

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5457

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 4, 2015

Title: An act relating to firefighting apparatus length and weight limits.

Brief Description: Modifying certain firefighting apparatus length and weight limits.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, Lias, Hobbs and King.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/02/15, 2/04/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Fain, Vice Chair; Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Lias, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland, Habib, Jayapal, Pedersen and Rivers.

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Firefighting apparatus means a vehicle or combination of vehicles designed for fire suppression and rescue or for fire prevention activities.

Generally a Department of Transportation oversize or overweight permit must be obtained if the firefighting apparatus exceeds a list of specified criteria including but not limited to the following: 600 pounds per inch width of tire, 14 feet in height, and 50 feet in overall length. There may also be local permitting requirements depending upon the response area of the firefighting apparatus.

However, a firefighting apparatus is subject to maximum weight limits. The maximum weight for a firefighting apparatus is 50,000 pounds on a tandem axle set and may not exceed 600 pounds per square inch width of tire. There is currently no maximum weight specified for a single drive axle. When determining the weight of the firefighting apparatus, the weight of the following must be included: a full water tank, if applicable, all necessary operational equipment, and a minimum of four personnel.

When an overweight permit has been obtained, the fire district must notify the Washington State Patrol (WSP). WSP may conduct random spot checks of a firefighting apparatus to

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ensure compliance with overweight permit regulations. If found to be out of compliance, WSP must issue a notice to the fire department prohibiting operation of the apparatus on city, county, and state roadways. It is a traffic infraction to continue to operate a firefighting apparatus on the roadways after a violation notice has been issued with increasing penalty amounts for subsequent violations.

Summary of Bill: The overall length of a firefighting apparatus that may operate without obtaining a permit is increased from 50 ft to 65 ft.

A maximum weight limit for single drive axels is set at 31,000 pounds. The maximum weight per square inch width of tire is increased from 600 to 675 pounds.

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: We support this bill because it provides us the flexibility to operate the equipment we are required to operate under federal law. Modern-day apparatuses are heavier due to other requirements made on this equipment. We tried to strip all nonessential items out of an apparatus and it still came in over the current weight limits. We would have to custom order our apparatus which is much more expensive for fire districts. The small changes requested in this bill will allow us to meet all the federal fire and rescue requirements and the state weight and size limitations.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mike Remington, Bellevue Deputy Fire Chief.