



Substitute House Bill No. 5279

Public Act No. 24-16

**AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORITY TO DECLARE THAT A
FIREFIGHTER, POLICE OFFICER OR EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICE PERSONNEL DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 7-313e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2024*):

(a) Notwithstanding any provision in the general statutes or a municipal ordinance to the contrary, the fire chief of the municipality, or any member serving in the capacity of fire officer-in-charge, shall, when any fire department or company is responding to or operating at a fire, service call [,] or other emergency, within such municipality, have the authority to: [(a)] (1) Control and direct emergency activities at such scene; [(b)] (2) order any person to leave any building or place in the vicinity of such fire for the purpose of protecting such person from injury; [(c)] (3) blockade any public highway, street [,] or private right-of-way temporarily while at such scene; [(d)] (4) at any time of the day or night, enter any building, including a private dwelling, or upon any premises where a fire is in progress or near the scene of any fire, or where there is reasonable cause to believe a fire is in progress, for the purpose of extinguishing the fire or preventing its spread; [(e)] (5) inspect for the purposes of preventing fires and preplanning the control

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of fire all buildings, structures or other places in their fire district, except the interior of private dwellings, where any combustible material, including, but not limited to, waste paper, rags, shavings, waste, leather, rubber, crates, boxes, barrels or rubbish, that is or may become dangerous as a fire menace to such buildings, structures or other places has been allowed to accumulate or where such chief or [his] such chief's designated representative has reason to believe that such material has accumulated or is liable to be accumulated; [(f)] (6) order disengagement or decoupling of any convoy, caravan or train of vehicles, craft or railway cars for the purpose of extinguishing a fire or preventing its spread; and [(g)] (7) take command of any industrial fire brigade or fire chief when such fire company or department has been called to such industry.

(b) If the death of a uniformed paid or volunteer firefighter is caused by a cardiac event, stroke or pulmonary embolism that occurred not later than twenty-four hours after such firefighter concluded a shift or training, the chief of such firefighter's fire department shall have the authority to determine whether such firefighter died in the line of duty, unless a local charter or ordinance in effect on October 1, 2024, provides the authority to a different individual or entity to make such determination. Such declaration by a chief shall not be used as evidence for a workers' compensation claim under chapter 568.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (Effective October 1, 2024) (a) For purposes of this section, (1) "police chief" means the chief law enforcement officer of a law enforcement unit, the chief elected official of a municipal police department without a chief law enforcement officer or, in the case of the Division of State Police, the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and (2) "law enforcement unit" and "police officer" have the same meanings as provided in section 7-294a of the general statutes.

(b) If the death of a police officer is caused by a cardiac event, stroke

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or pulmonary embolism that occurred not later than twenty-four hours after such officer concluded a shift or training, the police chief of such officer's law enforcement unit shall have the authority to determine whether such officer died in the line of duty, unless a local charter or ordinance in effect on October 1, 2024, provides the authority to a different individual or entity to make such determination. Such declaration by a police chief shall not be used as evidence for a workers' compensation claim under chapter 568 of the general statutes.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2024*) If the death of any emergency medical service personnel, as defined in section 19a-175 of the general statutes, is caused by a cardiac event, stroke or pulmonary embolism that occurred not later than twenty-four hours after such personnel concluded a shift or training, the service chief, or other administrative head, of such personnel's department, service, company or emergency medical service organization, as defined in section 19a-175 of the general statutes, shall have the authority to determine whether such personnel died in the line of duty, unless a local charter or ordinance in effect on October 1, 2024, provides the authority to a different individual or entity to make such determination. Such declaration by a chief or administrative head shall not be used as evidence for a workers' compensation claim under chapter 568 of the general statutes.

Approved May 14, 2024