
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2577

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By House Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Macri, Ormsby, Parshley, Pollet, Reed, and Hill)

READ FIRST TIME 02/03/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to hospital inspections; and amending RCW
2 70.41.120, 70.41.122, and 70.41.080.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 70.41.120 and 2009 c 242 s 1 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) The department shall make or cause to be made an unannounced
7 inspection of all hospitals (~~(on—average)~~) at least every
8 (~~(eighteen)~~) 18 months. Every inspection of a hospital may include an
9 inspection of every part of the premises. The department may make an
10 examination of all phases of the hospital operation necessary to
11 determine compliance with the law and the standards, rules, and
12 regulations adopted thereunder.

13 (2) The department shall not issue its final report regarding an
14 unannounced inspection by the department until: (a) The hospital is
15 given at least two weeks following the inspection to provide any
16 information or documentation requested by the department during the
17 unannounced inspection that was not available at the time of the
18 request; and (b) at least one person from the department conducting
19 the inspection meets personally with the chief administrator or
20 executive officer of the hospital following the inspection or the
21 chief administrator or executive officer declines such a meeting.

1 (3) Any licensee or applicant desiring to make alterations or
2 additions to its facilities or to construct new facilities shall,
3 before commencing such alteration, addition or new construction,
4 comply with the regulations prescribed by the department.

5 (4) No hospital licensed pursuant to the provisions of this
6 chapter shall be required to be inspected or licensed under other
7 state laws or rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, or local
8 ordinances, relative to hotels, restaurants, lodging houses, boarding
9 houses, places of refreshment, nursing homes, maternity homes, or
10 psychiatric hospitals.

11 (5) To avoid unnecessary duplication in inspections, the
12 department shall coordinate with the department of social and health
13 services, the office of the state fire marshal, and local agencies
14 when inspecting facilities over which each agency has jurisdiction,
15 the facilities including but not necessarily being limited to
16 hospitals with both acute care and skilled nursing or psychiatric
17 nursing functions. The department shall notify the office of the
18 state fire marshal and the relevant local agency at least four weeks
19 prior to any inspection conducted under this section and invite their
20 attendance at the inspection, and shall provide a copy of its
21 inspection report to each agency upon completion.

22 (6) (a) In the event of a federal, state, or local emergency, if
23 the department determines that conducting an unannounced inspection
24 is not in the best interest of public health, the department may
25 temporarily pause inspections of an individual hospital or all
26 hospitals until it determines it is appropriate to resume.

27 (b) The provisions of (a) of this subsection do not prohibit or
28 limit the department's responsibility to investigate concerns related
29 to patient well-being described in RCW 70.41.155.

30 **Sec. 2.** RCW 70.41.122 and 2009 c 242 s 2 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 Surveys conducted on hospitals by the (~~joint commission on the~~
33 ~~accreditation of health care organizations, the American osteopathic~~
34 ~~association, or Det Norske Veritas shall~~) department for the purpose
35 of certification by the federal centers for medicare and medicaid
36 services or a department recognized and approved accrediting body for
37 the purpose of accreditation or certification by the federal centers
38 for medicare and medicaid services may be deemed equivalent to a
39 department survey (~~for purposes of meeting the requirements for the~~

1 ~~survey specified in RCW 70.41.120)~~ if the department determines that
2 the applicable survey standards are substantially equivalent to its
3 own.

4 (1) Hospitals so surveyed shall provide to the department within
5 (~~thirty~~) 30 days of learning the result of a survey documentary
6 evidence that the hospital has been certified as a result of a survey
7 and the date of the survey.

8 (2) Hospitals shall make available to department surveyors the
9 written reports of such surveys during department surveys, upon
10 request.

11 (3) Hospitals that provide the department with documentary
12 evidence as described in subsection (1) of this section may be exempt
13 from the inspection frequency described in RCW 70.41.120(1), and
14 instead will be inspected at least every 36 months.

15 (4)(a) In the event of a federal, state, or local emergency, if
16 the department determines that conducting an unannounced inspection
17 is not in the best interest of public health, the department may
18 temporarily pause inspections of an individual hospital or all
19 hospitals until it determines it is appropriate to resume.

20 (b) The provisions of (a) of this subsection do not prohibit or
21 limit the department's responsibility to investigate concerns related
22 to patient well-being described in RCW 70.41.155.

