



2023 Acts Affecting First Responders

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting first responders enacted during the 2023 regular session and September 26 Special Session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Criminal Justice and Public Safety, are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) number or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/>.

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Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Personnel

Ambulance Rates

A new law requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner to increase the maximum allowable rates by licensed and certified ambulance services, invalid coaches, and paramedic intercept services for transporting and treating patients. Specifically, it raises the rates by 10% for FY 24 ([PA 23-204](#), § 53, effective upon passage).

Emergency Lights for Volunteer Ambulance Associations and Constables

New legislation allows vehicles operated by volunteer ambulance associations' or companies' active members to use flashing green or flashing blue lights while on the way to or at the scene of an emergency. Under prior law, these associations and companies were only allowed to use steady green or flashing green lights. The new law also authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner to issue permits allowing appointed or elected constables to use flashing red lights on a stationary vehicle as a warning signal during traffic directing operations ([PA 23-135](#), § 40, effective October 1, 2023).

EMS Data Collection and Reporting

A new law requires EMS organizations, in their quarterly data reporting to DPH, to include the reasons for 9-1-1 calls. The new law also makes changes concerning an existing annual report that DPH must provide to the EMS Advisory Board. It specifically requires DPH to (1) include data on any EMS personnel shortages in the state and (2) starting by June 1, 2024, annually submit the report to the Public Health Committee ([PA 23-97](#), § 36, effective October 1, 2023).

EMS Vehicle Design and Equipment Standards

A new law codifies minimum vehicle design and equipment standards for authorized EMS vehicles (i.e., invalid coaches and intercept vehicles staffed by emergency technicians or paramedics) that are currently in regulation. By law, DPH must at least biennially inspect the vehicles to ensure they meet these standards, which require, among other things, that (1) ambulances meet or exceed the design criteria of the U.S. General Services Administration's federal specification for the star-of-life ambulance (i.e., KKK-A-1822, as amended), with an exemption for the ambulance's color scheme and decals and (2) authorized EMS vehicles have equipment required for their particular vehicle classification specified in the 2022 Connecticut EMS Minimum Equipment Checklist ([PA 23-31](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2023).

Epinephrine Administration by EMS Personnel and Supply in Ambulances

New legislation requires EMS personnel, starting July 1, 2024, to administer epinephrine using automatic prefilled cartridge injectors, similar automatic injectable equipment, or prefilled vials and syringes under specified conditions, including that the professional is trained to do so and determines that administering epinephrine is necessary to treat the person. It allows EMS personnel to administer epinephrine before then in the same manner. Prior law allowed, but did not require, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics to do this using automatic prefilled cartridge injectors or similar equipment. The new legislation makes corresponding changes by requiring (1) all EMS personnel, not just EMTs and paramedics, to receive training on administering epinephrine and (2) licensed and certified ambulances to have this medication in injectors, similar equipment, or prefilled vials and syringes (rather than just in injectors or similar equipment as under prior law) ([PA 23-97](#), § 42, as amended by [PA 23-1](#), September 26 Special Session, § 6, both effective October 1, 2023).

Student Loan Reimbursement and State Income Tax Deduction

A new law requires the Office of Higher Education executive director to establish a pilot program within available appropriations to annually reimburse eligible state residents for up to \$5,000 of their student loan payments per year, for up to four years. Certain health professionals, among others, are eligible. Program participants must volunteer at a nonprofit for at least 50 unpaid hours for each year they participate (military service or serving on a nonprofit's board of directors may fulfill this requirement) ([PA 23-204](#), § 174, effective July 1, 2024). The act further authorizes a personal income tax deduction for any student loan reimbursement payment received under the program ([PA 23-204](#), § 175, effective January 1, 2024, and applicable to tax years starting on or after that date).

Firefighters

Firefighters Cancer Relief Benefits

New legislation generally requires that firefighters who have certain cancers and meet other specified criteria receive workers' compensation-like benefits and disability retirement benefits. The benefits must be paid by the municipality where the eligible firefighter is employed and then reimbursed to the municipality from the state's firefighters cancer relief account. Under existing law, unchanged by the act, firefighters who meet substantially similar criteria may also qualify for wage replacement benefits from the Firefighters Cancer Relief Program, which is funded by the same account and administered by the Connecticut State Firefighters Association's Firefighters Cancer Relief Subcommittee.

