



## 2024 Acts Affecting First Responders

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## Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts) significantly affecting first responders enacted during the 2024 regular legislative 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](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) 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](#).

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](#).

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## **Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Personnel**

### ***EMS Administration of Epinephrine***

Under existing law, starting July 1, 2024, EMS personnel must administer epinephrine using certain equipment (e.g., automatic prefilled cartridge injectors) under specified conditions. A new law specifies that this requirement applies only if the medication is available.

The act requires EMS personnel's training on administering epinephrine to be in line with national standards that the public health commissioner recognizes, rather than from an organization she designates. It provides that emergency medical responders need only be trained to use means of administering epinephrine that are within their scope of practice. It also provides that EMS personnel's administration of epinephrine must be under written protocols and standing orders of a physician serving as an EMS medical director, rather than an emergency department director as under prior law ([PA 24-68](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2024).

### ***Joint Appointment of Municipal Officials***

This session, the legislature authorized regional councils of governments (COGs) and municipalities acting jointly to make appointments on a municipality's behalf for municipal functions that are subject to a shared services or regional services agreement. Under the act, these municipal functions include the planning activities described in the law on local EMS plans.

These appointments must apply jointly to each municipality that is a party to the agreement and be instead of the municipality's individual appointment. Under the act, this authority supersedes state and local law, local charters, and home rule ordinances that would prohibit or limit the ability to make these joint appointments ([PA 24-151](#), § 127, effective July 1, 2024).

### ***Medicaid Ambulance Rates***

For FY 25, and within available appropriations, a new law requires the Department of Social Services to increase emergency and nonemergency ambulance service rates, including specifically (1) increasing the Medicaid ambulance mileage rate for all emergency and nonemergency transports by \$1.18 and (2) providing mileage reimbursement for in-town trips ([PA 24-81](#), § 74, effective upon passage).

### ***Regional EMS Coordinators***

A new law will move certain EMS coordinator positions into the classified service. Specifically, the act requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to transition the regional EMS

coordinator and assistant regional EMS coordinator positions into the classified service beginning June 30, 2024 ([PA 24-81](#), § 98, effective upon passage).

## **Firefighters**

### ***Fire Services Administrative Changes***

A new law makes several changes to how fire services are administrated. Principally, it eliminates the Office of State Fire Administration and creates a Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) as a successor agency. It assigns jurisdiction of this new division to the state fire administrator and reassigns the administrator's current duties to the division and expands on them.

The act also makes several changes to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, including expanding its membership and its powers and duties, such as advising the new division on the management of the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan. Additionally, the act creates a working group to make recommendations on the structure and operations of DAS's Office of the State Fire Marshal and Office of Education and Data Management ([PA 24-136](#), most provisions effective July 1, 2025).

### ***Military Experience as Substitute for Q-Endorsement Requirements***

This session, the legislature allowed qualifying veterans and servicemembers to waive the training and skill demonstration requirements for a Q-endorsement (i.e., a license endorsement that authorizes holders to operate a fire apparatus (i.e., drive a fire truck).) To qualify, a veteran or servicemember must meet the minimum requirements, set in federal regulations, that apply to commercial driver's license (CDL) testing waivers ([PA 24-14](#), effective October 1, 2024).

### ***Turnout Gear With PFAS***

A new law generally regulates the sale and use of certain products containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Beginning January 1, 2026, the act requires anyone selling turnout gear (e.g., protective clothing for firefighters and EMS personnel) that contains intentionally added PFAS to give the purchaser written notice of this fact at the time of sale and the reason PFAS are in the gear. Beginning January 1, 2028, the act bans manufacturing, selling, or offering or distributing for sale, turnout gear that contains intentionally added PFAS ([PA 24-59](#), effective October 1, 2024).

## **Law Enforcement**

### ***DESPP Missing Persons Clearinghouse***

New legislation removes children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) from the missing persons information clearinghouse administered by DESPP, which must hold information on certain missing individuals to help law enforcement agencies locate them. The clearinghouse must continue to hold information on adults with IDD and certain others ([PA 24-81](#), § 34, effective upon passage).

