
Consumer Protection & Business Committee

SSB 5880

Brief Description: Concerning fire protection sprinkler system contractors.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Business, Financial Services & Trade (originally sponsored by Senators Salomon, Conway, Keiser, Liias, Lovick, Nobles and Van De Wege).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Increases licensing fees for fire protection sprinkler system contractors and the fines the State Director of Fire Protection can impose on contractors.
- Modifies duties of the State Director of Fire Protection to investigate alleged statutory violations and complete certificate of competency renewals.
- Creates the Fire Protection Compliance Account for fines collected by the State Director of Fire Protection.

Hearing Date: 2/16/22

Staff: Michelle Rusk (786-7153).

Background:

Fire Protection Sprinkler Systems and Contractors.

A fire protection sprinkler system contractor is a person or organization that offers to undertake the execution of contracts for the installation, inspection, maintenance, or servicing of a fire protection sprinkler system or any part of such a system.

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

A fire protection sprinkler system is an assembly of underground and overhead piping or conduit, or both, beginning at the connection to the primary water supply, whether public or private, that conveys water with or without other agents to dispersal openings or devices to extinguish, control, or contain fire and to provide protection from exposure to fire or other products of combustion.

Licensing Fees.

The State Director of Fire Protection (director) administers examinations, issues certificates of competency, and licenses fire protection sprinkler system contractors in accordance with statute. The licensing fees for contractors who install, inspect, maintain, or service certain fire protection sprinkler systems may not exceed:

- \$100 for contractors who work on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 13-D systems, for one or two-family residential dwellings or mobile homes; and
- \$300 for contractors who work on NFPA 13R system, for residential dwellings up to four stories in height.

License fees and charges are deposited into the fire protection contractor license fund, which may only be used for identifying fire sprinkler system components that are subject to a recall or voluntary replacement, and developing and publishing educational materials regarding the effectiveness of residential fire sprinklers.

Fines - Infractions and Certificates of Competency.

The director has authority to adopt rules defining infractions under the fire sprinkler system contractors statute and associated fines for such infractions. A contractor who commits an infraction is subject to a fine no less than \$200 and no more than \$5,000. Additionally, a contractor who fails to obtain a certificate of competency is subject to a fine no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$5,000.

Fire Protection Sprinkler Fitting.

The director also administers the fire protection sprinkler fitting statute, including adopting and administering examinations for applicants for certificates of competency, and possessing discretion to investigate alleged violations of the fire protection sprinkler fitting statute.

Summary of Bill:

Increase in Certain Licensing Fees and Fines.

Licensing Fees.

The licensing fees for fire protection sprinkler system contractors who install, inspect, maintain, or service certain fire protection sprinkler systems may not exceed:

- \$125 for contractors who work on NFPA 13-D systems; and
- \$375 for contractors who work on NFPA 13R systems.

Infractions.

The minimum and maximum fines for a contractor who commits an infraction are:

- For a first infraction, a fine cannot be less than \$300 and not more than \$7,500.
- For a second infraction, a fine cannot be less than \$400 and not more than \$10,000.
- For a third infraction, a fine cannot be less than \$1,000 and not more than \$15,000.

Certificates of Competency.

A fire protection sprinkler system contractor who fails to obtain a certificate of competency shall be assessed a fine as follows:

- For a first infraction, the fine cannot be less than \$1,500 and not more than \$7,500.
- For a second infraction, a fine cannot be less than \$2,500 and not more than \$10,000.
- For a third or any subsequent infraction, a fine cannot be less than \$5,000 and not more than \$25,000.

Creation of Fire Protection Compliance Account.

The Fire Protection Compliance Account is established in the custody of the state treasury. Fines collected for contractor infractions and failure to obtain certificates of competency are to be deposited into this account. Expenditures from the account may only be used for enforcing the fire protection statutes, and the account is subject to allotment procedures, but no appropriation is required for expenditures.

Fire Protection Sprinkler Fitting.

An authorized representative of the director must investigate alleged violations of the fire protection sprinkler fitting statute, and when a certificate of competency under that statute is renewed the director must provide the renewal directly to the certificate holder through certified mail.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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