The act also (1) creates the Firefighters Cancer Relief Fund Advisory Committee to annually evaluate the firefighters cancer relief account's financial solvency; (2) requires the state treasurer to annually submit a report to the advisory committee on the status of the account and the existing Firefighters Cancer Relief Program; and (3) prohibits any firefighter that receives compensation under its provisions from filing a workers' compensation claim for a cancer diagnosis unless the firefighters cancer relief account becomes insolvent ([PA 23-204](#), §§ 159-162, effective October 1, 2023, except the provisions on the advisory committee and treasurer's report are effective upon passage).

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Affidavit

A new law makes several changes in a smoke and carbon monoxide detector disclosure law for residential buildings, which generally requires that certain transferors of property give transferees an affidavit certifying certain conditions about the detectors. The act also requires the State Fire Marshal's Office to create a (1) model form that may be used for the affidavit and (2) guide outlining smoke detector requirements to help transferors complete the affidavit. The office must consult with an association representing fire marshals' interests for the model form and guide, as well as with a bar association and an association representing realtors' interests for the model form ([PA 23-164](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Law Enforcement

Access to Juvenile Delinquency Records

New legislation gives municipal, state, and federal agency employees and authorized agents access to juvenile delinquency case records to evaluate a proposed firearm transfer to someone under age 21, as the federal Bipartisan Safer Communities Act requires. By law, juvenile delinquency case records are generally confidential and for the juvenile court's use, with exceptions in specified situations ([PA 23-25](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Accreditation Deadline Changes for Certain Law Enforcement Units

[PA 22-119](#) made several changes to the minimum standards and practices for administering and managing law enforcement units, including requiring that they be divided into three state-accreditation tiers. A new law changes the certification deadlines for units that serve a municipality and consist solely of constables or resident state troopers. It generally extends their prior certification deadline for tier one by one year and delays the deadlines to be certified for tiers two and three each by one year ([PA 23-59](#), effective upon passage).

Address Verification for Registered Sex Offenders

By law, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) generally must verify each registered sex offender’s residential address every 90 days after his or her initial registration by mailing a verification form to his or her last reported address. New legislation allows registrants to return the form by fax or email, in addition to by mail as existing law allows. The act also requires local police departments and the state police troop in whose jurisdiction a registered sex offender resides to verify a registrant’s residential address in person every 90 days if he or she resides at an address where there is no mail delivery ([PA 23-193](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Automated Traffic Enforcement

In response to a recent rise in traffic deaths, the legislature passed a new law that, among other things, allows municipalities to use speed and red light cameras (i.e., “automated traffic enforcement safety devices”) if the municipalities (1) adopt an ordinance meeting the law’s requirements and (2) have a speed and red light camera plan approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT) every three years. DOT must develop guidelines and evaluation criteria that ensure (1) cameras are installed only where they are likely to improve traffic safety and (2) that their distribution is equitable. The new law also addresses ticket issuance and processing (e.g., it requires that footage is reviewed and tickets are issued by municipal police officers, police department employees, or municipal employees approved by the local traffic authority), data privacy, and data reporting, among other provisions ([PA 23-116](#), §§ 10-14 & 16-18, most provisions effective October 1, 2023).

Cannabis and High-THC Hemp Products Police Training

This session, the legislature established new requirements addressing investigation and enforcement standards concerning cannabis and high-THC hemp products. Specifically, the new legislation requires (1) DESPP, in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection, to publish a training bulletin informing local law enforcement agencies and officers about these standards and (2) the Division of Criminal Justice and the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to include a session on them in each course of instruction ([PA 23-79](#), §§ 45 & 46, effective July 1, 2023).