23 **Sec. 3.** RCW 70.41.080 and 2008 c 155 s 1 are each amended to
24 read as follows:

25 Standards for fire protection and the enforcement thereof, with
26 respect to all hospitals to be licensed hereunder shall be the
27 responsibility of the chief of the Washington state patrol, through
28 the director of fire protection, who shall adopt, after approval by
29 the department, the recognized standards applicable to hospitals for
30 the protection of life against the cause and spread of fire and fire
31 hazards adopted by the federal centers for medicare and medicaid
32 services for hospitals that care for medicare or medicaid
33 beneficiaries. The standards used for an inspection of an existing
34 hospital, or existing portion thereof, shall be standards for
35 existing buildings and not standards for new construction. The
36 department upon receipt of an application for a license, shall submit
37 to the director of fire protection in writing, a request for an
38 inspection, giving the applicant's name and the location of the
39 premises to be licensed. Upon receipt of such a request, the chief of

1 the Washington state patrol, through the director of fire protection,
2 or his or her deputy, shall make an inspection of the hospital to be
3 licensed during the department's inspection. If it is found that the
4 premises do not comply with the required safety standards and fire
5 regulations as adopted pursuant to this chapter, the director of fire
6 protection, or his or her deputy, shall promptly make a written
7 report to the department listing the corrective actions required. The
8 department shall incorporate the written report into the department's
9 final inspection report. The applicant or licensee shall submit
10 corrections to comply with the fire protection standards along with
11 any other licensing inspection corrections to the department. The
12 department shall submit the section of the statement of corrections
13 from the applicant or licensee regarding fire protection standards to
14 the director of fire protection. If (~~extensive and serious~~
15 ~~corrections are required~~) the hospital's noncompliance constitutes
16 immediate jeopardy, as defined in RCW 70.41.020, or a condition-level
17 violation, the director of fire protection, or his or her deputy, may
18 reinspect the premises. (~~The director of fire protection, or his or~~
19 ~~her deputy, shall utilize the scope and severity matrix developed by~~
20 ~~the centers for medicare and medicaid services when determining what~~
21 ~~corrections will require a reinspection.~~) Whenever the hospital to
22 be licensed meets with the approval of the chief of the Washington
23 state patrol, through the director of fire protection, he or she
24 shall submit to the department, in a timely manner so the license
25 will not be delayed, a written report approving the hospital with
26 respect to fire protection, and such report is required before a full
27 license can be issued. The chief of the Washington state patrol,
28 through the director of fire protection, shall make or cause to be
29 made inspections of such hospitals (~~on average~~) at least once every
30 (~~eighteen~~) 18 months. Inspections conducted (~~by the joint~~
31 ~~commission on hospitals accredited by it~~) consistent with the
32 requirements in RCW 70.41.122 shall be deemed equivalent to an
33 inspection by the chief of the Washington state patrol, through the
34 director of fire protection, for purposes of meeting the requirements
35 for the inspections specified in this section, and shall be conducted
36 every 36 months, as described in RCW 70.41.122(3).

37 The director of fire protection shall designate one lead deputy
38 state fire marshal on a regional basis to provide consistency with
39 each of the department's survey teams for the purpose of conducting
40 the fire protection inspection during the department's licensing

1 inspection. The director of fire protection shall ensure deputy state
2 fire marshals are provided orientation with the department on the
3 unique environment of hospitals before they conduct fire protection
4 inspections in hospitals. The orientation shall include, but not be
5 limited to: Clinical environment of hospitals; operating room
6 environment; fire protection practices in hospitals; full
7 participation in a complete licensing inspection of at least one
8 urban hospital; and full participation in a complete licensing
9 inspection of at least one rural hospital.

10 In cities which have in force a comprehensive building code, the
11 provisions of which are determined by the chief of the Washington
12 state patrol, through the director of fire protection, to be equal to
13 the minimum standards of the code for hospitals adopted by the chief
14 of the Washington state patrol, through the director of fire
15 protection, the chief of the fire department, provided the latter is
16 a paid chief of a paid fire department, shall make the inspection
17 with the chief of the Washington state patrol, through the director
18 of fire protection, or his or her deputy and they shall jointly
19 approve the premises before a full license can be issued.

20 For the purposes of this section, "condition-level violation"
21 means noncompliance that does not present an immediate jeopardy or
22 threat to patient health or safety, but the deficient practice does
23 limit the hospital's capacity to furnish safe and effective care that
24 meets the needs of the patient and otherwise does not substantially
25 meet the applicable licensing requirements.

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