



## ACTS AFFECTING FIREFIGHTERS AND FIRE MARSHALS



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## **NOTICE TO READERS**

This report provides highlights of new laws (public acts) affecting firefighters and fire marshals enacted during the 2016 legislative session. In each summary, we indicate the public act (PA) number.

Not all provisions of the acts are included here. Complete summaries of all 2016 public acts are available on OLR's webpage: <http://cga.ct.gov/olr/olrpassums.asp>.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full texts 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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## **BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ADOPTION PROCESS**

A new law changes the process for adopting the state building and fire codes, which are now adopted under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA) (i.e., the act that agencies must follow when adopting regulations). The new law maintains many of UAPA's essential elements, including (1) a notice requirement, (2) a public comment period, and (3) approval by the Legislative Regulation Review Committee. But the committee may waive its review, and if it fails to meet or act on a proposed code or amendment within prescribed deadlines, the code is deemed approved ([PA 16-215](#), effective upon passage).

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL**

A new law extends the existing optional municipal property tax relief program for certain non-retired volunteer personnel to specific retired personnel. Retired volunteer firefighters, fire police officers, and emergency medical technicians who volunteered at least 25 years in the municipality are now eligible for the program. The relief may take the form of a tax (1) abatement of up to \$1,000 in property taxes due in any fiscal year or (2) exemption applicable to the assessed value of real or personal property up to \$1 million, divided by the

mill rate (expressed as a whole number per \$1,000 of assessed value) at the time of the assessment ([PA 16-99](#), effective July 1, 2016).

## **FIREFIGHTERS CANCER RELIEF PROGRAM**

A new law creates a wage replacement benefit program for eligible firefighters diagnosed with cancer. Firefighters are eligible for the program as of July 1, 2019. Benefits are limited to two years. The program will be funded through a diversion from the enhanced emergency 9-1-1-program, which is funded through an existing monthly subscriber fee on telephone service. Under the act, "firefighter" includes (1) volunteer and paid firefighters and (2) local fire marshals, fire investigators, fire inspectors, and other classes of inspectors and investigators who meet minimum state qualification standards ([PA 16-10](#), effective February 1, 2017).

## **FIRE MARSHALS**

A new law allows local fire marshals to delegate to deputy fire marshals or fire inspectors their authority to write citations for certain fire code violations, just as they may currently delegate their authority to issue orders or permits ([PA 16-157](#), effective July 1, 2016).

## **“MOVE OVER” LAW EXPANSION**

The legislature has expanded the circumstances under which drivers approaching emergency vehicles on a highway must slow down and move over one lane. Previously, drivers had to do so only when a stationary emergency vehicle was located on the shoulder, lane, or breakdown lane of a highway. Under this new law, a driver must also slow down and move over for emergency vehicles traveling significantly below the speed limit ([PA 16-151 § 3](#), effective July 1, 2016).

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