Catalytic Converters Regional Agreements

A new law directs the DESPP and DMV commissioners to pursue, individually or jointly, agreements with other states to create a regional approach to addressing catalytic converter theft. Under the act, the agreements may have provisions on information sharing, enforcement coordination, and

aligning laws regarding the sale of convertors and punishment for their theft ([SA 23-20](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Combatting Illegal Roadway Traffic Activity

New legislation requires the DESPP commissioner to establish a regional task force to combat illegal traffic activities in the Greater Hartford area committed by organized groups riding motor vehicles, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and other vehicles. This Greater Hartford Regional Law Enforcement Task Force to Combat Illegal Roadway Traffic Activity comprises state and local law enforcement officers in the Greater Hartford area. It may ask for and receive from any federal, state, or local agency cooperation and help, including temporarily assigning any necessary personnel. The DESPP commissioner may also, within available appropriations, appoint a commanding officer and other personnel that he finds necessary ([PA 23-112](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Conservation Officer Training Requirements

Prior law required each conservation officer or special conservation officer appointed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to complete a police training course at the state police training school or an equivalent course approved by the DESPP commissioner. A new law instead requires each conservation officer to become POST-certified within one year after being appointed. It also requires each special conservation officer to become POST-certified or complete a DESPP commissioner-approved equivalent course.

For lake patrolmen appointed by DEEP as special conservation officers to enforce boating laws in their respective jurisdictions, the new law requires each to complete a police training course at a POST-approved training academy. Prior law required they complete the course at the state police training school or an equivalent DESPP commissioner-approved course ([PA 23-196](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Criminal Records Erasure

This session, new legislation made several changes to laws on criminal record erasure, including some changes affecting law enforcement. For example, notwithstanding existing laws that limit the disclosure of erased records, the act gives law enforcement, the court, and the state's attorney access to any record required to substantiate a defendant's conviction to (1) verify a defendant's obligation to register as a deadly weapon offender or sex offender, or to comply with a standing criminal protective order and (2) prosecute someone for failing to register as required or comply

with the protective order. It also establishes certain liability protections for actions taken based on erased records, if the actions were taken in good faith reliance on the erased information.

Additionally, the act requires the DESPP commissioner, by January 1, 2024, to post information online about criminal records that are subject to erasure, including a list of statutes that are subject to automatic erasure. The commissioner must annually review the list and update it as necessary. Also starting in 2024, the act allows people who believe that their records should have been automatically erased by law to seek a determination on the matter from DESPP following a hearing ([PA 23-134](#) as amended by [PA 23-169](#), § 2, and [PA 23-204](#), § 119, most provisions effective July 1, 2023).

Crisis Intervention Training for Police Officers

Under existing law, each police basic or review training program conducted or administered by POST, the State Police, or a municipal police department must include POST-developed curricula for police officers on interacting with people who (1) have mental or physical disabilities and (2) are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. A new law requires POST, by July 1, 2024, to add to these curricula crisis intervention strategies for police officers to use when interacting with people with mental illness in crisis ([PA 23-104](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2023).

Deceptive or Coercive Interrogation Tactics

New legislation generally presumes any written or oral admission, confession, or statement is involuntary and inadmissible in any proceeding if it was made by someone during a custodial interrogation in which a law enforcement agency official or the official's agent used deception or coercive tactics. The act specifies what these tactics are when interrogating anyone and additionally prohibits other particular tactics (e.g., using false facts about evidence or making false statements or misrepresentations of the law) if the person being interrogated is a minor ([PA 23-27](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Delayed Release of Body and Dashboard Camera Footage

By law, an officer has the right to review recordings from officer-worn body cameras or dashboard cameras under specified circumstances. This recorded footage must be disclosed to the public upon request within either of the following timeframes, whichever is earlier: (1) 48 hours after the officer reviews it or (2) if the officer does not review the recording, either 96 hours after the disciplinary investigation begins or, for officers not subject to investigation, within 96 hours after the request for public disclosure. A new law allows delayed public disclosure for up to 144 hours after the recorded event if the officer is not reasonably able to review the recording due to a

medical or physical response or an acute psychological stress response to the incident ([PA 23-47](#), § 8, effective October 1, 2023).

