

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2455
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Urban Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Due to the nature of their business, fire fighters suffer high rates of illness. Exposure to toxic substances and contagions increase the chances of cancer and pathogenic illnesses, and bursts of physical activity under high stress in life-and-death situations can also exacerbate cardiac conditions. Fire departments across Texas have begun taking a proactive approach to addressing job-related health problems by offering an annual screening for infectious diseases, cardiovascular issues, and cancers. C.S.H.B. 2455 seeks to require that professional fire fighters be offered an annual medical evaluation.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2455 amends the Local Government Code to require a fire department of a municipality, a county, a special-purpose district or authority, or any other political subdivision of the state to offer to each permanent full-time certified fire fighter employed by the fire department an annual occupational medical evaluation, at no cost to the fire fighter, which is confidential and includes:

- a fluid test;
- a pulmonary function test;
- an electrocardiogram;
- an infectious disease screening;
- a cancer screening; and
- once every five years, a chest x-ray.

C.S.H.B. 2455 requires the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, not later than June 1, 2024, to adopt rules establishing minimum standards for the examinations by using standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association. A fire department is not required to offer the examinations until July 1, 2024.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2455 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the introduced required the annual occupational medical evaluation to include fluid tests, the substitute requires the evaluation to include a fluid test.