

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1562
By: Hinojosa
Government Reform
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, no mandatory training is required for animal control officers in Texas. This bill would require animal control officers to receive basic training, as well as obtain regular continuing education, in order to ensure knowledgeable, humane, ethical, responsible behavior of all animal control officers.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

The bill amends the Health and Safety Code to require "animal control officers," as defined by the bill, to satisfactorily complete a 12-hour Basic Training Class within one year from their employment date or complete a personnel training course on or before June 30, 2008, under Section 823.004 of the Health and Safety code, as it existed on that date. The bill further requires that animal control officers to complete 30 hours of continuing education every three years.

The bill also requires that the Department of State Health Services (department) prescribe the standards and curriculum for basic and continuing education of animal control courses, including what is considered satisfactory completion and what is a passing grade by December 1, 2007. However, the bill expressly states that the basic animal control course is to be at least 12 hours and requires the attendance of all sessions. Similarly, the bill lists the required curriculum topics for both the basic and continuing education courses; however, the bill requires the department to consult with the Texas Animal Control Association and other animal control protection organizations in developing and approving the curriculum. Furthermore, the bill requires the department to offer two Basic Training courses per year in each of its regions and 12 hours of continuing education in each of the department's zoonosis control regions per year, as well as ensure available animal control courses through approved sponsors.

The bill also requires the department to issue a certificate to each person that satisfactorily completes a course and lists the requirements for the necessary information each certificate must contain. The department or its designee is authorized to charge a reasonable fee for the certificate. In addition, the bill requires that the department issue a certificate to an animal shelter inspected under 823.003, Health and Safety Code, or a quarantine or impoundment inspected under 826.052, Health and Safety Code.

Likewise, the bill requires the department to maintain the training records for each person that satisfactorily completes any of the offered courses, for the purpose of ensuring that the person is in compliance with the stated requirements.

The bill permits the department and any authorized animal control course sponsor to charge reasonable fees to cover the cost of arranging and conducting an animal control course. A political subdivision may require that an individual pay a fee for a course or certificate under this chapter.

The bill allows a person to sue for injunctive relief to prevent or restrain a substantial violation of chapter 829 of the Health and Safety Code.

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The bill repeals Section 823.004 of the Health and Safety Code effective July 1, 2008, makes other conforming changes, as well as makes conforming changes to the Occupations Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act, except for Sections 829.002 and 829.009, takes effect September 1, 2007.

Sections 829.002 and 829.009 of the Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, take effect July 1, 2008.