Emergency Medical Services for People in a Peace Officer's Custody or Direct Contact

New legislation gives anyone who experiences an emergency medical condition or is medically unstable the right to be provided emergency medical services if this occurs while the person is (1) in direct audio or video contact with a peace officer or (2) under a peace officer's custody or control. It correspondingly requires a peace officer to immediately request emergency medical services for any such person, whether the (1) person communicates to the officer that he or she is in this situation or (2) officer observes that to be the case. However, the act exempts a peace officer from this requirement if he or she (1) has made a reasonable determination that the person is not in this situation and (2) knows that the person was seen by a medical professional within the last 24 hours and was released from care after the medical professional made the same determination ([PA 23-192](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Fingerprinting for Handgun Permits

A new law repeals a provision that allowed a handgun permit issuing authority to forgo taking an applicant's fingerprints if (1) they determine that the applicant's fingerprints were already taken and (2) the applicant presents identification that they determine is valid ([PA 23-130](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2023).

Firearm Incident Reports

Under new legislation, police officers responding to an alleged crime or fatality involving the use of a firearm must complete a DESPP-prescribed firearm incident report, whether or not an arrest is made. Law enforcement units must send these reports to DESPP and, in cases where an arrest was made, forward copies of them to the state's attorney for the appropriate judicial district. The act requires DESPP to compile the firearm incident statistics and annually (1) publish them in the Connecticut Uniform Crime Reports and (2) report them to the governor and Public Safety and Security Committee ([PA 23-69](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2023).

Firearm Permits Issued by Tribal Police Departments

During the 2022 session, the General Assembly allowed the police chiefs of the state's federally recognized Native American tribes with a law enforcement unit (i.e., the Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot police chiefs) to issue temporary state handgun permits under the statutory permit approval process to applicants who are bona fide permanent residents of the tribal

reservations. A new law makes numerous conforming changes throughout the firearm permitting statutes to extend the statutory permit approval process to these police chiefs ([PA 23-130](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Firearm Permitting Functions Performed by Municipal CEOs

Under a 2022 act, the chief executive officer (CEO) of any municipality without a police chief may perform various firearms permitting and administrative functions or designate the resident state trooper or relevant state police officer to do so. New legislation defines a municipal CEO for these purposes as the (1) first selectman; (2) chief administrative officer appointed by the board of selectmen or mayor; (3) mayor; (4) borough warden; or (5) appointed town, city, or borough manager ([PA 23-130](#), §§ 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2023).

Firearm Risk Protection Orders and Risk Warrants

The state's "red flag" law allows courts to (1) prevent people who may pose a danger to themselves or other people from acquiring firearms or other deadly weapons (through a risk protection order) and (2) authorize the temporary seizure of these weapons that the person already possesses (through a risk warrant). This year, the legislature enacted certain changes to this law, such as (1) allowing a single police officer to apply for a risk protection order that does not include a risk warrant, instead of requiring two as under prior law, and (2) limiting the existing process to adults and creating a new, separate risk warrant process for children (under age 18) who possess firearms or other deadly weapons and pose an imminent risk of injuring other people ([PA 23-89](#), §§ 1-3, most provisions effective upon passage).

Firearms Omnibus

New legislation makes various changes in the state's gun (firearm) laws. Among other things, it:

1. generally prohibits anyone from (a) knowingly carrying a firearm with intent to display it (i.e., open carry) and (b) having a ghost gun beginning January 1, 2024;
2. generally limits a person to purchasing only three handguns in a 30-day period;
3. requires various gun safety measures, including expanding existing law's requirements for trigger locks and safe storage of firearms to cover all retail firearm sales;
4. expands the assault weapons ban to include more firearms and provides a process for those who lawfully own these weapons to get a certificate of possession or transfer or sell them;
5. specifies that firearm safety training for gun credentials must be completed within two years before applying and expands the required content of the training courses (e.g., safe firearm storage);

6. sets stricter release conditions for serious firearm offenders;
7. establishes firearm-related crime dockets in certain courts;
8. increases the penalty for a first-time unintentional failure to report the loss or theft of a firearm from an infraction to a class A misdemeanor; and
9. requires DESPP to make a decision on a handgun permit application if the applicant presents an affidavit that the local authority failed to expressly deny or approve a temporary state permit application after a specified period ([PA 23-53](#) as amended by [PA 23-203](#), §§ 1-3, various effective dates).

