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Alaska State Legislature

Senator Drua Pearce, Chair
Senator Virginia Collins, Vice Chair
Senator Dick Eliason
Senator Rick Halford
Senator Jay Kerttula



WHILE IN JUNEAU
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SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

SENATE LETTER OF INTENT

CS SB 208 (L&C)

The Senate Labor and Commerce Committee is concerned that volunteer firefighters providing volunteer service outside an incorporated city or borough may not be covered by workers' compensation. This committee encourages representatives from the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, the Alaska Firefighters Association, the state Fire Marshal's office, the Emergency Medical Services Association, and the state Emergency Medical Services' office to meet during the interim to address this concern. Recommendations on how to remedy this lack of insurance coverage should be reported to the Second Session of the Seventeenth Alaska State Legislature by January 31, 1992, for possible legislative action.

Senate adopted 4/19/91

FISCAL NOTE

N. 1

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL Version: SA 208
(S) Publish Date: 4/15/91

Revision Date: _____
Title: " An Act relating to workers' compensation for emergency medical ..."
Sponsor: Senator Ellason
Requestor: Senate Labor & Commerce

Department Affected: Labor
BRU: Workers' Compensation
Component: Workers' Compensation
COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 344

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND&STRUCTURES						
Gr. INTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: None

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Changes in CS SB 208 (LVC) have no fiscal impact. This fiscal note is appropriate.

4-15-91 date MMW Comte Aide (initial)

Prepared by: Linda Rexwinkel, Director *LR* Phone: 465-2790
Division: Workers' Compensation Date: 4/2/91

Approved by Commissioner: Nancy Bear Usura *NBU*
Agency: Department of Labor Date: 4/2/91

Distribution (by preparer): Legislative Finance, Legislative Sponsor, Requestor, OMB, & Impacted Agency(ies).

FISCAL NOTE

2
 bill Version: SB 208
 (S) Publish Date: 4/15/91

STATE OF ALASKA
 1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: _____ Department Affected: ADMINISTRATION
 Title: An act relating to Workers' Compensation for emergency medical BRU: Risk Management

Sponsor: Eliason techs
 Requestor: Labor and Commerce Component: _____

COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

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Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
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REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

Estimate of current year impact: 0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)
 See Attached
 Changes in CS SB 208 (1+c) have no fiscal impact. This fiscal note is appropriate.
4-15-91 date RM Comte Aide (initial)

Prepared By: Don Hitchcock Phone: 465-2180
 Division: Risk Management Date: 3-20-91
 Approved by Commissioner: Miller + Keller Date: 3/21/91
 Agency: Administration

Alaska State Legislature

Senator Drue Pearce, Chair
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SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE LETTER OF INTENT

CS SB 208 (L&C)

The Senate Labor and Commerce Committee is concerned that volunteer firefighters providing volunteer service outside an incorporated city or borough may not be covered by workers' compensation. This committee encourages representatives from the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, the Alaska Firefighters Association, the state Fire Marshal's office, the Emergency Medical Services Association, and the state Emergency Medical Services' office to meet during the interim to address this concern. Recommendations on how to remedy this lack of insurance coverage should be reported to the Second Session of the Seventeenth Alaska State Legislature by January 31, 1992, for possible legislative action.

(7)

Date Referred: April 22, 1991

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Judiciary
Finance

Date of Committee Action: 5-9-91

The LABOR AND COMMERCE Committee considered:

CSSB 208(L&C)

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 208 (L&C)

WORKERS' COMP FOR VOLUNTEER EMT'S

"An Act relating to workers' compensation for volunteer emergency medical technicians; and providing for an effective date."

RECOMMENDATIONS: the same title
be replaced with _____ a new title

have attached amendments(s)

do pass

do not pass

no recommendations

individual recommendations

additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: Senate L+C Comm. letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal impact _____

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note _____

zero fiscal note(s) Repts. of Labor & Admin.

SIGNING DQ PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	DNP	NR	AM
<i>David Duley</i>	✓				
<i>Tom Buchanan</i>	✓				
<i>Adrian G. Taylor</i>	✓				
<i>Gene [unclear]</i>	x				
<i>Kevin [unclear]</i>	✓				
<i>John [unclear]</i>	✓				

[Signature]
CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to worker's compensation for volunteer emergency medical technicians."

SB 208 would provide workers' compensation coverage by the state for state certified volunteer EMT's who are injured while providing emergency medical services outside an incorporated city or borough and who are not otherwise covered for worker's compensation.

