

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to 911 emergency dispatcher certification;
3 amending s. 401.465, F.S.; defining "certified dispatch
4 training center" and "certified dispatch training
5 program"; requiring any person serving as a 911 emergency
6 dispatcher to be certified by the Department of Health on
7 or after a specified date; providing conditions under
8 which a public safety agency may employ a 911 emergency
9 dispatcher trainee for a limited period; requiring
10 applicants to apply for certification or recertification
11 on a specified form; providing for satisfaction of the
12 training program requirement by completion of a certified
13 dispatch training program or the training program of a
14 certified dispatch training center; eliminating a
15 requirement for certification; providing for quadrennial
16 renewal of certification; providing for expiration of
17 initial certification procedure for specified dispatchers
18 under department rule; requiring certified dispatch
19 training centers and certified dispatch training programs
20 to apply to the department for approval as a condition of
21 eligibility to provide 911 emergency dispatcher training
22 to applicants; requiring certified dispatch training
23 centers and certified dispatch training programs to
24 certify to the department applicants' compliance for
25 certification; requiring the department to establish a
26 procedure for the quadrennial review and approval of
27 certified dispatch training centers and certified dispatch
28 training programs by rule; requiring the assessment of

29 fees for specified review and approval of 911 emergency
 30 dispatch training programs offered by certified dispatch
 31 training centers and certified dispatch training programs;
 32 providing an exemption from fees; providing application
 33 procedures; authorizing the department to require online
 34 application for and renewal of certification by rule;
 35 authorizing assessment of an additional application fee
 36 under certain circumstances; authorizing electronic
 37 certification of specified persons; amending s. 401.411,
 38 F.S.; clarifying certain grounds for disciplinary actions
 39 or the imposition of penalties by the department;
 40 providing an effective date.

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42 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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44 Section 1. Section 401.465, Florida Statutes, is amended,
 45 to read:

46 401.465 911 emergency dispatcher certification.--

47 (1) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

48 (a) "911 emergency dispatcher" means a person employed by
 49 a state agency or local government as a public safety dispatcher
 50 or 911 operator whose duties and responsibilities include
 51 answering 911 calls; dispatching law enforcement officers, fire
 52 rescue services, emergency medical services, and other public
 53 safety services to the scene of an emergency; providing real-
 54 time information from federal, state, and local crime databases;
 55 or supervising or serving as the command officer to a person or
 56 persons having such duties and responsibilities. However, the

57 term does not include administrative support personnel,
58 including, but not limited to, those whose primary duties and
59 responsibilities are in accounting, purchasing, legal, and
60 personnel.

61 (b) "Department" means the Department of Health.

62 (c) "Certified dispatch training center" means any public
63 safety agency as defined in s. 365.171(3)(d) employing 911
64 emergency dispatchers whose training program is equivalent to
65 the most recently approved emergency dispatch course in public
66 safety telecommunications of the Department of Education and
67 consists of not less than 208 hours.

68 (d) "Certified dispatch training program" means a 911
69 emergency dispatch training program offered by an educational
70 institution approved by the Department of Education to offer
71 such program that is equivalent to the most recently approved
72 emergency dispatch course in public safety telecommunications of
73 the Department of Education and consists of not less than 208
74 hours.

75 (2) PERSONNEL; STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION.--

76 (a) Effective October 1, 2012, any person serving as a 911
77 emergency dispatcher must be certified by the department.
78 Notwithstanding this requirement, a public safety agency as
79 defined s. 365.171(3)(d) may employ a 911 emergency dispatcher
80 trainee for a period not to exceed 6 months, provided that the
81 trainee is under the direct supervision, as determined by rule
82 of the department, of a certified 911 emergency dispatcher with
83 a minimum of 2 years' experience.

84 (b)(a) An applicant ~~Any person who desires~~ to be certified
 85 or recertified as a 911 emergency dispatcher must ~~may~~ apply to
 86 the department under oath on forms provided by the department.
 87 The department shall establish by rule educational and training
 88 criteria for the certification and recertification of 911
 89 emergency dispatchers.

