

Legislative Analysis



WORKER'S COMPENSATION FOR VOLUNTEER AND PART-TIME PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIALS FOR CERTAIN DISEASES

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4729 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Will Snyder
Committee: Labor
Revised 10-25-23

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4729 would amend Chapter 4 (Occupational Diseases and Disablements) of the Worker's Disability Compensation Act to allow certain part-time, on-call, and volunteer members of fire, police, and public safety departments to be eligible for worker's compensation for respiratory and heart diseases.

Chapter 4 of the act provides that a respiratory or heart disease, or an illness resulting from those diseases, can be designated as a compensable personal injury for the following individuals if the disease or illness develops while the individual is in active service as a result of the performance of their duties, as it is presumed that the disease or illness can be attributed to the employment:¹

- Members of a fully paid fire department of an airport operated by a county, public airport authority, or state university or college.
- Full-time paid employees of a city, village, or township fire or police department.
- Full-time paid employees of a public fire authority.
- County sheriffs and their deputies.
- Members of the state police.
- Conservation officers.
- Officers of the Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Enforcement Division.

Under House Bill 4729, the following individuals would also be eligible for personal injury coverage for respiratory and heart diseases:

- Part-time, on-call, or volunteer members of a fire department of an airport operated by a county, public airport authority, or state university or college.
- Part-time or on-call members of a police department of a city, township, or village.
- Part-time, on-call, or volunteer members of a fire or public safety department of a city, township, or village.
- Part-time, on-call, or volunteer members of a public fire authority.
- Forest fire officers.

MCL 418.405

¹ The personal injury designation applies if it is determined that the individual has applied for but will not receive pension benefits.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would expand the population of fire and public safety officers that are eligible to file workers' compensation claims for respiratory and heart diseases or related illnesses that result from active service to also include part-time, paid on-call, and volunteer officers. The bill would likely increase costs to certain local units of government by an indeterminate amount for the costs of any additional worker's compensation claims that might be filed. The amount of increased costs would depend upon a variety of factors, such as the number of part-time, paid on-call, and volunteer officers in a department, as well as the amount of increased funding for each of the new claims that received payments.

Currently, there are 1,029 fire departments in Michigan that employ 8,670 full-time firefighters. The bill's provisions would extend eligibility to all the approximate 31,046 current full-time, part-time, paid on-call, and volunteer firefighters. That is an approximate increase of 22,376 firefighters that would become eligible. Eligibility would also be extended to the 16,514 full-time, part-time, paid on-call, and volunteer law enforcement officers employed by local governments as well, instead of only the full-time officers that are eligible under current law.

The bill would have no significant fiscal impact on the state of Michigan.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.