

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6710

As Passed Senate, February 19, 2008

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: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/29/08, 2/04/08 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/19/08, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6710 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Hewitt, King, Murray and Prentice.

Staff: Ingrid Mungia (786-7423)

Background: The Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP), through the Director of Fire Protection, sets and enforces standards for fire protection as it relates 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 Chief of the WSP, through the Director of Fire Protection, must inspect hospitals at least once a year.

The state Director of Fire Protection 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 Substitute Bill: The requirement that the Chief of the WSP conduct inspections of hospitals every 12 months is extended to an average of every 18 months. The standard 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.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Chief of the WSP, through the Director of Fire Protection (Director), must inspect a hospital during the inspection conducted by the Department of Health (DOH). DOH must incorporate the written report from the Director into DOH's final inspection report. Applicants or licensees must submit their corrections to comply with the fire protection standards along with any other licensing inspection to DOH. 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 are deemed equivalent to an inspection by the Chief of the WSP, through the Director.

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.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: Since the 1990's, the State Patrol has been delegating hospital inspections to the Department of Health because of budget cuts. The State Fire Marshal has been informed they cannot delegate this duty because of public safety issues. This bill has been worked on and agreed upon by all parties. This bill allows the State Fire Marshal's Office to coordinate hospital inspections with the Department of Health to reduce disruptions to hospitals. This bill is the right thing to do. It is good for citizens and responders.

OTHER: The Hospital Association supports the proposed substitute.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Keiser, prime sponsor; Mike Matlick, State Fire Marshal's Office; T.K. Nedrow, Fire Protection Policy Board.

OTHER: Lisa Thatcher, WA State Hospital Association.