

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1588

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to ambulance personnel requirements.

Brief Description: Addressing ambulance personnel requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Bronoske and Reed.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/8/23, 2/17/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes that the driver of an ambulance providing advanced life support must be an emergency medical technician.
- Establishes that an ambulance service in a rural area may use a driver without any medical or first aid training for an ambulance that is not providing advanced life support, if certain criteria are met.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Riccelli, Chair; Bateman, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Hutchins, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Bronoske, Davis, Graham, Macri, Maycumber, Orwall, Simmons, Stonier, Thai and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Harris and Mosbrucker.

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

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.

Background:

Ambulances must operate with sufficient personnel for adequate patient care. At least one of the personnel must be an emergency medical technician, who is responsible for ambulance operation and the care of patients.

Generally, the driver of the ambulance must have at least a certificate of advanced first aid qualification. The driver is not required to have a certificate in two circumstances. First, the driver does not have to have a certificate if there are at least two certified emergency medical technicians in attendance of the patient. Second, with approval by the Department of Health, an ambulance service established by a volunteer or municipal corporation, or by an association made up entirely of two or more municipalities, in a rural area with insufficient personnel may use a driver without any medical or first aid training if the driver:

- is at least 18 years old;
- passes a background check;
- possesses a valid driver's license with no restrictions;
- is accompanied by a nondriving emergency medical technician while operating the ambulance during a response or transport of a patient; and
- only provides medical care to patients to the level that they are trained.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The driver of an ambulance providing advanced life support must be an emergency medical technician.

An ambulance service in a rural area may use a driver without any medical or first aid training for an ambulance that is not providing advanced life support, if certain criteria are met.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill establishes that the driver of an ambulance providing advanced life support must be an emergency medical technician. The substitute bill also specifies that an ambulance service in a rural area may use a driver without any medical or first aid training for an ambulance that is not providing advanced life support, if certain criteria are met. The substitute bill also establishes an effective date of July 1, 2024.

Appropriation: None.**Fiscal Note:** Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2024.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) When an ambulance is staffed by a paramedic, it is important that the other members of the ambulance team have a first aid qualification. There are certain events that might happen while transporting a patient that may require assistance from a second person with medical training. Some ambulance services in rural communities are allowed to use an ambulance driver without medical training, but that exception has been liberally interpreted. To protect patients, an ambulance service providing advanced life support should be required to use a driver with medical training.

(Opposed) Many ambulance services provide both advanced life support services and basic life support services. This bill would handicap ambulance services that provide dual service. Ambulance services need to have flexibility when staffing multiple ambulances at once.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Dan Bronoske, prime sponsor; Zach Heeren; AJ Johnson; and Paul Berendt, Washington Ambulance Association.

(Opposed) Andrew Shaffran, Washington State Fire Fighters' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.