Gaming Regulation

This session, the legislature made various changes to the state’s gaming laws, including creating a new license class (“live game employee”) under which certain people associated with live online casino gaming must be licensed. The legislature also made several modifications for “key employees,” broadens what a “sporting event” is considered for sports wagering purposes, and expands the jurisdiction of certain Department of Consumer Protection investigators to act as special police officers ([PA 23-54](#), effective upon passage).

Grant Program Extension for Purchasing Eligible Body and Dashboard Cameras and Related Equipment and Services

A new law extends, through FY 25, the Office of Policy and Management-administered municipal grant program for purchasing eligible police body cameras, digital data storage devices or services, and certain dashboard cameras. By law, the grants are for up to 50% of the associated costs for distressed municipalities and up to 30% for all other municipalities. In both cases, funding for digital data storage services is limited to the cost for up to one year ([PA 23-204](#), § 99, effective upon passage).

Local Dog Pound Inspection Reports

By law, the agriculture commissioner may inspect local dog pounds and other facilities where domestic animals are kept and issue orders to correct any deficiencies found. New legislation requires the commissioner to give municipal animal control officers (ACOs) an inspection report with findings within five days after an inspection. The ACO must give a copy of the report to the municipality’s CEO and police department or ACO supervisor within 30 days after receiving it ([PA 23-138](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

Motor Vehicle Accident Report Form Task Force

A new law extends appointment, meeting, and reporting deadlines for a 13-member task force responsible for examining the uniform motor vehicle accident report form and considering changes to it to address issues such as its length and the time investigators need to complete it. Under the act, the task force must submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024, rather than January 1, 2023, as under prior law ([SA 23-2](#), effective upon passage).

Police Assistance Agreements and Requests for Aid

New legislation sets specific terms that municipal police assistance agreements entered into, renewed, or amended on and after July 1, 2023, must include. Specifically, they must (1) allow each municipality's police chief, or the chief's designee, to request and provide police assistance and (2) require those who do so to inform their municipality's CEO about the actions taken. The act also makes several changes to the process on requesting aid absent an agreement, including authorizing the municipality's police chief to make the request instead of its CEO, narrowing the circumstances when a request may be made and for how long assistance may be provided, and generally transferring responsibility for costs incurred from the requesting municipality to the one supplying the assistance ([PA 23-81](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Police Informing Drivers of the Purpose of a Traffic Stop

The Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Prohibition Act requires police officers to record the statutory reason for stopping a vehicle for every stop. A new law further requires them to verbally tell the vehicle's driver the purpose for the stop before it is completed. Under the act, police officers are sworn members of an organized local police department or the State Police; appointed constables who perform criminal law enforcement duties; special police officers appointed under law (e.g., public assistance fraud investigators); or any members of a law enforcement unit who perform police duties ([PA 23-95](#), effective upon passage).

Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) Membership

New legislation increases POST membership from 21 to 23 members by adding two new members, one appointed by the Public Safety and Security Committee chairs and one by the Senate and House minority leaders. The appointees must be sworn police officers who are not in command positions within their law enforcement units ([PA 23-86](#), January 1, 2024).

Police Recording Equipment Reporting

A new law requires (1) POST to create a form for law enforcement units to use to report on their compliance with state law's body and dashboard camera requirements; (2) the units to annually submit a report on the form; and (3) UConn's Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy to review the submissions and report findings and recommendations to specified entities ([PA 23-204](#), § 58, July 1, 2023).

Racial Profiling

This session the legislature made several changes to the Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Prohibition Act including broadening its definition of "racial profiling." It also specified that police officers seeking to apprehend a specific suspect may take certain actions based on the description of the suspect's status (e.g., race or ethnicity) if used in combination with other information ([PA 23-9](#), effective upon passage).