90 (c)(b) The department shall determine whether the
 91 applicant meets the requirements specified in this section and
 92 in rules of the department and shall issue a certificate to any
 93 person who meets such requirements. Such requirements must
 94 include, but need not be limited to, the following:

95 1. Completion of an appropriate 911 emergency dispatcher
 96 training program that is equivalent to the most recently
 97 approved emergency dispatcher course of the Department of
 98 Education and consists of not less than 208 hours. The
 99 requirement of this subparagraph may be satisfied by the
 100 completion of a certified dispatch training program, or the
 101 certified dispatch training program of a certified dispatch
 102 training center, if the program or center has applied to and
 103 received approval from the department pursuant to paragraph
 104 (3) (a) or paragraph (4) (a);

105 ~~2. Completion and documentation of at least 2 years of~~
 106 ~~supervised full-time employment as a 911 emergency dispatcher~~
 107 ~~since January 1, 2002;~~

108 ~~2.3.~~ Certification under oath that the applicant is not
 109 addicted to alcohol or any controlled substance;

110 ~~3.4.~~ Certification under oath that the applicant is free
 111 from any physical or mental defect or disease that might impair

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112 the applicant's ability to perform his or her duties;

113 ~~4.5.~~ Submission of the application fee prescribed in
114 subsection (5) ~~(3)~~; and

115 ~~5.6.~~ Submission of a completed application to the
116 department which indicates compliance with subparagraphs 1., 2.,
117 and 3. ~~and 4.~~

118 ~~(d)~~ (e) The department shall establish by rule a procedure
119 for the quadrennial ~~biennial~~ renewal certification of 911
120 emergency dispatchers.

121 ~~(e)~~ (d) Each 911 emergency dispatcher certificate expires
122 automatically if not renewed at the end of the 4-year ~~2-year~~
123 period and may be renewed if the holder meets the qualifications
124 for renewal as established by the department. A certificate that
125 is not renewed at the end of the 4-year ~~2-year~~ period
126 automatically reverts to an inactive status for a period that
127 may not exceed 180 days. Such certificate may be reactivated and
128 renewed within the 180-day period if the certificateholder meets
129 all other qualifications for renewal and pays a \$50 late fee.
130 Reactivation shall be in a manner and on forms prescribed by
131 department rule.

132 ~~(f)~~ (e) The department may suspend or revoke a certificate
133 at any time if it determines that the certificateholder does not
134 meet the applicable qualifications.

135 ~~(g)~~ (f) A certificateholder may request that his or her 911
136 emergency dispatcher certificate be placed on inactive status by
137 applying to the department before his or her current
138 certification expires and paying a fee set by the department
139 which may not exceed \$100.

140 1. A certificateholder whose certificate has been on
 141 inactive status for 1 year or less may renew his or her
 142 certificate pursuant to the rules adopted by the department and
 143 upon payment of a renewal fee set by the department which may
 144 not exceed \$100.

145 2. A certificateholder whose certificate has been on
 146 inactive status for more than 1 year may renew his or her
 147 certificate pursuant to rules adopted by the department.

148 3. A certificate that has been inactive for more than 6
 149 years automatically expires and may not be renewed.

150 (h) ~~(g)~~ The department shall establish by rule a procedure
 151 for the initial certification of 911 emergency dispatchers as
 152 defined in this section who have documentation of at least 5
 153 years of supervised full-time employment as a 911 emergency
 154 dispatcher since January 1, 2002. This paragraph shall expire on
 155 October 1, 2012.

156 (3) CERTIFIED DISPATCH TRAINING CENTERS.--

157 (a) A certified dispatch training center must apply to the
 158 department on forms provided by the department to obtain
 159 approval prior to being eligible to provide 911 emergency
 160 dispatcher training to applicants under this section.

161 (b) Certified dispatch training centers shall notify the
 162 department of each individual who has successfully completed a
 163 911 emergency dispatch course in public safety
 164 telecommunications within 2 weeks after the individual's course
 165 completion date and shall certify to the department the
 166 individual's compliance for certification as described in this
 167 section.

