
BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

BILL REQ. #: H-0094.1/21

ATTY/TYPIST: AI:jlb

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Concerning public safety telecommunicators.

1 AN ACT Relating to public safety telecommunicators; adding a new
2 section to chapter 38.52 RCW; and adding a new chapter to Title 38
3 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature acknowledges that a
6 primary responsibility of government is to ensure public safety and
7 that almost always an emergency response begins with a request to 911
8 for assistance. Requests to 911 and subsequent emergency response
9 communications are managed by public safety telecommunicator
10 professionals. These are essential workers who continue public
11 service throughout the pandemic, who are essential to triage requests
12 for emergency responses, ensuring the appropriate response for the
13 situation; law enforcement, behavioral health, fire, and emergency
14 medical. The public safety telecommunicator also dispatches, tracks,
15 processes, and transmits information from the public and continually
16 communicates with responders providing an additional layer of safety.
17 The legislature takes special note of the contributions made by
18 public safety telecommunicators whose tasks are arduous and whose
19 working conditions may be contributing to the high and often critical
20 turnover among the principal cadre of professionals who receive and

1 process requests from the public for emergency response and provide
2 emergency communications with public safety responders.

3 (2) The legislature also recognizes that public safety
4 telecommunicators are the only public safety professionals who are
5 not required to be certified and do not have standard initial
6 training requirements to perform their critical public safety
7 function. Further, employers of public safety telecommunicators face
8 challenges in attracting suitable candidates, training, and retaining
9 of staff due to the high demand and high stress environment of this
10 critical public safety profession.

11 (3) The legislature finds and declares that:

12 (a) Public safety telecommunicators must have a formal system of
13 training, and certification and recertification standards, to ensure
14 a standardized response is given when the public seeks assistance
15 during an emergency and that standardized communications are in place
16 to support public safety responders within Washington state.

17 (b) The quality of emergency response in most cases begins with
18 the competence of public safety telecommunicators. To ensure the
19 availability and quality of trained public safety telecommunicators,
20 the legislature recognizes the need to adopt and implement
21 standardized training programs and certification and recertification
22 requirements.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
24 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
25 otherwise.

26 (1) "Certification board" means the voluntary public safety
27 telecommunicator certification board.

28 (2) "Public safety answering point" includes primary public
29 safety answering points that receive enhanced 911 calls directly from
30 the public and secondary public safety answering points that receive
31 enhanced 911 calls only on a transfer or relay basis from the primary
32 public safety answering point (WAC 480-120-021).

33 (3) "Public safety telecommunicator" means an individual,
34 regardless of title, who has successfully completed the training,
35 certification, or recertification standards established in the state
36 of Washington. This includes an employee of the state, a local public
37 agency, or an independent governmental agency whose primary
38 responsibility is to receive, process, transmit, or dispatch 911
39 emergency and nonemergency calls for law enforcement, fire, emergency

1 medical, and other public safety services by telephone, radio, or
2 other communication devices and includes an individual who promoted
3 from this position and supervises individuals who perform these
4 functions.

5 (4) "State-approved training program" means a public safety
6 telecommunicator certified training program approved by the
7 certification board to meet the requirements of a state-approved
8 public safety telecommunicator training, certification, and
9 recertification standards. For community colleges, vocational-
10 technical institutes, skill centers, and secondary schools as
11 described in chapter 28B.50 RCW, public safety telecommunicator
12 certified training programs shall be approved by the certification
13 board in cooperation with the board for community and technical
14 colleges or the superintendent of public instruction.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The certification board is established
16 in the state enhanced 911 coordination office. Board rule making is
17 done with the advice and assistance of the enhanced 911 advisory
18 committee. Duties of the certification board include:

19 (a) Adopting bylaws for the certification board;
20 (b) Adopting rules to implement the provisions of this chapter;
21 (c) Adopting rules to implement a state-approved training program
22 for process, policy, and procedure; and reviewing and approving
23 programs biennially. Approved training programs must, at a minimum,
24 comply with APCO ANS 3.103.2.2015, "Minimum Training Standards for
25 Public Safety Telecommunicators;"

26 (d) Setting all public safety telecommunicator certification,
27 registration, and renewal fees, and to collect and deposit all such
28 fees in the enhanced 911 account established under RCW 38.52.540;

29 (e) Establishing recertification requirements; and

30 (f) Exercising decertification authority of any certified public
31 safety telecommunicator who has not met the requirements to maintain
32 the certification. The certification board, with the advice and
33 assistance of the enhanced 911 advisory committee, shall adopt rules
34 to implement the decertification provisions of this chapter.

35 (2) The certification board is created to certify, recertify, and
36 decertify public safety telecommunicators throughout the state. The
37 board shall represent diverse stakeholders of the 911 system and
38 shall consist of the following volunteer members:

- 1 (a) The chair or vice chair of the enhanced 911 advisory
2 committee;
- 3 (b) One representative appointed by the Washington association of
4 sheriffs and police chiefs;
- 5 (c) One public safety answering point director or 911 coordinator
6 from the westside of the Cascade mountains appointed by the enhanced
7 911 advisory committee, who must be an association of public-safety
8 communications officials/national emergency number association
9 member;
- 10 (d) One public safety answering point director or 911 coordinator
11 from the eastside of the Cascade mountains appointed by the enhanced
12 911 advisory committee, who must be an association of public-safety
13 communications officials/national emergency number association
14 member;
- 15 (e) One representative from the enhanced 911 advisory committee
16 training subcommittee appointed by the enhanced 911 advisory
17 committee;
- 18 (f) One representative appointed by the Washington state fire
19 chiefs association;
- 20 (g) One representative from the Washington state association of
21 counties;
- 22 (h) One public safety telecommunicator from a public safety
23 answering point on the westside of the Cascade mountains appointed by
24 the enhanced 911 advisory committee; and
- 25 (i) One public safety telecommunicator from a public safety
26 answering point on the eastside of the Cascade mountains appointed by
27 enhanced 911 advisory committee.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 38.52
29 RCW to read as follows:

30 The state enhanced 911 coordination office must:

- 31 (1) Establish funding rules for the public safety
32 telecommunicator certification board activities;
- 33 (2) Establish forms and procedures necessary to administer this
34 chapter and chapter 38.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 6
35 of this act);
- 36 (3) Hire clerical and administrative staff as needed to implement
37 this chapter and chapter 38.--- RCW (the new chapter created in
38 section 6 of this act);

1 (4) Issue a public safety telecommunicator registration and
2 certification to any applicant who has met the requirements for
3 certification;

4 (5) Maintain the official record for the department of all
5 applicants and persons with registrations and certificates under this
6 chapter and chapter 38.--- RCW (the new chapter created in section 6
7 of this act);

8 (6) Deny certification to applicants who do not meet the training
9 and conduct requirements for certification as a public safety
10 telecommunicator; and

11 (7) Provide legal support and liability protection for the public
12 safety telecommunicator certification board.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A public safety telecommunicator is a
14 first responder. This designation does not confer a right to, or
15 entitlement upon, an employee or prospective employee to obtain a
16 retirement benefit for an employment classification that is not
17 specifically identified in the Revised Code of Washington.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 3 and 5 of this act
19 constitute a new chapter in Title 38 RCW.

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