
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6489

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senate Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Becker, Llias, Rivers, Bailey, Parlette, Braun, Angel, Brown, Schoesler, Warnick, Honeyford, Dammeier, Pearson, Billig, King, and Hewitt)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/16.

1 AN ACT Relating to fire suppression volunteers; and adding a new
2 section to chapter 76.04 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 76.04
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) To maximize the effective utilization of qualified wildland
7 fire suppression volunteers, the department is required to:

8 (a) Compile and maintain a master list of qualified wildland fire
9 suppression volunteers who have valid incident qualifications for the
10 kind of volunteer work to be performed. In order to be included on a
11 master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers:

12 (i) Volunteers in fire crews must have adequate training and
13 qualifications, including possessing a valid incident qualification
14 card, commonly called a red card;

15 (ii) Volunteers other than those identified in (a)(i) of this
16 subsection must have training and qualifications evidenced by
17 possession of a valid department qualification and safety document,
18 commonly called a blue card; and

19 (iii) Volunteers identified in (a)(i) and (ii) of this subsection
20 must be registered as qualifying fire suppression volunteers with the
21 department;

1 (b) Create and make available a process by which potential
2 volunteers may register with the department. Registration must be
3 made available free of charge. As part of the registration process,
4 the department may require proof of adequate training and relevant
5 fire suppression-related qualifications or certifications;

6 (c) Make the lists of qualified wildland fire suppression
7 volunteers available to county legislative authorities, emergency
8 management departments, and local fire districts, and provide those
9 entities training on the process for ordering volunteers through
10 established coordinated resource ordering systems of local or state
11 firefighting organizations;

12 (d) Cooperate with federal wildland firefighting agencies to
13 maximize, based on predicted need, the efficient use of local
14 resources in close proximity to wildland fire incidents;

15 (e) Provide all necessary safety and fire suppression equipment
16 at no cost to each volunteer when the volunteer is dispatched to fire
17 suppression duty. If the department cannot provide the necessary
18 safety and fire suppression equipment, it must offer to reimburse any
19 volunteer who purchases new equipment suitable for the kind of
20 volunteer work to be performed. If the volunteer accepts
21 reimbursement, he or she must surrender the equipment for which he or
22 she was reimbursed when the volunteer period comes to an end; and

23 (f) Maintain its inventory of safety and fire suppression
24 equipment for volunteers in good condition and conduct periodic
25 inspections to ensure safety. The safety and fire suppression
26 equipment must be stored in a geographic area and manner such that it
27 is easily distributed to volunteers without delay when needed for
28 fire suppression.

29 (2) The volunteers identified in subsection (1)(a) of this
30 section may be dispatched to support wildland fire suppression
31 efforts through the coordinated resource ordering systems of local or
32 state firefighting organizations. Volunteers are prohibited from
33 independently assigning themselves to wildfires without an official
34 resource order.

35 (3) Nothing in subsection (1) of this section prohibits the
36 department from conducting condensed safety training on the site of a
37 wildland fire in order to utilize available volunteers not included
38 on a master list of qualified wildland fire suppression volunteers.

1 (4) For purposes of this section, "volunteers" means qualified
2 individuals performing fire suppression activities for the department
3 without any expectation of compensation.

4 (5) No civil liability may be imposed by any court on the state
5 or its officers and employees for any adverse impacts resulting from
6 the department training, listing, or dispatching of volunteers under
7 the provisions of this section except upon proof of gross negligence
8 or willful or wanton misconduct.

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