### ***Dog Bite Statute***

This session, the legislature passed a law that generally replaces the prior dog bite statute with provisions that, among other things:

1. establish new procedures for owners, keepers, animal control officers, police officers, and injured people when a dog bites or attacks someone or causes damage to another animal;
2. specify factors an animal control officer must consider in deciding whether to issue an order to restrain or dispose of a biting or attacking dog; and
3. exempt military and service animals if the animal is in the custody and control of the U.S. military or a government agency or a person with a disability, is currently vaccinated for rabies, and is subject to routine veterinary care ([PA 24-108](#), § 28, effective October 1, 2024).

### ***Enforcement of Boating Laws***

A new law grants people with authority to enforce boating laws (e.g., environmental conservation officers and patrolmen) the power to make arrests on any part of waters lying between Connecticut and a neighboring state for violations and bring the violator to trial in the state where the violation happened. However, they may only exercise this cross-border authority if Massachusetts, New York, or Rhode Island enacts a similar law ([PA 24-123](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Incident Reports and the Administrative Per Se Process***

By law, someone arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) is subject to administrative licensing sanctions through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in addition to criminal prosecution. This process is referred to as “administrative per se,” and the sanctions may occur when (1) a driver refuses to submit to a blood, breath, or urine test; (2) a test indicates an elevated blood alcohol content (BAC); or (3) the officer concludes through investigation (e.g., a drug influence evaluation) that the driver was under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or both. When any of these circumstances occurs, the arresting officer must prepare a report and send it to DMV.

Prior law required that the report be prepared and sent to DMV within three business days after the incident. A new law extends this timeframe to within six business days after the incident ([PA 24-40](#), § 54, effective July 1, 2024).

### ***Fallen Officer Fund***

A new law codifies a state comptroller policy by establishing the “Fallen Officer Fund” to, within available appropriations, give a lump sum death benefit totaling \$100,000 to a surviving family member or beneficiary of a police officer who was killed in the line of duty or sustained injuries that were the direct and proximate cause of the officer’s death. (The FY 24-25 Budget appropriated \$500,000 in each year to the comptroller’s operating expenses account to provide money for the Fallen Officer Fund.)

The act also allows survivors who were covered by the police officer’s health insurance at the time of the officer’s death, to apply for or keep the coverage for one year after the death and to renew it annually for up to five years ([PA 24-27](#), various effective dates).

### ***Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemptions of Law Enforcement and Government Agency Records***

This session, the legislature passed a law expanding exemptions of certain law enforcement and government agency records from disclosure under FOIA. This includes, for certain investigatory records, exempting (1) the identity of “mandated reporters” (i.e., generally, people in more than 40 different professions and occupations that have contact with children or whose primary focus is children) not otherwise known and (2) signed witness statements. The act also exempts, subject to specific conditions, certain photographs, films, videos, digital images, and other visual images depicting a minor, domestic or sexual abuse victim, homicide or suicide victim, or deceased victim of an accident ([PA 24-56](#), effective July 1, 2024).

### ***National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Databank***

A new law conforms law to practice by requiring DESPP’s Division of Scientific Services to participate in the NIBIN databank, rather than the firearms evidence databank that prior law required the division to establish. It also requires all firearms, not just handguns, that pertain to a criminal investigation to be tested ([PA 24-32](#), effective October 1, 2024).

## ***Police Body Cameras***

A new law specifically requires the state's guidelines on the use of police body cameras, starting October 1, 2024, to include provisions on the circumstances when officers must not pause recording with the cameras. The act similarly requires these circumstances to be included in police basic and review training programs on body camera use ([PA 24-15](#), effective upon passage, except the provision on police training programs takes effect October 1, 2024).

## ***Police Officer's Responsibility in Sexual Assault Incident***

This session, the legislature established that it is a police officer's responsibility to provide immediate assistance to a victim at the scene of a sexual assault incident or at the time the complaint is filed. The officer must help the victim get medical treatment, if required; inform the victim of available services; and provide a child's parent or guardian with certain documents on behavioral and mental health, if there is a child at the scene ([PA 24-127](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2024).

