

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5198

As Passed Senate, February 3, 2021

Title: An act relating to personnel restrictions on ambulances in rural areas.

Brief Description: Easing ambulance restrictions in rural areas.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Dozier, Honeyford, King, Short and Warnick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Housing & Local Government: 1/21/21, 1/28/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/3/21, 48-1.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits ambulance services established by an association made up entirely of two more municipalities located in rural areas to use a driver without any medical or first aid training under certain circumstances.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kuderer, Chair; Das, Vice Chair; Fortunato, Ranking Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Member; Short, Assistant Ranking Member; Cleveland, Lovelett, Salomon and Warnick.

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: Ambulances. State law requires ambulances to operate with sufficient personnel to care for patients, which includes at least one emergency medical technician (EMT). EMTs are responsible for the operation of the ambulance and for the care of the patient. EMTs are certified by the Department of Health (DOH) to render emergency

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medical care or, under the responsible supervision and direction of an approved medical program director, to participate in a community assistance referral and education services program.

Unless certain exemptions apply, ambulance drivers are required to have a first aid certificate recognized by DOH. Ambulance drivers that have at least two EMTs in attendance of the patient are not required to have a first aid certificate. Additionally, upon approval by DOH, an ambulance service established by volunteer or municipal corporations municipalities in a rural area with insufficient personnel, may use a driver without first aid training or medical training if the driver:

- is at least 18 years old;
- passes a background check;
- possesses a valid driver's license with no restrictions;
- is accompanied by a nondriving EMT while operating the ambulance during a response or transporting a patient; and
- only provides medical care to patients to the level the driver is trained.

Certificate of First Aid. DOH must recognize a current certificate of advanced first aid qualification by those who show proof of advanced Red Cross training or its equivalent. Red Cross courses teach participants how to respond to common emergencies, including burns, cuts, and head and neck injuries. Training lasts from two to five hours and provides participants a two-year certification.

Summary of Bill: Upon approval by DOH, an ambulance service established by an association made up entirely of two or more municipalities in a rural area with insufficient personnel, may use a driver without any medical or first aid training if the driver:

- is at least 18 years old;
- passes a background check;
- possesses a valid driver's license with no restrictions;
- is accompanied by a nondriving EMT while operating the ambulance during a response or transporting a patient; and
- only provides medical care to patients to the level the driver is trained.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Legislature addressed this issue for rural areas with insufficient personnel but two tiny towns keeping an ambulance service alive could not take advantage of this exemption. I see this bill as a technical correction.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mark Schoesler, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.