Background

Approximately two-thirds of Alaska's twenty five hundred state certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) are volunteers. These volunteers provide the backbone of the emergency medical services system in many parts of rural Alaska. Although most volunteers respond to fewer emergency medical calls than paid EMT's, they often face similar hazards and are at some risk of becoming injured.

Under AS 23.30.092, a political subdivision may elect to provide benefits and compensation to volunteer ambulance attendants, policemen or firemen by obtaining insurance and filing copies of the policies with the commissioner of the Department of Labor. However, volunteer EMT's who live in, and provide services in, unincorporated communities outside organized incorporated cities or boroughs do not have worker's compensation coverage at the present time. A review of the computer records of the Emergency Medical Services Section in the Division of Public Health reveals that less than one hundred fifty state certified volunteer EMT's reside in unincorporated areas and therefore would be eligible to receive benefits under this bill.

If this bill passes, those volunteer EMT's who reside in incorporated cities or boroughs that elect not to provide this coverage would still not be eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits, except if they happen to be injured while providing services outside incorporated cities and boroughs. We have no way of estimating how many volunteer EMT's would be in this category, but we estimate that the number is low.

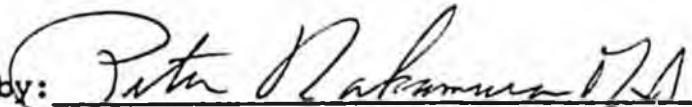
The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has provided workers' compensation coverage for volunteer EMT's and firefighters for over ten years. Currently, 350 volunteers are covered by borough paid worker's compensation coverage. According to Kevin Koechlein, Director of Emergency Services for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, over ten years there have been two lost work time injuries, costing less than \$1,000 apiece, and an average of about \$2,000.00 per year in medical claims. Last

year, among the volunteer EMT's, there were two needlestick injuries, one back strain, and one laceration.

Position


The Department of Health and Social Services supports SB 208. We believe it is only fair that EMT's who provide emergency medical services in unincorporated areas should receive the same or similar benefits if injured as those volunteer EMT's who are provided workers' compensation coverage by a local government. This should help emergency medical services in remote rural areas to recruit and retain volunteer EMT's.

The Department of Health and Social Services supports SB 208.

Recommended by: 

Peter M. Nakamura, MD, MPH
Director
Division of Public Health

Date: 4/3/91

Approved by: 

Theodore A. Mala, MD, MPH
Commissioner
Department of Health and Social Services

Date: 3 Apr 91

SOUTHEAST REGION

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COUNCIL
207 MOLLER DRIVE RM. 113 • SITKA, ALASKA 99835
TELEPHONE 907-747-8005

Senator Pearce
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

April 2, 1991

Dear Senator Pearce,

I am writing to comment on SB208.

The bill goes a long way toward supporting the volunteer EMS workers who provide an essential state-mandated service to Alaska for free. Senator Eliason's bill, through providing worker's compensation insurance for volunteers in Alaska's unincorporated areas, supports those volunteers in a very quantifiable way. We've notified people from unincorporated areas in Southeast about the upcoming hearing on SB 208, and I believe you'll be hearing from folks in places like Hollis, Gustavus, Elfin Cove and Port Protection who are really behind the bill. These people have no significant sources of local funding and rely on the state to support their work through mini grants (funded through the Grants to EMS Councils line item) and bills like this one and SB194, that would make Hepatitis B vaccinations available to volunteer EMS workers.

In a conversation with Jack Mason, EMS Captain for Port Protection, he noted that SB208 proposes to cover "emergency medical technicians...". Our experience is that in a lot of smaller communities, emergency trauma technicians make up the brunt of the emergency medical service workers. We, therefore, suggest that a broader definition of emergency medical service workers be considered that would include the whole range of EMS volunteers.

As liaison between the communities of Southeast and the state of Alaska, Southeast Region EMS Council fully supports SB208 and the philosophy behind it-- supporting Alaska's volunteer EMS system.

Sincerely,



Shawn Newell
Executive Director

To Senator Dick Eliason 4/3/91
From Reed Reynolds, SE Region EMS

Re: SB 208 Worker's Comp for EMS

This will advise you that the entire 30 member Regional Board of Directors voted unanimously on March 19, 1991, to endorse SB 208. In making this decision, the regional board called attention to the significance of having volunteers to provide emergency medical care to the unincorporated areas of Alaska. The risk to the workers' compensation fund is considered very low based on 13 years of experience; the benefits to the public far outweigh the risk. Protection of such volunteer EMS workers is proper and is essential to the maintenance of vital, high quality EMS on a continuous year round basis. On behalf of rural, isolated volunteer EMS workers, the regional board strongly encourages adoption of SB 208.