

Fighting Ordinance or “Offenses Against Peace and Order”

In most cases, assaults in Pullman end up with an arrest and subsequent assault charge to those suspected of harming others. There are cases however, where a criminal arrest is not deemed necessary or supported by probable cause. There are also cases where an inevitable assault is stopped or prevented by citizens or police. This is where Pullman’s fighting ordinance is enforced.

Not only can an assault result in a violation of the fighting ordinance, simply causing or invoking an assault can also be a violation. Some examples include using abusive epithets, using words and language that a reasonable person would find offensive, or other words and language that are likely to provoke fear, anger or apprehension when addressed to a person of ordinary sensibilities. People who “pick” fights, or use abusive language towards others, can be subject to fines under this ordinance.

It is a violation of this ordinance to disturb or disrupt any lawful assembly or meeting of persons. This can include meetings, gatherings, and lawful protests. It is also a violation of this ordinance to obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic without lawful authority. This can include standing in, or blocking traffic with vehicles or other objects.

A first violation of the fighting ordinance is a civil infraction, similar to a traffic ticket. The first violation of this code can result in a fine of not less than \$250. Repeat violations can result in a mandatory court appearance, and fine of not less than \$500.

The fighting ordinance is often used at the officer’s discretion. It is important to note that many actions included in the fighting ordinance, are also considered crimes in the state of Washington ([Assault](#) , [Disorderly Conduct](#) , [Harassment](#)). Disorderly Conduct (RCW 9A.84.030), addresses many of the same actions prohibited in the fighting ordinance. Disorderly Conduct is a misdemeanor crime that can result in arrest and a possible jail sentence. Assault and Harassment also contain many of the same actions prohibited in the fighting ordinance, and can also result in arrest and a possible jail sentence.

Additional Resources:

- Pullman City Code (PCC) [Chapter 8.26](#)
- Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [Chapter 9A.36 Assault](#)
- Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [Chapter 9A.84.030 Disorderly Conduct](#)
- Revised Code of Washington(RCW) [Chapter 9A.46.020 Harassment](#)