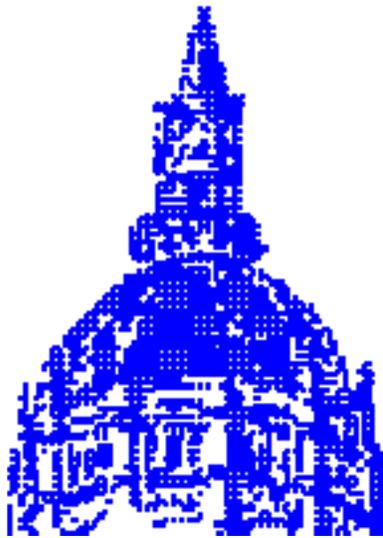


Office of Legislative Research  
Connecticut General Assembly



**OLR ACTS AFFECTING**

**Firefighters**



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## **NOTICE TO READERS**

This report provides brief highlights of new laws affecting firefighters enacted during the 2007 regular and special sessions. At the end of each summary we indicate the public act (PA) number.

Not all provisions of the acts are included here. Complete summaries of all 2007 public acts will be available in the fall when OLR's Public Act Summary book is published; some are already on OLR's webpage:

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/OLRPASums.asp>

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/>

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## **MUTUAL AID COMPACT**

A new law establishes the Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact as a legal statewide mechanism for participating towns to request and provide mutual aid during a declared local civil preparedness emergency. Responding personnel, including firefighters, providing aid during such emergencies have the same rights, duties, privileges, and immunities as they have in their own towns.

**PA 07-56**, effective October 1, 2007

## **FIRE CODE ENFORCEMENT**

A new law makes several unrelated changes affecting fire code enforcement.

As an alternative to annual inspections, the new law allows the state fire marshal to adopt a schedule for inspecting certain buildings subject to the State Fire Safety Code less often if it is in the interest of public safety.

It streamlines fire incident reporting procedures and expands the kind of fire-related incidents that local fire marshals must report to the state fire marshal.

It extends the deadline for adopting the State Fire Prevention Code from January 1, 2005 to October 1, 2008.

It requires (1) at least one member of the Fire Marshal Training Council to participate in

hearings to revoke the certificate of local fire marshals unable to prove that they completed required training and (2) the council to advise the state fire marshal and Codes and Standards Committee on decertification hearings.

It authorizes the state fire marshal and Codes and Standards Committee to issue emeritus certificates to certain retired fire code officials.

**PA 07-84**, effective upon passage for the training council requirements and October 1, 2007 for the other provisions.

## **PENSION BENEFITS**

A new law requires any municipality that provides pension benefits to survivors of paid police and firefighters who die in the line of duty to continue to provide the benefits after the surviving spouse remarries.

**PA 07-161**, effective October 1, 2007

## **FIRE RESCUE VESSELS**

New legislation establishes responsibilities for vessel operators (1) being approached by a law enforcement or fire rescue vessel using an audible signal device and displaying appropriate flashing lights or (2) approaching a stationary law enforcement or rescue vessel. It subjects violators to penalties.

**PA 07-179**, effective July 1, 2007

## **SCHOOL SECURITY**

A new law establishes a competitive state grant for FY 08 to improve security infrastructure in schools, install security systems in schools' primary entryways, purchase portable security devices, and train school personnel to use the devices and the infrastructure. To receive a grant, a district must show that it (1) has conducted a uniform security assessment of its school entrances and any security infrastructure, (2) has an emergency plan at its schools developed with applicable state and local first-responders, and (3) periodically practices the plan. The security assessment must be carried out under the supervision of the district's local law enforcement agency and use the Safe Schools Facilities Check List published by the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities.

The new law requires colleges, universities, and private occupational schools to (1) by October 1, 2007, to have emergency response plans and (2) by that date and annually thereafter, submit the plans to the public safety and emergency management and homeland security commissioners and local first-responders. Institutions must consult local first-responders in developing the plans.

**PA 07-208**, effective July 1, 2007, except for the security

grants, which take effect upon passage.

## **MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES**

A new law requires political subdivisions to provide employees (1) who are parties to a civil union and (2) have worked for the political subdivision for at least 12 months and 1,250 hours during the past 12 months, with the same Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits that federal law provides to parties to a marriage.

It allows employees who have worked for political subdivisions for at least 12 months and 1,250 hours during the past 12 months to request leave to serve as an organ or bone marrow donor. Political subdivisions include any town, city, borough, school district, fire district, improvement association, and other districts or associations.

The new law states that it cannot be construed to authorize leave in addition to the 12 weeks allowed within a 12-month period under the federal FMLA, which cover political subdivision employees. Federal regulations state that (1) the federal FMLA does not supersede any provision of state law that provides greater rights and (2) if leave is taken for a purpose covered by state law but not federal law, it does not count toward the 12 weeks allowed under the federal FMLA (29 CFR 825.701). It is unclear how the provisions of this law

and federal law will be interpreted.

**PA 07-245**, effective October 1, 2007 except the provisions on “marital status” and anti-discrimination laws are effective upon passage.

## **FIREFIGHTER TRAINING**

A new law specifically allows money in the state fire school training and education extension account to be used to (1) reimburse municipalities and municipal fire departments for one-half the cost of Firefighter I certification and recruit training for paid and volunteer municipal fire service personnel and (2) reimburse state agencies one-half the cost of Firefighter I certification and recruit training for state agency fire service personnel. By law, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, which maintains this General Fund account, may already use the account for training and education programs and sessions, which, in practice, include Firefighter I certification programs.

**PA 07-4**, June Special Session, effective July 1, 2007

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