Receiving Firearm Credentials and Security Officer License Expiration Notices by Email

Under a new law, anyone holding a handgun permit or eligibility certificate, long gun eligibility certificate, or security officer license may now opt to receive the expiration notices for these credentials by first class mail or email. The act also authorizes DESPP to send these notices and related renewal forms by email, rather than only by first class mail as prior law allowed ([PA 23-73](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Rural Speed Enforcement Grant Program Expansion

Existing law requires DESPP to administer a municipal grant program for speed enforcement activities on rural roads. Municipalities eligible for grants under prior law were those with a population of less than 25,000 and that have a law enforcement unit or resident state trooper. New legislation removes the requirement that these municipalities have a law enforcement unit or resident state trooper. Program grants are capped at \$5,000, but eligible municipalities may receive up to 10 grants ([PA 23-204](#), § 52, effective July 1, 2023).

Seabird and Shorebird Protection Program

A new law (1) allows the DEEP commissioner to establish a seabird and shorebird protection program under which she may designate and identify protected areas on state-owned public property within the state's coastal area (i.e., the coastline along Long Island Sound) and (2) makes it an infraction to disturb these areas. The new law authorizes DEEP-appointed conservation

officers and officers who can serve criminal process to enforce its provisions ([PA 23-155](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Seat Belt Safety in Municipal Police Vehicles

New legislation requires POST, by December 31, 2023, to develop and promulgate a model policy with guidelines on required seat belt use in municipal police vehicles and standardized procedures for municipal police officers to ensure that anyone being transported in their vehicles is secured by a seat belt. The act further requires each municipal law enforcement unit to adopt and maintain a written policy that meets or exceeds the model policy standards by April 1, 2024. It also establishes procedures for disciplining officers who violate the policy ([PA 23-87](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Security Officer License Renewals

Existing law requires security officer license applicants to submit to a state and national criminal history records check. By law, these are done through the State Police and applicants are fingerprinted and charged fees by DESPP and the FBI for performing the checks. A new law requires licensed officers to also submit to these checks when renewing their licenses (i.e., every five years), however it waives (1) the requirement that they submit fingerprints and (2) DESPP's fee for conducting the state criminal history records check (i.e., \$75) ([PA 23-105](#), effective July 1, 2023).

Squantz Pond Capacity Limit

Under a new law, the DEEP commissioner must develop and publicly post the capacity limit of Squantz Pond State Park (in New Fairfield) by January 31, 2024. The new law also (1) requires the commissioner to coordinate with municipal and state law enforcement to implement traffic control efforts to minimize public safety concerns on local and state roads and (2) allows her to close the park to new entrants when the capacity limit is reached ([PA 23-43](#), effective upon passage).

Street Takeovers

The legislature incorporated "street takeovers" into the law prohibiting street racing and other related actions and makes various additional changes to this law, including reclassifying various penalties. Under the new law, a "street takeover" means taking over a portion of a public road or parking area by blocking or impeding regular traffic flow with intent to cause disorder or create a nuisance for other road or parking area users. Operating a motor vehicle on a public road or in a parking area for a street takeover is a class A misdemeanor for a first offense and a class D felony for a subsequent offense.

Among its other changes, the new law adds a prohibition on knowingly inciting or recruiting by any means (including social media) before the event, anyone to participate in the performance of a street race, contest, demonstration of skill or speed, or street takeover. Violations of this prohibition are class B misdemeanors ([PA 23-135](#), § 39, as amended by [PA 23-203](#), § 4, both effective October 1, 2023).

Use of Opioid Settlement Funds to Equip Police With Opioid Antagonists

The FY 24-25 budget and implementer act expands the purposes for which the Opioid Settlement Fund may be used to include providing funds to municipal police departments to equip officers with opioid antagonists. Under the act, priority for these funds must be given to departments without a current supply of them ([PA 23-204](#), § 184, effective July 1, 2023).

