



# AKVMA OPPOSES HB 70 and Recommends Amendments to Emergency Medical Services to Operational Canines

## What This Bill Does?

The Alaska Veterinary Medical Association (AKVMA) recognizes the importance of ensuring that operational canines receive timely medical care in emergency situations. However, we have significant concerns with House Bill 70 in its current form. While we understand the intent behind the bill, the AKVMA believes that the language as written could present risks to both the animals and the emergency responders. We urge lawmakers to reconsider certain provisions and work towards amendments that would better safeguard both public and animal welfare.



## Concerns with the Bill?

Section 18.08.093 of House Bill 70 allows emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and mobile intensive care paramedics (MICPs) to provide **emergency medical services** to operational canines under certain circumstances. While we acknowledge the intent to ensure timely medical care, the language in this section is overly broad and creates significant risks to both the animals and emergency responders.

Allowing EMTs and MICPs, who lack formal veterinary training, to provide emergency care to operational canines **beyond basic first aid** could lead to misdiagnosis, improper treatment, legal liabilities, and even potential death for animals.

## AKVMA Proposes:

- ✓ Working towards a solution that allows EMTs and MICPs to provide “*basic first aid to operational canines*” with the goal to stabilize and transport to a veterinary facility for emergency medical services. While we acknowledge the intent to ensure timely medical care, EMTs and MICPs lack the **specialized knowledge** required to safely treat animals, putting both the animals and responders at risk.
- ✓ Including statutory language that defines “*basic first aid to operational canines*” clearly and explicitly ensuring that EMTs and MICPs understand the limited scope of care they can provide.

“*Basic first aid to operational canines*” means providing immediate medical care in an emergency situation to which the emergency responder is responding, that is intended to stabilize the operational canine that the animal can be safely transported as practicable to a licensed veterinarian for treatment. The scope of care provided by EMTs and MICPs should be limited to the following procedures:

- Administering oxygen.
- Managing ventilation by mask.
- Manually clearing the upper airway, not including tracheal intubation or surgical procedures.
- Controlling hemorrhage with direct pressure.
- Bandaging for the purpose of stopping bleeding.

AKVMA welcomes and encourages EMTs, MICPs, and lawmakers to work with veterinarians to craft specific statutory language that balances the need for rapid response with the protection of animal welfare. Together, we can find a solution that works for both the operational canines and the emergency responders who serve them.