

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5775

As Passed Senate, February 9, 1998

Title: An act relating to hazardous devices.

Brief Description: Providing additional exemptions from state law for the handling of hazardous devices.

Sponsors: Senator McCaslin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 2/28/97, 3/3/97 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/19/97, 43-0.
Passed Senate, 2/9/98, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Fairley, Goings, Hargrove, Haugen, Kline, Long, Stevens and Zarelli.

Staff: Harry Steinmetz (786-7421)

Background: The Washington State Explosives Act governs the manufacture, use, and handling of explosives. No person may manufacture, possess, store, sell, purchase, transport, or use explosives unless licensed by the Department of Labor and Industries.

Certain uses are exempt from the explosives act. For example, the normal and emergency operations of federal agencies involving transportation, storage, and use of explosives are exempt. Only emergency operations of state agencies, law enforcement, or local government are exempt.

Local government explosive disposal (bomb) units are subject to restrictions under the explosives act when handling and storing explosives. Certain training exercises conducted with explosive materials, and other normal operations of such units, are restricted by regulations governing the handling and possession of explosives.

Summary of Bill: Certain activities of hazardous devices technicians are exempt from the explosives act, including the performance of normal and emergency operations, handling evidence, and operating specially designed emergency response vehicles carrying no more than 10 pounds of explosive material. Training activities involving the minimum safety equipment prescribed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation are also exempt. Hazardous devices technicians are persons who have graduated from the FBI hazardous devices school and who are employed by the state or a local government.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Law enforcement personnel who handle explosives are all highly trained professionals, trained and approved by the federal government. This bill will remove confusion between what is allowed by federal law and under state law. It will provide better readiness capability and more timely response. The bill protects professionals who handle small amounts for training.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Jim Mathis, Washington Council of Police Officers; Sgt. Jim Bass, Tacoma Police Department; Sgt. Jim Anson, Seattle Police Department.