

ASSEMBLY, No. 2786

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MARCH 3, 1997

By Assemblyman KELLY

1 AN ACT concerning the training of certain firefighters, supplementing
2 chapter 14 of Title 40A of the New Jersey Statutes, and making an
3 appropriation.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. Any person appointed after the effective date of this act to a
9 Firefighter I or similar title, for career service as a paid member of a
10 paid or part-paid fire department or force or of a fire district
11 maintained and controlled by a board of fire commissioners and
12 supported by the municipal taxpayers, shall be required to
13 satisfactorily complete a basic training program formulated or
14 approved by the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of
15 Community Affairs as a prerequisite for assignment to suppression or
16 rescue duty.

17 Regulations promulgated pursuant to this act specifying the
18 curriculum of the training program shall be primarily based on
19 Standard 1001, "Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications," established
20 by the National Fire Protection Association, or any other national
21 standard, or both, which may be adopted by reference. A municipality
22 or fire district shall provide the fire fighter with the opportunity to
23 participate in the program.

24 The training program shall:

25 a. Consist of a minimum of 84 hours of instruction over a minimum
26 period of weeks to be established by rule and regulation;

27 b. Utilize a curriculum which shall provide one-time initial training;

28 c. Take place at central locations in the State, including county
29 fire academies or State facilities;

30 d. Require that the fire fighter either pass or fail the program
31 within one year of appointment. If the person fails one or more
32 modules of the program, he shall retake the failed module and pass at
33 the appropriate level of performance; and

34 e. Be available to volunteer fire fighters at their own expense.

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36 2. Expenses incurred in furnishing the programs in fire fighting to
37 fire fighters referred to in section 1 of this act that are directly

1 attributable to training, including regular compensation and the
2 furnishing of meals and lodging at or near a training facility, shall be
3 reimbursed by the State. Reasonable travel expenses incurred by the
4 fire fighter shall also be paid by the State, but only if the travel
5 expense would not otherwise be incurred by the fire fighter in the
6 regular course of his employment.

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8 3. The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall, in accordance
9 with the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-
10 1 et seq.) promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the
11 implementation of this act.

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13 4. There is appropriated \$550,000 from the General Fund to the
14 Department of Community Affairs to effectuate the purposes of this
15 act.

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17 5. This act shall take effect on the first day of the tenth month after
18 enactment and apply only to initial fire fighter appointments
19 thereafter.

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22 STATEMENT

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24 The State has promulgated rules and regulations establishing
25 standards for fire service training and certification pursuant to chapter
26 18C of Title 5 of the Administrative Code. However, these training
27 requirements are voluntary. Virtually all paid and part-paid fire
28 departments around the State expect new career appointees to be
29 trained. Nevertheless, some departments and fire districts either rely
30 on on-the-job training or do not now conform their curricula to the
31 State guidelines.

32 This bill provides for mandatory fire fighting training. It is
33 proposed in the wake of a review by the Fire Fighters Association of
34 New Jersey of the more than 15 fire fighter fatalities in the State over
35 as many years. In every case, the lack of mandatory, minimum
36 training is said to have played a significant part in the unfortunate
37 outcome.

38 Assembly Bill No. 706 requires training for certain fire service
39 supervisors. This bill, intended to be a companion to Assembly
40 Bill No. 706, would mandate standard training for entry level fire
41 fighter appointees. They would be expected to satisfactorily complete
42 84 minimum hours of instruction during their one year probationary
43 period. This is the same minimum hour standard currently
44 recommended in Division of Fire Safety regulations. The requirements
45 of the bill are permissive for volunteer fire fighters. The bill
46 appropriates \$550,000 to the Department of Community Affairs for

1 the cost of training, which includes salary reimbursements,
2 instructional costs and related personal expenses.

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7 Mandates basic training for certain newly-appointed entry-level
8 firefighters.