

Alaska State Legislature

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State Affairs Committee
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SPONSOR STATEMENT **Immunity for Fire Dept. & Members** **Version H**

Senate Bill 43 extends protections to fire departments and employees of certain types of fire departments.

Under current law, employees of municipal fire departments receive immunity from liability. However, some fire departments, such as those in Fairbanks, Chugiak, and Girdwood, operate as volunteer-based non-profits that contract with local governments to provide services. These types of fire departments aren't similarly protected in statute.

Liability protections should not be exclusive to employees of fire departments operated by municipalities and should be extended to include all fire departments that have a contractual relationship with local governments.

Senate Bill 43 also extends immunity available to municipal fire departments and to contracted fire departments. While municipal fire departments already have some statutory protections, contract fire departments have none. Because the current statute does not protect them from liability, these fire departments, local governments, and ultimately taxpayers, are vulnerable.