
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

SB 796 (Richardson) - Emergency medical services: state-employed public safety personnel: optional first aid skills

Version: April 28, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: May 12, 2025

Policy Vote: HEALTH 11 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: SB 796 would require the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) to act as the authorizing entity for the optional first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills, as specified, for lifeguards, firefighters, and peace officers, as specified, that are employed by a state agency.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown ongoing General Fund costs for the EMSA for state operations.

Background: Current law establishes the EMSA, which is responsible for the coordination and integration of all state activities concerning EMS, including the establishment of minimum standards, policies, and procedures. Current law requires all ocean, public beach, and public swimming pool lifeguards and all firefighters and peace officers, except those whose duties are primarily clerical or administrative, to be trained to administer first aid and CPR. The training must meet standards prescribed by EMSA.

Pursuant to the requirement in existing law that lifeguards, firefighters, and peace officers obtain training to administer first aid and CPR, EMSA adopted regulations detailing the training that meets these requirements and listing the authorized skills. Lifeguards, firefighters, and peace officers who meet these requirements are considered “public safety first aid” (PSFA) providers. While there could be firefighters, peace officers, or lifeguards who are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) or paramedics, those individuals would be providing care under the authorization provided by the EMT or paramedic certificate or license, which have a more expansive scope than PSFA providers, and they would not be considered PSFA providers. The authorized skills for PSFA providers include the following: CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator; supporting airway and breathing using manual airway opening methods, including manual methods to remove an airway obstruction; performing spinal immobilization and splinting of extremities; emergency eye irrigation using water or normal saline; assist with administration of oral glucose; assist patients with administration of physician-prescribed epinephrine devices and naloxone; assist in emergency childbirth; hemorrhage control; chest seals and dressings; simple decontamination techniques; care for amputated body parts; and basic wound care.

EMSA also adopted regulations permitting public safety personnel to perform “optional skills” when the PSFA provider has been trained and tested to demonstrate competence following initial instruction, and when authorized by the Medical Director of the local EMS agency (LEMSA). The regulations require the LEMSA to establish policies and procedures that require PSFA personnel to demonstrate trained optional skills

competency at least every two years, or more frequently as determined by the EMS quality improvement program. The optional skills include the following:

- Administration of epinephrine by auto-injector for suspected anaphylaxis.
- Supplemental oxygen therapy using a non-rebreather face mask or nasal cannula, and bag-valve-mask ventilation.
- Administration of auto-injectors containing atropine and pralidoxime chloride for nerve agent exposure for self or peer care, when authorized by the Medical Director of a LEMSA while working for a public safety provider.
- Administration of naloxone for suspected narcotic overdose.
- Use of oropharyngeal airways (OPAs) and nasopharyngeal airways (NPAs).

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require that if a firefighter, lifeguard, or peace officer is subject to state regulations, as specified, pertaining to first aid and CPR for public safety personnel, and is employed by a state agency, the EMSA must act as the authorizing entity for the optional first aid and CPR skills specified in state regulations.
- Require the EMSA to develop, implement, and monitor policies, protocols, and quality assurance and improvement (QA/QI) measures to ensure the safe and effective use of these skills.

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