

## **Conveyance Industry Whistleblower Protections**

SSB 5412, an Act relating to whistleblowing in the conveyance workplace, became effective June 7, 2012. This legislation protects employees in the conveyance industry who in good faith report or oppose policies or practices of their employer that create unsafe conditions relating to the installation, repair, or maintenance of conveyances such as elevators. Also protected are persons believed by their employer to have made such a report, and anyone who assisted with the report or provided testimony in connection with such a report.

Employers in the conveyance industry are prohibited from taking any retaliatory action against employees who make reports of unsafe policies or practices of their employers, or against employees believed to have made a report, assisted with a report, or provided testimony in connection with a report. Retaliatory action includes, but is not limited to: termination; discipline; failing to schedule the employee for work; failing to provide an employee with the appropriate tools, means or support to do their work; changing work location or hours to the detriment of the employee; harassing the employee; laying the employee off without economic justification; refusing to return a laid off employee to work when appropriate; and passing over a qualified employee for a job.

The WSHRC will investigate cases filed by employees who believe that they have been retaliated against under this law. If we find cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, the case may be referred to the Office of Attorney General for prosecution, and employer could be subject to monetary awards such as backpay and emotional damages, as well as to orders to correct any discriminatory practices.