



2001
ACTS AFFECTING

FIRE FIGHTERS

Office of Legislative Research



Prepared for members of the
Connecticut General Assembly

by

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NOTICE TO READERS

This report provides brief highlights of the 2001 public and special acts affecting fire fighters. Not all provisions of the acts are included; readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, the House Clerk's office, or the General Assembly's website (<http://www.cga.state.ct.us/default.asp>). Complete summaries of all public acts passed during the 2001 session will be available in early fall when OLR's *Public Act Summary* book is published, and some are now available on the OLR website (<http://cgalites/olr/pa2001draft/01palist.htm>). *Highlights of the Revised FY 02-03 Budget* is available from the Office of Fiscal Analysis (<http://cgalites/ofa/Documents/BudgetHighlights6-29-01.pdf>).

All acts summarized here are effective October 1, 2001, unless otherwise noted.

**PA 01-1—An Act Concerning
the Certification of Emergency
Medical Service Personnel**

This act gives (EMS) emergency medical services personnel whose certification expires after December 31, 2000, a 90-day grace period during which they can continue to perform their EMS duties while meeting Department of Public Health (DPH) recertification requirements. The act establishes three different recertification requirements for EMS personnel whose certification has expired, depending on how long it has been since their certification lapsed. These apply to emergency medical technicians (EMT), EMT intermediates, medical response technicians, and EMS instructors.

The act also requires DPH to adopt regulations for issuing, renewing, reinstating, and recertifying EMS personnel licenses and certifications.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**PA 01-4 June Special
Session—An Act Concerning
the Implementation of
Expenditures for Various State
Health Programs and Services
and Making Technical and
Other Changes to Certain
Public Health and Related
Statutes**

This act specifies that paid or volunteer fire fighters or police officers, ski patrol members, lifeguards, conservation officers, patrol officers, special police officers of the Department of Environmental Protection, or emergency medical service personnel who have been trained to use an automatic external defibrillator in accordance with American Red Cross or American Heart Association standards are not subject to additional requirements, except recertification, in order to use such a defibrillator.

**PA 01-80—An Act
Enhancing Benefits in the
Police Officer and Firefighter’s
Survivors Benefit Fund and
the Municipal Employees’
Retirement System**

This act makes several changes in the Municipal Employees’ Retirement Fund B. Specifically, it:

1. reduces the vesting period from 10 to five continuous years;
2. increases the monthly MERF benefit beginning January 1, 2002, for employees eligible to receive Social Security;

3. allows employees who take voluntary retirement to begin getting a cost of living adjustment (COLA) on the July 1 after retiring instead of after turning age 65;
4. changes the COLA percentage and formula for those retiring on or after January 1, 2002 and gives a temporary COLA to those who retire before that date and are not 65 years old; and
5. allows municipalities to pay employee contributions on a pre-tax basis beginning January 1, 2002.

The act also raises by 20% the monthly benefits from the Policemen and Firemen Survivors' Benefit Fund, which pays benefits to surviving spouses and eligible dependents of municipal police officers and fire fighters.

**PA 01-150—An Act
Concerning Natural Resources
Programs of the Department of
Environmental Protection**

This act makes the DEP commissioner, rather than the state forester, the state forest fire warden. It allows the state warden to pay fire companies, rather than fire fighters individually, for helping to fight forest fires and authorizes him to establish rates for such services and equipment and supplies used. It changes the powers of

state forest fire personnel and makes several minor and corresponding changes.

**PA 01-192—An Act
Concerning the Use of
Flashing White Head Lamps,
Failure to Yield to Emergency
Vehicles, and Duty to Stop for
Stopped School Busses**

This act allows any vehicle operated by a volunteer emergency medical technician or member of a volunteer fire department or company to use flashing white headlamps on the way to a medical emergency or fire scene. It increases, from \$50 to \$200, the maximum fine for willfully or negligently obstructing or impeding an emergency vehicle responding to an emergency. It also expressly requires emergency vehicles to stop at least 10 feet from a school bus displaying flashing red signal lights and to remain there until the lights are turned off.

SA 01-1, June Special Session—An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2003, and Making Appropriations Therefor

This act appropriates \$100,000 of the FY 2000-01 General Fund surplus for the Firefighters Memorial on the grounds of the Connecticut Fire Academy in Windsor Locks.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

SA 01-2, June Special Session—An Act Concerning the Authorization of Bonds of the State for Capital Improvements and Other Purposes

This act allows the Department of Public Works to use up to \$200,000 in infrastructure bond funds to conduct a study of the facilities at the regional fire schools.

The act also gives the Office of Policy and Management up to \$2,600,000 in grants in aid to buy thermal imaging cameras.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2001

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