

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill establishes a board of firefighter training and education to address educational needs of firefighters; to make recommendations regarding firefighter training and skills; to establish firefighter training standards; and to reimburse fire departments for training. The bill also authorizes this board to adopt rules regarding reimbursement for firefighter training and appropriates money for the purposes of implementing and administering the board's activities.

1 Definitions. Defines "fire department" to mean a regularly organized fire department, district, or company, as defined in the Uniform Fire Code, which is regularly charged with responsibility for providing fire protection to the state or a local government. Includes within the definition a private nonprofit fire department directly serving a local government. Excludes industrial fire brigades.

Defines "firefighter" to mean a volunteer, paid on-call, part-time, or career firefighter serving a general population within the boundaries of the state.

2 Board of firefighter training and education.

Subd. 1. Purpose. Establishes the board of firefighter training and education. Provides that the board's purposes are:

to review the educational needs of firefighters and fire departments in the state, make recommendations on ways to improve firefighter training and skills, address changes in technology, and enhance the safety of firefighters;

to establish firefighter training standards; and

to reimburse fire departments for training as provided in section 299N.03 (section 3 of bill).

Subd. 2. Membership. Designates the membership of the board and specifies which members are appointed by the governor. Also specifies the associations that are responsible for

recommending individuals as members.

Subd. 3. Terms; chair; compensation. Provides that board members shall serve for terms of four years. Requires the governor to appoint a chair from among the members. Specifies that terms, compensation, and filling of vacancies are subject to section 15.0575, subdivisions 3, 4, and 5 (general terms for administrative boards and agencies).

Subd. 4. Powers and duties. Requires the board to:

- review fire service training needs and make recommendations on reimbursable training;
- establish standards for reimbursable educational programs and develop procedures for program oversight;
- establish qualifications for fire service training instructors in these programs;
- report to fire service organizations, the Minnesota state colleges and universities, and private providers of firefighter training on the quality and effectiveness of training programs provided in Minnesota;
- administer funds for fire service educational programs and services; and
- adopt rules necessary to carry out its duties.

Also provides that the board may:

- hire an executive director and hire staff;
- contract for technical or professional services;
- pay expenses necessary to carry out its duties;
- apply for, receive, and accept grants, gifts, devises, and endowments for the purposes of this chapter and use any money given to it consistent with these purposes and the terms and conditions under which the money was received;
- make recommendations to the legislature to improve firefighter training quality;
- collect and provide data, subject to the data practices act;
- conduct studies and surveys and make reports; and
- conduct other activities necessary to carry out its duties.

- 3 Firefighter training and reimbursement program.** Requires the board to adopt rules establishing the requirements for fire departments to obtain reimbursement for firefighter training costs up to a limit established by the board.
- 4 Initial terms of board members.** Provides that, of the members of the board initially appointed by the governor, five members must be appointed for two-year terms, five appointed for three-year terms, and five appointed for four-year terms.
- 5 Appropriation.** Appropriates an unspecified amount from the general fund to the board for the purposes of implementing and administering this bill, to be available for the biennium ending June 30, 2001.