## ***Restitution for Injuring or Killing a Police Animal or Volunteer Search and Rescue Dog***

A new law requires anyone convicted of intentionally injuring or killing a peace officer's animal or a volunteer canine search and rescue team's dog to pay restitution to the animal's owner. The restitution may include the cost of veterinary services and, if the animal or dog is killed or rendered unable to perform its duties, the costs and expenses of purchasing and training a replacement. The restitution is in addition to the criminal penalties under existing law ([PA 24-65](#), effective October 1, 2024).

## ***Special Police Officers***

This session, the legislature made various changes to the state's gaming laws. Among other things, it expanded the jurisdiction of certain Department of Consumer Protection special police officers to include investigating and making arrests for any offense arising from Internet gaming ([PA 24-142](#), § 88, effective upon passage).

Another law requires the DESPP commissioner to appoint up to two people who the Department of Children and Families (DCF) nominates to act as special police officers to assist with background checks, conduct and respond to threat assessments in and around any building or facility under DCF supervision or control, and respond to acute crises or security concerns in DCF-supervised or -controlled buildings or facilities ([PA 24-79](#), §§ 7 & 8, effective July 1, 2024).



## ***Union Avenue Detention Center in New Haven***

Starting in 2026, a new law places New Haven’s Union Avenue detention center under the jurisdiction of a state agency, as the Office of Policy and Management secretary determines. Currently, the facility is under local police jurisdiction ([PA 24-81](#), § 60, effective upon passage).

## ***Victim Information to Bail Commissioners***

A new law requires police officers to give bail commissioners and intake assessment and referral specialists identifying information about the victim of the charged crime or crimes, including the victim’s name, address, and phone number, if available, to carry out the commissioner’s and specialist’s duties ([PA 24-108](#), § 20, effective July 1, 2024).

## **Miscellaneous Acts Affecting Multiple or Other First Responders**

### ***Drone Grant Program***

New legislation requires DESPP, within available resources, to administer a grant program for municipalities to purchase drones, accessories, or both, and authorizes up to \$3 million in state general obligation bonds for the program. Under the new law, DESPP must report to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the program, including grant applications received and grants awarded for each year in which grants are issued ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 60 & 61, effective July 1, 2024).

### ***Extension of First Responder Peer Support Confidentiality to All Department of Correction Employees***

This session, the legislature extended to all Department of Correction (DOC) employees existing provisions that make oral and written communications between a first responder and a peer support team member confidential with certain exceptions. It does this by adding DOC employees to a statutory definition of the term “first responder,” thus adding them to the list of people to whom these provisions apply. By law, a “peer support team member” is any person who directs or staffs any employer-established peer support program for first responders ([PA 24-67](#), effective July 1, 2024).

### ***Line of Duty Death Declarations***

A new law generally allows a police or fire chief or EMS chief or administrative head to declare that a police officer, uniformed paid or volunteer firefighter, or EMS personnel died in the line of duty if the death was caused by a cardiac event, stroke, or pulmonary embolism within 24 hours after finishing a shift or training. The chief or administrative head may do so unless a local charter or

ordinance in effect on October 1, 2024, authorizes a different person or entity to make the determination ([PA 24-16](#), effective October 1, 2024).

### ***Local Voluntary Public Safety Registration System***

A new law eliminates the 2023-enacted local voluntary public safety registration system for children with IDD, including autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders, as well as related provisions. It correspondingly eliminates a requirement that each emergency dispatcher employed by a public safety answering point (PSAP), when practicable, search the system when dispatching emergency services to a residential address ([PA 24-81](#), § 37, effective upon passage).

### ***Municipal Employee Retirement Changes***

A new law creates the 13-member Municipal Employees Retirement Commission and, starting January 1, 2025, transfers responsibility for the municipal employees retirement system (MERS) and the Policemen and Firemen Survivors' Benefit Fund ("benefit fund") from the State Employees Retirement Commission (SERC) to the new commission. Broadly, the new law gives the new commission powers and responsibilities over MERS and the benefit fund and imposes related requirements similar to those that currently apply to SERC. The new law also (1) allows a MERS retiree who returns to work for a municipality that does not participate in MERS to participate in and receive credit in that municipality's retirement system and (2) requires the comptroller to create and administer a municipal defined contribution retirement plan (e.g., 401(k)), which any municipality may join ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 82-90, various effective dates).

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