

SSB 5555 - H COMM AMD

By Committee on Community & Economic Development

ADOPTED 03/04/2022

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature acknowledges that a
4 primary responsibility of government is to ensure public safety and
5 that almost always an emergency response begins with a request to 911
6 for assistance. Requests to 911 and subsequent emergency response
7 communications are managed by public safety telecommunicator
8 professionals. These first responders are essential workers who
9 continue public service throughout the pandemic, who are essential to
10 triage requests for emergency responses and provide lifesaving
11 instructions and guidance to those who call 911, ensuring the
12 appropriate response for the situation; law enforcement, behavioral
13 health, fire, and emergency medical. The public safety
14 telecommunicator also dispatches, tracks, processes, and transmits
15 information from the public and continually communicates with
16 responders providing an additional layer of safety. The legislature
17 takes special note of the contributions made by public safety
18 telecommunicators whose tasks are arduous and whose working
19 conditions may be contributing to the high and often critical
20 turnover among the principal cadre of professionals who receive and
21 process requests from the public for emergency response and provide
22 emergency communications with public safety responders.

23 (2) The legislature also recognizes that public safety
24 telecommunicators are the only public safety professionals who are
25 not required to be certified and do not have standard initial
26 training requirements to perform their critical public safety
27 function. Further, employers of public safety telecommunicators face
28 challenges in attracting suitable candidates, training, and retaining
29 of staff due to the high demand and high stress environment of this
30 critical public safety profession.

31 (3) The legislature finds and declares that:

1 (a) Public safety telecommunicators must have a formal system of
2 training, and certification and recertification standards, to ensure
3 a standardized response is given when the public seeks assistance
4 during an emergency and that standardized communications are in place
5 to support public safety responders within Washington state.

6 (b) The quality of emergency response in most cases begins with
7 the competence of public safety telecommunicators. To ensure the
8 availability and quality of trained public safety telecommunicators,
9 the legislature recognizes the need to adopt and implement
10 standardized training programs and certification and recertification
11 requirements.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
13 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
14 otherwise.

15 (1) "Certification board" means the voluntary public safety
16 telecommunicator certification board.

17 (2) "Public safety answering point" includes primary public
18 safety answering points that receive 911 calls directly from the
19 public and secondary public safety answering points that receive 911
20 calls only on a transfer or relay basis from the primary public
21 safety answering point.

22 (3) "Public safety telecommunicator" means a first responder
23 working in a primary public safety answering point, regardless of
24 title, who has successfully completed the training, certification, or
25 recertification standards established in the state of Washington.
26 This includes an employee of the state, a local public agency, or an
27 independent governmental agency whose primary responsibility is to
28 receive, process, transmit, or dispatch 911 emergency and
29 nonemergency calls for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and
30 other public safety services by telephone, radio, or other
31 communication devices and includes an individual who promoted from
32 this position and supervises individuals who perform these functions.

33 (4) "State-approved training program" means a public safety
34 telecommunicator certified training program approved by the
35 certification board to meet the requirements of a state-approved
36 public safety telecommunicator training, certification, and
37 recertification standards. For community colleges, vocational-
38 technical institutes, skill centers, and secondary schools as
39 described in chapter 28B.50 RCW, public safety telecommunicator

1 certified training programs shall be approved by the certification
2 board in cooperation with the board for community and technical
3 colleges or the superintendent of public instruction.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The certification board is established in
5 the state 911 coordination office to create a certification and
6 training program for public safety telecommunicators throughout the
7 state.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Duties of the certification board include:

9 (1) Adopting bylaws for the certification board;

10 (2) Adopting rules, with the advice and assistance of the 911
11 advisory committee, to implement the provisions of this chapter
12 including, but not limited to, rules to implement a state-approved
13 training program for process, policy, and procedure;

14 (3) Reviewing and approving state-approved training programs
15 biennially. State-approved training programs should be consistent
16 with industry standards;

17 (4) Setting all public safety telecommunicator certification,
18 registration, and renewal fees, and to collect and deposit all such
19 fees in the 911 account established under RCW 38.52.540; and

20 (5) Establishing recertification requirements.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The certification board shall represent
22 diverse stakeholders of the 911 system and shall consist of the
23 following volunteer members:

24 (1) The chair or vice chair of the 911 advisory committee;

25 (2) Two public safety answering point directors or 911
26 coordinators, one from the eastside and one from the westside of the
27 Cascade mountains appointed by the 911 advisory committee;

28 (3) Two labor union representatives from labor unions
29 representing public safety telecommunicators;

30 (4) One representative appointed by the Washington association of
31 sheriffs and police chiefs;

32 (5) One representative appointed by the Washington state fire
33 chiefs association;

34 (6) One representative from the Washington state association of
35 counties appointed by the Washington state association of counties;
36 and

1 (7) Two public safety telecommunicators from a public safety
2 answering point, one from the eastside and one from the westside of
3 the Cascade mountains appointed by the 911 advisory committee.

4 **Sec. 6.** RCW 38.52.520 and 2010 1st sp.s. c 19 s 15 are each
5 amended to read as follows:

6 A state (~~enhanced~~) 911 coordination office, headed by the state
7 (~~enhanced~~) 911 coordinator, is established in the emergency
8 management division of the department. Duties of the office include:

9 (1) Coordinating and facilitating the implementation and
10 operation of (~~enhanced~~) 911 emergency communications systems
11 throughout the state;

12 (2) Seeking advice and assistance from, and providing staff
13 support for, the (~~enhanced~~) 911 advisory committee;

14 (3) Providing staff support and assistance to the certification
15 board established under section 3 of this act that includes, but may
16 not be limited to:

17 (a) Establishing forms and procedures necessary to administer
18 chapter 38.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 7 of this
19 act);

20 (b) Issuing a public safety telecommunicator registration and
21 certification to any applicant who has met the requirements for
22 certification under chapter 38.--- RCW (the new chapter created in
23 section 7 of this act); and

24 (c) Maintaining the official record for the department of all
25 applicants and persons with registrations and certificates under
26 chapter 38.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 7 of this
27 act).

28 (4) Recommending to the utilities and transportation commission
29 by August 31st of each year the level of the state (~~enhanced~~) 911
30 excise tax for the following year;

31 (~~(4)~~) (5) Considering base needs of individual counties for
32 specific assistance, specify rules defining the purposes for which
33 available state (~~enhanced~~) 911 funding may be expended, with the
34 advice and assistance of the (~~enhanced~~) 911 advisory committee; and

35 (~~(5)~~) (6) Providing an annual update to the (~~enhanced~~) 911
36 advisory committee on how much money each county has spent on:

37 (a) Efforts to modernize their existing (~~enhanced~~) 911
38 emergency communications system; and

39 (b) (~~Enhanced~~) 911 operational costs.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act
2 constitute a new chapter in Title 38 RCW."

3 Correct the title.

EFFECT: Removes the term "enhanced" where it describes 911 calls and systems, the 911 Coordination Office, the 911 Coordinator, the 911 Advisory Committee, the 911 Account, the 911 excise tax, and state 911 funding and operational costs.

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