

Office of Legislative Research
Connecticut General Assembly



Emergency Medical Services and Personnel



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BLOOD SAMPLES

PA 07-252 (§ 37) deletes Emergency Medical Technicians II from the list of those who can take a blood sample following a motor vehicle accident resulting in serious injury or death.

This takes effect July 1, 2007.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

PA 07-252 (§ 39) adds to the Department of Public Health's (DPH) disciplinary authority over licensed health practitioners, including paramedics, the ability to not renew or reinstate a license by voluntary surrender or agreement.

This takes effect upon passage.

PA 07-252 (§ 5) also increases, from \$10,000 to \$25,000 the civil penalty DPH and various health professional regulatory boards can assess against a health care professional, including a paramedic.

This takes effect October 1, 2007.

INTRASTATE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM

PA 07-56 establishes the Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact (IMAC) and commits the state's political subdivisions (towns) to its terms. It provides a legal statewide mechanism for

participating towns to request and provide mutual aid during a declared local civil preparedness emergency. IMAC is similar to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact for states, which Connecticut enacted in 2000.

Any town may withdraw from IMAC by adopting a resolution to that effect, and member towns may enter into or remain in supplementary or other interlocal mutual aid agreements.

The act describes the responsibilities of local civil preparedness organizations, compact activation procedures, permit and license reciprocity, and compact rights and liabilities, reimbursement issues.

Existing law already allows towns to establish mutual aid civil preparedness agreements and address some of the same issues this act addresses. It also requires towns, if properly ordered, to make their civil preparedness forces available to provide assistance.

This takes effect October 1, 2007.

LICENSE RENEWALS-ACTIVE ARMED FORCES MEMBERS

PA 07-157 extends, from six months to one year after discharge, the grace period during which DPH must renew certain DPH credentials that become void while the holders are on active duty in the armed

forces. This applies to various health professionals, including emergency medical service personnel. It establishes the same grace period for National Guard members whose credentials lapsed while they were performing military service ordered by the governor.

As under existing law, the act does not apply to reservists or guard members on active duty for regularly scheduled annual training that is not part of mobilization.

This takes effect July 1, 2007.

MOBILE FIELD HOSPITAL

PA 07-252 (§§ 63-72) changes the name of the facility the governor can deploy for public health emergencies from “critical access” to “mobile field” hospital. A “critical access hospital” is a facility that meets specified federal criteria (including rural location and provision of 24-hour emergency care), which Connecticut's facility does not.

The act adds providing medical services at mass gatherings and surge capacity during mass casualty events or infrastructure failures to the purposes for which the hospital can be used. The facility could already be used for isolation care and treatment during a public health or other emergency, triage and treatment during a mass casualty event, and training. The act also specifies that the facility must be modular and transportable.

The act specifies that licensed and certified ambulances can transport patients to the mobile field hospital (and be paid for doing so) when the governor or her designee has deployed it for an allowable purpose.

This takes effect upon passage.

PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PA 07-103 allows state or local health care professional societies and organizations to establish a single assistance program to serve all health care professionals, including paramedics. The assistance program must have one or more medical review committees. A “medical review committee” is a committee that reviews and monitors participation by health care professionals in the assistance program.

The assistance program is an alternative, voluntary, and confidential program to rehabilitate health care professionals. It must provide a variety of educational, rehabilitative, and supportive services to health care professionals with a chemical dependency, emotional or behavioral disorder, or physical or mental illness. It must include mandatory, periodic evaluations of each participant's ability to practice with skill and safety and without posing a threat to the health and safety of any person

or patient in the health care setting.

The program must annually report certain information to DPH, licensing boards, and the Public Health Committee.

A medical review committee must determine a person's appropriateness for the program before admittance. The act specifies various confidentiality provisions concerning the program and participation by health care professionals.

DPH must establish an oversight committee to monitor program quality. The oversight committee must meet with the assistance program on a regular basis; the program must also undergo an annual audit.

This takes effect upon passage.

STATE EMPLOYEES PROVIDING DISASTER RELIEF SERVICES

PA 07-3 gives a state employee who is a certified American Red Cross disaster service volunteer up to 15 working days each year, rather than 14 calendar days, to participate in Red Cross specialized disaster relief services without loss of pay or accrued leave time (vacation, sick, or earned overtime). By law, the leave must be (1) approved by the employee's supervisor and (2) requested by the Red Cross.

This takes effect October 1, 2007.

WHEELCHAIR TRANSFER SAFETY

PA 07-134 requires anyone transporting someone being transferred into or out of a motor vehicle while in a wheelchair to provide and use a device designed to secure the person in the wheelchair while transferring him or her from the ground to the vehicle or the vehicle to the ground. The device must be in the vehicle at all times.

The act requires operators of certain specific types of newly registered vehicles to provide additional protection through the use of a device that secures the wheelchair to the motor vehicle's mechanical lift, or otherwise prevents or seeks to prevent the person from falling from the vehicle. This applies to a variety of vehicles including those used by municipal, volunteer and commercial ambulances, rescue services, and management services.

The act authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) commissioner to adopt regulations, in consultation with the Departments of Transportation (DOT) and DPH commissioners, to implement these requirements.

It designates violations of the requirements as infractions.

This takes effect October 1, 2007.