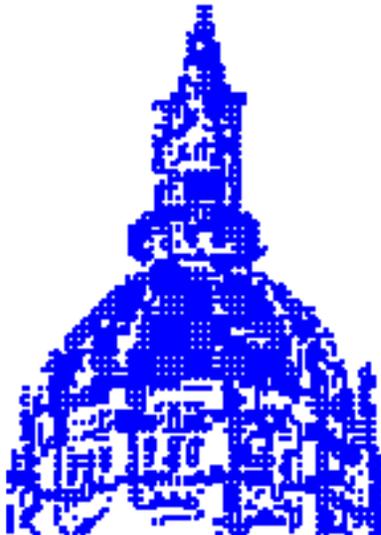


Office of Legislative Research  
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**2004 ACTS AFFECTING FIRE FIGHTERS**



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## NOTICE TO READERS

This report provides brief highlights of public and special acts affecting firefighters enacted during the 2004 regular and special sessions.

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 in 2004 will be available in the fall when OLR's *Public Act Summary* book is published; some are now available on the OLR website (<http://www.cga.state.ct.us/olr/publicactsummaries.asp>)

All acts summarized here are effective October 1, 2004, unless otherwise noted

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## **FIRE PREVENTION CODE**

A new act requires the state fire marshal to adopt a state fire prevention code based on a nationally recognized code to (1) enhance the enforcement capabilities of local fire marshals and (2) prevent fire and other related emergencies. This is in addition to the state Fire Safety Code already required by law. He must adopt the prevention code by January 1, 2005, in coordination with a 9-member advisory committee the act creates, and revise it as deemed necessary to incorporate revisions to the national code within 18 months after they are first published.

The act eliminates the requirement for fire safety code revisions every four years and instead requires them within 18 months after the model code revisions are first published. But by law, the state fire marshal and Codes and Standards Committee may elect not to do the scheduled fire code revisions if they both certify the revisions as unnecessary (**PA 04-59**, effective upon passage).

## **DEMOLITION PERMIT**

A new act exempts from demolition permit registration requirements anyone (1) burning a building or structure as part of an organized fire department

training exercise or (2) removing underground petroleum storage tanks (**PA 04-150**).

## **FIREFIGHTER WITNESS FEES**

A new act increases, from \$40 to \$100 per day, witness fees for police officers and firefighters, including volunteers or substitutes, in the following circumstances:

1. criminal proceedings before the Superior Court or proceedings before the Department of Consumer Protection, if their employer does not compensate them for the time spent in court;
2. civil proceedings on any vacation or compensatory day, even if their employer compensates them; and
3. civil proceedings on other days, if their employer does not compensate them (**PA 04-232**).

## **USE OF FLASHING LIGHTS ON VEHICLES**

Previously, flashing or revolving white lights could be displayed on motor vehicles of paid or volunteer fire chiefs and their first and second deputies or first and second assistants, if there were no deputies. A new act removes the explicit limit on the number of deputy or

assistant chiefs and instead allows up to a total of four paid chiefs, deputies, and assistants and four volunteer chiefs, deputies, and assistants per municipality to display such lights. It also allows the flashing or revolving white lights to be displayed in combination with flashing or revolving red lights (**PA 04-161**).

### **VIDEO INCIDENT RESPONDER SYSTEM**

A new act requires the Department of Transportation annually to allocate any amount of federal funds transferred to the Section 402 highway safety grant program pursuant to the federally mandated open container law “penalty transfer” for hazard elimination activities and earmarks \$200,000 of any such amount for FY 2004-05 for hardware, software, and other costs for a video incident responder system for I-95 to aid in coordinating emergency responses to highway incidents (**PA 04-143**, effective July 1, 2004).

### **PROPERTY CONVEYANCE**

A new act requires the Department of Correction to convey approximately 10 acres of property in Cheshire to the Area Waterbury Fire Chiefs Association for firefighting educational and training purposes (**PA 04-186**, effective on passage).

### **BUILDING SAFETY**

Under prior law, any place of public assembly constructed or renovated after July 9, 2003 to increase capacity or change its occupancy had to have a main entrance to allow the emergency exit of two-thirds of the capacity of the building during an emergency. A new act limits the requirement to places constructed under a building permit application filed on or after October 1, 2004, if they have a single main entrance. It allows the state fire marshal and state building inspector to grant variations or exemptions or approve equivalent or alternate compliance if they believe strict compliance would entail practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship or is unwarranted. When making such determination, they must observe the act’s intent and assure public safety (**PA 04-237**).

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