

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6710

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to standards for fire protection of hospitals.

Brief Description: Modifying the fire protection standards for hospitals.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser and Marr; by request of Washington State Patrol).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/25/08, 2/27/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires simultaneous inspections and coordinated inspection reporting of hospital inspection activities conducted by the Director of Fire Protection and the Department of Health.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, DeBolt, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Department of Health (Department) must conduct inspections of hospitals every 18 months. Surveys conducted by either the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health Care Organizations or the American Osteopathic Association may be deemed equivalent to a Department inspection. The Department is required to coordinate hospital inspection activities with other agencies, including the Department of Social and Health Services, the

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Office of the State Fire Marshal, and local agencies to minimize the number of separate inspections that must be conducted.

The Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP), through the Director of Fire Protection (Director), sets and enforces standards for fire protection as they relate to all licensed hospitals. Hospital fire protection and enforcement standards must be consistent with standards adopted by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for hospitals that care for Medicare or Medicaid beneficiaries. The Director must inspect hospitals at least once a year.

The Director administers licensing and certification requirements, and sets license and certificate fees for fire sprinkler contractors and fire sprinkler certificate of competency holders. These fees are deposited into the Fire Protection Contractor License Fund. This fund is used only for purposes of licensing and regulating fire protection sprinkler system contractors and assisting in identifying fire sprinkler system components subject to recalls or voluntary replacement programs, as well as for licensing and regulating fire protection sprinkler system contractors.

Summary of Bill:

The requirement that the Director conduct fire protection inspections of hospitals every 12 months is extended to an average of every 18 months. The standards used for inspecting an existing hospital, or portion of an existing hospital, must be the standards used for existing buildings and not the standards used for new construction.

The Director, must inspect a hospital during the licensing inspection conducted by the Department. The Department must incorporate the written report from the Director into the Department's final inspection report. Applicants or licensees must submit their corrections to comply with the fire protection standards along with any other licensing inspection corrections to the Department which will send the fire protection corrections to the Director. The Director may reinspect the premises if extensive and serious corrections are required. The Director must utilize the scope and severity matrix developed by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services when determining what corrections will require a reinspection. Inspections conducted by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations are deemed equivalent to an inspection by the Director.

The Director shall designate a lead deputy state fire marshal for each region to conduct fire protection inspections during Department inspections of hospitals. Prior to conducting hospital fire protection inspections, the deputy state fire marshals must receive an orientation on hospitals that includes the subjects of the clinical environment of hospitals, the operating room environment, and fire protection practices in hospitals, as well as participation in a licensing inspection of at least one urban and one rural hospital.

The purposes for which the Fire Protection Contractor License Fund may be used are broadened to include the standards set for fire protection and its enforcement with respect to all hospitals.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Fire inspections at hospitals should be conducted by trained fire inspectors from the State Fire Marshal's Office. Changing the fire inspection cycle to the same as the Department of Health's inspection cycle will ease the inspection process for hospitals.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor; Lisa Thatcher, Washington State Hospital Association; and Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.