



2011 Agency Request Legislation Fees for Emergency Medical Services Providers HB 2141

Overview

The Governor's supplemental budget removes general fund state (GFS) funding for emergency medical services (EMS) personnel and agencies. Without GFS funding, fees will be required to regulate EMS personnel, including emergency medical responders (EMR), emergency medical technicians (EMT), advanced EMTs (AEMT) and paramedics, as well as ambulance and aid services (EMS agencies.) The department requests legislation for fee authority to replace the GFS funding that is removed in the Governor's budget. Regulation includes licensing and discipline.

Background

The EMS and Trauma System began regulating EMS agencies and personnel in 1973. The program is the same as regulation of other health care providers and services, except that the program has been funded by GFS rather than fees.

EMS providers are regulated under Chapters 18.73 and 18.71 RCW. There are 4 skill levels of EMS personnel:

	<u>Training Hours</u>	<u># Certified</u>
1. Emergency Medical Responders	40-60 hours	693
2. Emergency Medical Technicians	120-160 hours	13,989
3. Advanced EMTs	180-220 hours	390
4. Paramedics	2,000-3,000 hours	2,330

EMS personnel and agencies have not paid fees because of concerns about requiring fees from volunteer providers. The volunteer EMS workforce has decreased over the last 20 years from 66 percent to about 40 percent. Most volunteers are in rural communities. Volunteers comprise 91.8 percent of EMRs and 43 percent of EMTs. Only 2.8 percent of paramedics are volunteers.

Summary of the Bill

The bill requires the department to establish fees to regulate EMS providers and agencies. The bill also removes from statute the licensing fee exemption for municipal corporations that provide EMS services.

This fee proposal would generate \$988,000 in the current biennium, beginning July 1, 2012. In the 2013–15 biennium proposed fees would generate \$2,014,000. These fees would replace current GFS funding.



How the Fee Proposal Would Work

EMS personnel re-certify every three years; EMS agencies re-certify every two years. The fees would replace GFS funds for the costs to regulate EMS providers and agencies. RCW 43.70.110 allows the department to charge licensing fees for all licensees, including EMS personnel. RCW 43.70.110 also exempts EMS ambulance and municipal corporation aid services from fees.

I-960 requires specific legislative approval to establish new or to increase current fees. The bill requests the authority to establish fees and remove the current municipal corporation exemption. It is necessary to remove this exemption because only 11.5 percent of EMS agencies are private. It would not be cost effective to have a fee system solely for private services.

There are 17,402 EMS personnel in Washington and 480 EMS ambulance and aid agencies.

A fee study and rules would be completed before any fees were collected. Preliminary estimates suggest graduated fees based on the level of certification. The levels would range from \$40 to \$200 per certification period. EMS personnel are certified for three years, and EMS agencies for two years. The following proposed fees would be applied:

Emergency Medical Responders:	\$40/every 3 years
Emergency Medical Technicians:	\$125/every 3 years
Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians:	\$150/ every 3 years
Paramedic:	\$200/every 3 years
Aid Services:	\$150/ every 2 years
Ambulance Services:	\$300/every 2 years

Local governments operate 88.5 percent of EMS agencies. Only 18.6 percent of all paid EMS personnel work for private agencies. Many private and municipal union contracts require that agencies pay fees for their personnel. This means that for public agencies the cost could be shifted from state to local government.

Most government-operated ambulance services charge transportation and patient care fees, which can be collected from public and private insurers. There are several statutes that provide local governments with EMS taxing authority.

For More Information

Brian Peyton, Director
Policy, Legislative and Constituent Relations
(360) 236-4048 or brian.peyton@doh.wa.gov

Janet Kastl, Director
Office Community Health Systems
(360) 236-2801 or janet.kastl@doh.wa.gov