168 (c) The department shall establish by rule a procedure for
 169 the quadrennial review and approval of certified dispatch
 170 training centers to verify compliance with training standards
 171 required by this section.

172 (4) CERTIFIED DISPATCH TRAINING PROGRAMS.--

173 (a) A certified dispatch training program must apply to
 174 the department on forms provided by the department to obtain
 175 approval prior to being eligible to provide 911 emergency
 176 dispatcher training to applicants under this section.

177 (b) Certified dispatch training programs shall notify the
 178 department of each individual who has successfully completed a
 179 911 emergency dispatch course in public safety
 180 telecommunications within 2 weeks after the individual's course
 181 completion date and shall certify to the department the
 182 individual's compliance for certification as described in this
 183 section.

184 (c) The department shall establish by rule a procedure for
 185 the quadrennial review and approval of the certified dispatch
 186 training programs to verify compliance with training standards
 187 required by this section.

188 (5) ~~(3)~~ FEES.--

189 (a) The fee for application for the 911 emergency
 190 dispatcher original certificate is \$75.

191 (b) The application fee for the 911 emergency dispatcher
 192 biennial renewal certificate is \$100.

193 (c) Fees collected under this section shall be deposited
 194 into the Emergency Medical Services Trust Fund and used solely
 195 for salaries and expenses of the department incurred in

196 administering this section.

197 (d) If a certificate issued under this section is lost or
 198 destroyed, the person to whom the certificate was issued may,
 199 upon payment of a fee set by the department which may not exceed
 200 \$25, obtain a duplicate or substitute certificate.

201 (e) Upon surrender of the original 911 emergency
 202 dispatcher certificate and receipt of a replacement fee set by
 203 the department which may not exceed \$25, the department shall
 204 issue a replacement certificate to make a change in name.

205 (f) The department shall charge a fee not to exceed \$100
 206 for the initial review and approval of 911 emergency dispatch
 207 training programs offered by certified dispatch training centers
 208 and certified dispatch training programs to determine compliance
 209 with paragraph (3) (a) or paragraph (4) (a).

210 (g) The department shall charge a fee not to exceed \$75
 211 for quadrennial review and approval of training programs
 212 authorized by this section.

213 (h) Employees of certified dispatch training centers are
 214 exempt from all fees under this subsection.

215 (6) APPLICATION PROCEDURES.--

216 (a) The department may by rule require any category of
 217 application or certification to be applied for or renewed online
 218 using an online application and certification renewal system. In
 219 the case of online renewal, the department shall provide a
 220 secure means by which the applicant may print a receipt for the
 221 properly prepared application. Alternatively, when the online
 222 application and certification renewal system is in operation,
 223 the licensing authority may require payment of an additional

224 fee, not to exceed \$25, to be paid by applicants who elect to
 225 use paper applications or certificate renewal forms in lieu of
 226 the online system.

227 (b) Certified dispatch training centers may electronically
 228 certify to the department employees who have completed training
 229 in compliance with this section.

230 Section 2. Paragraphs (g) and (k) of subsection (1) of
 231 section 401.411, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

232 401.411 Disciplinary action; penalties.--

233 (1) The department may deny, suspend, or revoke a license,
 234 certificate, or permit or may reprimand or fine any licensee,
 235 certificateholder, or other person operating under this part for
 236 any of the following grounds:

237 (g) Unprofessional conduct, including, but not limited to,
 238 any departure from or failure to conform to the minimal
 239 prevailing standards of acceptable practice under this part ~~as~~
 240 ~~an emergency medical technician or paramedic, including~~
 241 ~~undertaking activities when that the emergency medical~~
 242 ~~technician or paramedic is not qualified by training or~~
 243 ~~experience to perform.~~

244 (k) Practicing as an emergency medical technician,
 245 paramedic, ~~or other~~ health care professional, or other
 246 professional operating under this part without reasonable skill
 247 and safety to the public ~~patients~~ by reason of illness,
 248 drunkenness, or the use of drugs, narcotics, or chemicals or any
 249 other substance or as a result of any mental or physical
 250 condition.

251 Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 2009.