

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Higher Education Committee

BILL: CS/SB 948

INTRODUCER: Health Regulation Committee and Senator Jones

SUBJECT: Emergency Medical Services

DATE: April 4, 2009

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Munroe	Wilson	HR	Fav/CS
2.	Harkey	Matthews	HE	Favorable
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Statement of Substantial Changes |
| B. AMENDMENTS..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant amendments were recommended |

I. Summary:

The bill authorizes the Department of Health to determine, by rule, what portion of the paramedic field internship may be satisfied aboard an advanced life supported vehicle other than an ambulance. The bill revises the minimum requirements for drivers of basic life support vehicles, advanced life support vehicles, and air ambulances. The bill eliminates the ineligibility of a person who has been convicted of reckless driving within the past three years. Additionally, the 3-year period of ineligibility for a person to become an ambulance driver is limited to when the person was initially designated as a driver.

This bill amends ss. 401.2701 and 401.281, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Emergency Medical Training

Part III of chapter 401, F.S., provides for the regulation of medical transportation services, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians. Institutions in Florida that conduct emergency medical services training programs must meet specified requirements established in s. 401.2701, F.S. Emergency medical technician programs must be a minimum of 110 hours, with at least

20 hours of supervised clinical supervision, including 10 hours in a hospital emergency department.

Paramedic programs are only available to Florida-certified emergency medical technicians or an emergency medical technician applicant who will obtain Florida certification before the applicant completes phase one of the paramedic program. Paramedic programs must be a minimum of 700 hours of didactic and skills practice components, with the skills laboratory student-to-instructor ratio not exceeding six to one. Paramedic programs must provide a field internship experience aboard an advanced life support permitted ambulance.

Ambulance or emergency medical services vehicle means any privately or publicly owned vehicle that is designed, constructed, reconstructed, maintained, equipped, or operated for, and is used for, or intended to be used for, land or water transportation of sick or injured persons requiring or likely to require medical attention during transport.¹ Internship experience aboard an advanced life support permitted ambulance ensures that the trainee gains experience with sick or injured persons during transport.

With an increasing frequency, non-transport emergency medical services vehicles, such as fire rescue vehicles, are being used to transport first responders, including paramedic students, to emergency calls. The Department of Health has recently clarified its interpretation of s. 401.2701, F.S., to require a paramedic training program's field internship to only be provided on board a permitted advanced life support ambulance.

Emergency Medical Services Drivers

Section 401.281, F.S., requires each Florida-licensed basic life support service, advanced life support service, and air ambulance service to be responsible for ensuring that its vehicles are driven only by trained, experienced, and otherwise qualified personnel. The Florida-licensed basic life support service, advanced life support service, or air ambulance service must, at a minimum, document that each of its drivers:

- Is at least 18 years of age;
- Certifies under oath that he or she is not addicted to alcohol or any controlled substance;
- Certifies under oath that he or she is free from any physical or mental defect or disease that might impair his or her ability to drive an ambulance;
- Has not, within the past three years, been convicted of reckless driving or driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances *and* has not had a driver's license suspended under the point system provided for in ch. 322, F.S.;
- Possesses a valid driver's license, is trained in the safe operation of emergency vehicles, and has completed an emergency vehicle operator's course (this provision applies only to a driver of a land vehicle);
- Possesses a valid American Red Cross or National Safety Council standard first aid course card; and
- Possesses a valid American Red Cross or American Heart Association cardiopulmonary resuscitation card.

¹ s. 401.23(5), F.S.

Chapter 322, F.S., provides for the regulation of drivers by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Under s. 322.27, F.S., the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is authorized to suspend the license of any person upon a showing of its records or other good and sufficient evidence that a driver has been convicted of a violation of motor vehicle laws or ordinances, or applicable provisions of the Florida Litter Law, amounting to 12 or more points as determined by the point system. The suspension may be for a period of not more than 1 year. When a driver accumulates 12 points within a 12-month period, the period of suspension must be for not more than 30 days.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 401.2701(1)(b)2., F.S., to revise the requirement for paramedic training programs, which currently limits field internships for paramedic students to experience aboard advanced life support permitted ambulances. The bill authorizes the Department of Health to determine, by rule, what portion of the paramedic field internship may be satisfied aboard an advanced life supported vehicle other than an ambulance.

The bill amends s. 401.281, F.S., to change the minimum requirements for drivers of basic life support vehicles, advanced life support vehicles, and air ambulances. The bill eliminates the ineligibility of a person who has been convicted of reckless driving within the past three years. Additionally, the 3-year period of ineligibility for a person to become an ambulance driver is limited to when the person was initially designated as a driver.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Health Regulation on March 4, 2009:

The CS authorizes the Department of Health to determine, by rule, what portion of the paramedic field internship may be satisfied aboard an advanced life support vehicle other than an ambulance. The CS changes the minimum requirements for drivers of basic life support vehicles, advanced life support vehicles, and air ambulances by eliminating the ineligibility of a person who has been convicted of reckless driving within the past three years. Additionally, the 3-year period of ineligibility for a person to become an ambulance driver is limited to when the person was initially designated as a driver.

B. Amendments:

None.