

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1382

As of March 17, 2015

Title: An act relating to delivery of basic firefighter training and testing.

Brief Description: Addressing the delivery of basic firefighter training and testing.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Griffey, Blake, Lytton and G. Hunt).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/02/15, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/16/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Office of the State Fire Marshal (Marshal) sits within the Washington State Patrol, providing various services to fire districts, government agencies, and the public. Examples of these services include coordination of the state fire service resources for mobilization during large-scale fires and disasters, fire incident reporting and data collection, fire code review and adoption, and construction plan reviews for fire sprinkler and alarm systems. The Marshal also regulates the fireworks and sprinkler industries, and provides instructional programs and high-risk fire training to fire departments and fire protection districts, hazardous materials training, and fire prevention education.

The Washington State Fire Training Academy (FTA), operated by the Marshal, sits on 51.3 acres of land east of North Bend. The FTA provides training for firefighters and public safety officials as well as private brigades and the maritime industry. The FTA also provides training for hazardous spill cleanup. The facility consists of an administrative building, three classrooms, dormitories, and support facilities.

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1001, known as Firefighter I, identifies the minimum job performance requirements for both career and volunteer firefighters to address structural fires. The Marshal must develop and adopt a plan for providing Firefighter I and wildland training to all firefighters in the state. The plan does not need to provide reimbursement for any fire agencies independently obtaining Firefighter I training.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The Marshal must provide a plan for the FTA to deliver basic firefighter training and testing, up to and including the Firefighter I standard, for all city fire departments, fire districts, regional fire authorities, and other municipal fire agencies. This training must be provided at the FTA or regionally at local fire agencies. Fire agencies may seek reimbursement for Firefighter I training obtained from sources other than the Marshal. Reimbursement to fire agencies conducting Firefighter I training independently is calculated on a per-capita basis in an amount equal to the three-year statewide average for the cost of providing regional direct Firefighter I training.

The Marshal must provide either direct Firefighter I training or reimbursement of training expenses in the following order of priority:

- to volunteer fire departments, defined as fire departments where 85 percent or more of department members are volunteers;
- to combination fire departments, defined as fire departments where less than 85 percent of department members are either volunteers or career firefighters; and
- to fire agencies using exclusively career firefighters and fire officers.

FTA facilities and programs must be made available at no cost to fire service youth programs, dependent on the Marshal's approval.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is something that should have been done a while ago. It prioritizes which fire agencies get training money first. Volunteer fire agencies generally have fewer resources. It is cost-prohibitive for many agencies to send firefighters to the FTA, and those smaller agencies also don't have the manpower to send people to training and still provide coverage. Approximately two-thirds of firefighters in the state are volunteers, and it is becoming more difficult to recruit and retain them with so many demands on families.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Griffey, prime sponsor; Andrew Schaffran, WA State Firefighters Assn.; Ryan Spiller, WA Fire Commissioners.