



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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**FIRE FIGHTERS TRAINING STANDARDS
RECEIVED**

Senate Bill 847 (Substitute H-2)
First Analysis (12-8-88)

JAN 18 1988

Sponsor: Senator Richard D. Fessler *Mich. State Law Library*
Senate Committee: State Affairs, Tourism, and
Transportation
House Committee: Labor

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

While fire fighting has always been a dangerous occupation, recent disasters have pointed out the need for rules for open fire training. A fire training exercise in Milford last year, for example, resulted in the deaths of three experienced volunteer fire fighters when gasoline was reportedly used to set the fire. In spite of the fact that the Milford fire department has a solid reputation with neighboring departments, investigators in the catastrophe said that the procedures used by the fire fighters were not up to national fire training standards. The Fire Fighters Training Council — a state-funded agency — prepares and publishes standards for the recruitment of fire fighters, offers training and advice to Michigan fire departments, prepares and administers examinations for both volunteer and full-time fire fighters based on standards set by the National Fire Protection Association, and approves the standards of fire fighter training schools. Local fire departments, however, often set their own standards. Some feel that this creates confusion, and in view of this, and the fact that fire fighters today increasingly have to face the possibility that the buildings they enter may contain hazardous or toxic materials, some feel that the need exists for the council to adopt standards that are consistent with state and federal safety standards and which address specific problems.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Fire Fighters Training Council Act to require that the council review and monitor state and federal standards relating to live fire training exercises in structures, and make recommendations to the General Industry Safety Standards Commission (established by the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act [MIOSHA]) for any new or modified standards necessary for the protection of fire fighter trainees.

MCL 29.369

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

The Senate version of the bill would have amended the Fire Fighters Training Council Act to require the council to prepare and publish advisory standards on live fire training evolutions and structures consistent with the standards adopted by and published by the National Fire Protection Association, and to provide at no cost a firefighters training manual for each trainee's use while enrolled in a training course. The House Labor Committee adopted a substitute to require that the council instead advise the appropriate commission of the need for standards.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal impact on the state. (12-7-88)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Present day fire fighting conditions make it necessary to have consistent standards for the training of fire fighters. By providing state-wide standards for fire fighters to adhere to, the reduction of injuries and fatalities would reduce the human suffering, as well as the cost, that accompanies such events.

For:

Under the bill, the General Industry Safety Standards Commission, which has authority under the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act (MIOSHA) to enforce rules for the protection of workers, will determine which standards should be promulgated for the protection of fire fighters during live fire training exercises. It makes sense for these standards to be promulgated by the commission, since it has the authority under MIOSHA to administer and enforce these standards.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Labor supports the bill. (12-6-88)

The Department of State Police supports the bill. (12-6-88)

The Michigan State Fire Fighters' Union supports the bill. (12-6-88)

The Michigan State Firemen's Association supports the bill. (12-6-88)

The Bureau of Safety and Regulation (MIOSHA) in the Department of Labor supports the bill. (12-6-88)

The Michigan State AFL-CIO supports the bill. (12-7-88)

The Michigan Townships Association has no position on the bill. (12-6-88)

S.B. 847 (12-7-88)