
**Labor & Workplace Standards
Committee**

HB 2805

Brief Description: Requiring mandatory reporting of hazardous exposures for firefighters.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Griffey, Moeller, Van De Wege, Gregerson, Ormsby, Sawyer, Stokesbary, Tarleton, Fitzgibbon, Morris, Stanford, Pollet, Frame, Goodman and Bergquist.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries to begin rule-making to require the reporting of all hazardous exposures suffered by firefighters in the course of employment.

Hearing Date: 2/1/16

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

Under the state's Industrial Insurance Act, a worker who, in the course of employment, is injured or suffers disability from an occupational disease is entitled to certain benefits. To prove an occupational disease, the worker must show that the disease arose naturally and proximately out of employment. For certain firefighters, there is a rebuttable presumption that certain medical conditions (such as respiratory disease, certain heart problems, specified cancers, and certain infectious diseases) are occupational diseases.

In 2015, the Legislature passed SHB 1604, which required the Department of Labor and Industries (Department) to convene a work group to discuss creating definitions, policies, and procedures for mandatory reporting of hazardous exposures suffered by firefighters in the course of employment.

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 work group included representatives of firefighters unions, fire departments, fire chiefs, self-insured employers, and state fund public employers. The work group met eight times during the 2015 interim. The work group did not reach consensus on mandating the reporting of personal hazardous exposures by individual firefighters.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative findings are made stating firefighters contract diseases at significantly higher rates than the general population and that there is no reliable reporting requirement to consistently track and account for hazardous exposure suffered by firefighters.

Beginning July 1, 2016, the Department must begin rule-making to require the reporting of all hazardous exposures suffered by firefighters in the course of employment. The rules must:

- require reports of exposures to be maintained for at least six years after the firefighter's last date of employment and maintained in a database that is readily accessible to firefighters; and
- address the nondisclosure of reports to protect the privacy of personal information.

The reports by firefighters are exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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