Wrong-Way Driving Countermeasures

A new law addresses the recent uptick in wrong-way driving accidents and deaths. Among other things, it requires DOT to install wrong-way driving detection and notification systems on at least 120 additional exit ramps that the department determines are high-risk for wrong-way driving incidents. By law, these systems must be capable of alerting drivers with flashing lights when they are going the wrong way and notifying law enforcement upon detecting a wrong-way driver ([PA 23-51](#), most provisions effective October 1, 2023).

Relatedly, this year's bond bill authorizes up to \$20 million in special tax obligation bonds in each of FYs 24 and 25 (\$40 million total) for purchasing, installing, and implementing advanced wrong-way driving technology and other wrong-way driving countermeasures ([PA 23-205](#), §§ 40 & 46, effective July 1, 2023, for FY 24 authorization and July 1, 2024, for FY 25 authorization).

Telecommunicators

“Portal-to-Portal” Coverage for 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatchers

New legislation gives “portal-to-portal” workers’ compensation coverage to telecommunicators (i.e., 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers) in three situations: (1) when they are subject to emergency calls while off duty by the terms of their employment, (2) when they are responding to a direct order to appear at their work assignment when nonessential employees are excused from working, or (3) after working two or more mandatory overtime shifts on consecutive days. With “portal-to-portal” coverage, an injury that occurs while the employee is travelling directly between his or her home and workplace is deemed to have occurred in the course of the employee’s employment, making

him or her eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits for the injury ([PA 23-80](#), effective October 1, 2023).

Miscellaneous Acts Affecting Multiple First Responders

Collaboration Between Police Officers and Social Workers

New legislation builds off social worker feasibility evaluations required under existing law. By January 31, 2021, DESPP and each municipal police department had to submit to POST an evaluation of the feasibility and potential impact of social workers responding to calls for assistance (either remotely or in person) or joining a police officer on calls where a social worker's experience and training could provide help. The new legislation requires POST, by January 1, 2024, to (1) examine these evaluations and any programs and strategies used in Connecticut or other jurisdictions on police officer and social worker collaborations and (2) issue guidance to law enforcement units with recommendations on how police officers may collaborate with social workers ([PA 23-104](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2023).

Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) Loan Subsidy Program

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring CHESLA to establish a Nursing, Mental Health Care and EMS Professionals Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on CHESLA refinancing loans to certain Connecticut licensed nurses, nurse's aides, psychologists, marital and family therapists, clinical and master social workers, and professional counselors as well as EMS professionals who are DPH-certified as an emergency medical responder, emergency medical technician, or advanced emergency medical technician ([PA 23-60](#), as amended by [PA 23-70](#), §§ 7-8, both effective July 1, 2023).

Similarly and starting July 1, 2024, another new law requires CHESLA to establish a Police Officer Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on CHESLA loans to eligible sworn members of municipal police departments employed in distressed municipalities, subject to available funding. The act requires CHESLA to establish the program's eligibility criteria and administrative guidelines in consultation with POST ([PA 23-70](#), § 6, effective January 1, 2024).

Emergency Services Awareness Programs

Under a new law, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Children and Families, and DESPP must, by December 31, 2023, jointly develop guidelines and best practices for municipalities to create and implement emergency services awareness programs for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, nonverbal learning disorders, and

intellectual and other developmental disabilities. At a minimum, these programs must give the children and adults an opportunity to observe and interact with (1) uniformed emergency services personnel, (2) their vehicles and their associated flashing lights and sirens, and (3) mock traffic stops. They must be held in a setting suited to the children’s and adults’ developmental and sensory needs ([PA 23-137](#), § 9, effective upon passage).

Expanding Opioid Antagonist Access Through New Means of Distribution

New legislation allows prescribing practitioners and pharmacists to enter into agreements with community health organizations, EMS providers, government agencies, law enforcement agencies, local and regional boards of education, and syringe services programs to distribute opioid antagonists through secured boxes or machines or vending machines. The new law specifies how these boxes and machines must be operated and maintained. For example, secured boxes must be equipped with an alarm capable of (1) detecting and transmitting a signal when accessed by someone and (2) alerting first responders to the access, unless it is commercially impracticable ([PA 23-52](#), § 12, effective upon passage).

