightseeing service, charter service, taxicab service, and contract carriers who submit an application to suspend their authority under Commission Rule 6205³³ before the effective date of this Recommended Decision may also avoid revocation of their permits. The Complaints against

³¹ § 40-10.1-107, C.R.S., and Rule 6008, 4 CCR 723-6.

³² Limited regulation carriers are defined as carriers who provide transportation service by charter bus, children's activity bus, fire crew transport, luxury limousine, Medicaid client transport, or off-road scenic charter. Rule 6001(qq), 4 CCR 723-6

³³ 4 CCR 723-6.

carriers who take this action before the effective date of this Decision will be dismissed, and their permits will not be revoked. Applications to suspend a common carrier authority are available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3u7jb_duOQ2dXZ0UTNIXzBvRIU/view. Applications to suspend a contract carrier authority are available at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3u7jb_duOQ2U2JQS2dvek5HWm8/view.

34. Having a permit revoked or cancelled does not always mean that a carrier's business is permanently terminated. Generally, Commission rules allow many types of motor carriers, including luxury limousine, household goods movers, and towing carriers, to obtain new permits. For the most part, such permits may be obtained by completing an application that can be submitted to the Commission on-line, providing related supporting information and proof of financial responsibility, and paying a fee.³⁴ Applications for a luxury limousine, towing, or household goods mover permits are available at the following link: <https://doraapps.state.co.us/puc/TransportationApplications/>. Referenced carrier types who voluntarily cancel their permits or whose permits are revoked may reapply for a permit.

35. As provided below, this Recommended Decision will not become effective for 20 days after the date the Decision is mailed, and only then if no party appeals this Decision by filing exceptions. This allows ample time for Respondents to take action to avoid a final Commission decision revoking their permits or authorities.

³⁴ See Rules 6302 (luxury limousine application and permit); 6503 (towing carrier application and permit); 6603 (household goods mover carrier application and permit), 4 CCR 723-6. Carriers concerned about their ability to comply with application requirements may request that the Commission waive an application requirement pursuant to Rule 1003(a), 4 CCR 723-1. That rule allows parties to request a waiver of a Commission rule; in deciding whether to waive a rule, the Commission may consider hardship, equity, or more effective implementation of a rule on an individual basis. Such requests are decided on an individual and case-by-case basis and are outside the scope of this proceeding. See Rule 1003(a), 4 CCR 723-1.

36. Pursuant to § 40-6-109, C.R.S., the ALJ transmits the record of this proceeding, this recommended decision containing findings of fact and conclusions thereon, and a recommended order to the Commission.

III. ORDER

A. The Commission Orders That:

1. Consistent with the above discussion, except for the Respondents listed in ¶ 2 below, the authorities and permits listed in Appendix A, attached hereto, are revoked as of the effective date of this Recommended Decision.

2. As discussed, the Complaints against ATW Tours, Inc. (Permit Nos. LL-03605 and ORC-00238; Case Nos. 11684-INS, 11719-INS) and Vector Moving (Permit No. HHG-00540; Case No. 11703-INS) are dismissed.

3. Ordering Paragraph No. 1 will be void and the case dismissed as to any Respondent who takes one of the following actions before the effective date of this Recommended Decision:

- a. files the required Certificate of Insurance or surety with the Commission;
- b. files an Application to Suspend their permit or authority with the Commission, if allowed by Commission rule; or
- c. submits a permit cancellation form to the Commission, if allowed by Commission rule.

4. Proceeding No. 20C-0543-INS is closed.

5. This Recommended Decision shall be effective on the day it becomes the Decision of the Commission, if that is the case, and is entered as of the date above.

6. As provided by § 40-6-109, C.R.S., copies of this Recommended Decision will be served upon the parties, who may file exceptions to it.

a) If no exceptions are filed within 20 days after service or within any extended period of time authorized, or unless the decision is stayed by the Commission upon its own motion, the recommended decision will become the decision of the Commission and subject to the provisions of § 40-6-114, C.R.S.

b) If a party seeks to amend, modify, annul, or reverse basic findings of fact in its exceptions, that party must request and pay for a transcript to be filed, or the parties may stipulate to portions of the transcript according to the procedure stated in § 40-6-113, C.R.S. If no transcript or stipulation is filed, the Commission is bound by the facts set out by the administrative law judge and the parties cannot challenge these facts. This will limit what the Commission can review if exceptions are filed.

7. If exceptions to this Recommended Decision are filed, they may not exceed 30 pages in length, unless the Commission finds good cause and permits this limit to be exceeded.

(S E A L)



THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

CONOR F. FARLEY

Administrative Law Judge

ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Dean".

Doug Dean,
Director