Gun Violence Community Roundtables

Under a new law, by October 1, 2023, and on a quarterly basis afterwards, each municipal law enforcement unit must hold a meeting, open to the public, with stakeholders who also serve the municipality to work towards reducing gun violence and crime. The new law allows units to decide to hold meetings more often than quarterly or not at all if a unit’s chief, the municipality’s chief executive officer, and the municipality’s civilian police review board, if any, agree a meeting is unnecessary. For stakeholder meetings, each municipal law enforcement unit must invite at least (1) one prosecutor who serves in the judicial district that includes the municipality and (2) representatives from social services and mental health agencies and organizations serving the municipality, organizations combatting gun violence in the municipality, and the judicial branch ([PA 23-146](#), effective upon passage).

Local Voluntary Public Safety Registration System for Children With Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

A new law creates a voluntary public safety registration system that municipal police departments may implement for parents and guardians of children with IDD, including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders. It requires DESPP, within available appropriations, to develop a form that municipal police departments may distribute to these parents and guardians to collect specified information that can help emergency services personnel

(i.e., police, firefighting, medical, ambulance, and others) interact with the children. Participating municipal police departments must record the information collected in a database that police officers and emergency dispatchers can access in specified situations ([PA 23-137](#), §§ 7 & 8, as amended by [PA 23-204](#), § 170, both effective upon passage).

The FY 24-25 bond act authorizes \$800,000 in state general obligation bonds for this local voluntary public safety registration system ([PA 23-205](#), § 95, effective July 1, 2023).

“Move Over” Law Expansion

The state’s “move over” law requires drivers approaching emergency vehicles that are stationary or moving slowly in the shoulder, lane, or breakdown lane to immediately slow down and, if traveling in the adjacent lane, move over one lane unless doing so is unsafe. The legislature expanded this law by (1) requiring drivers approaching emergency vehicles on two-lanes roads (those with two lanes proceeding in opposite directions) to slow down until safely clear of the emergency vehicle (under prior law, it only applied on roads with at least two lanes proceeding in the same direction) and (2) applying the enhanced penalties for violations that cause the death of or injury to an emergency vehicle driver to include emergency vehicle occupants ([PA 23-40](#), § 32, effective October 1, 2023).

Opioid Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund and EMS Provision of Opioid Antagonist Kits

A new law creates an Opioid Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund as a separate, nonlapsing General Fund account. Starting by January 1, 2024, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in collaboration with DPH, must use the account’s funds to provide opioid antagonists to municipalities, law enforcement agencies, EMS organizations, and other eligible entities and for EMS personnel to provide this medication to certain members of the public. Relatedly, it requires EMS personnel to give kits with opioid antagonists and a related one-page fact sheet to certain patients (such as those showing symptoms of opioid use disorder) or their family members, caregivers, or friends ([PA 23-97](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2023).

Sensory Kits for Emergency Services Personnel

New legislation requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to develop and acquire sensory kits for DESPP to distribute to emergency services personnel who interact with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, or nonverbal learning disorders. DAS must do so in consultation with the E-911 Commission and the DESPP Coordinating Advisory Board, which advises the department on ways to improve emergency response communications and related issues. The kits must (1) help these children and adults manage emotions and anxiety while

interacting with emergency services personnel and during emergencies to which they respond and (2) include noise-canceling headphones, dark tinted glasses, and anxiety-reducing tactile objects or toys.

Municipalities may apply to DESPP for these sensory kits, as the department prescribes, by September 1, 2025. DESPP must choose up to 75 municipalities to receive the kits, based on specified criteria, and determine the number of kits to distribute to each selected municipality based on a formula it sets, which must consider the municipality's population and demonstrated need for the kits ([PA 23-137](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

Task Force on Police Recruitment and Retention

A new law creates a nine-member task force to study police recruitment and retention in Connecticut. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024 ([PA 23-69](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

Task Force on Shortage of Firefighters and EMS Personnel

New legislation creates a 13-member task force charged with studying the shortage of firefighters and EMS personnel in Connecticut. The task force must reports its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2024 ([SA 23-1](#), effective upon passage).

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