

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 944
Judiciary

(Delegates Shoemaker and Rose)

First Responders - Mandatory Autism Training

This bill requires each “first responder” in the State to complete autism awareness training approved by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission (MPTSC).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Affected State agencies can likely meet the bill’s requirements with existing resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local governments can likely meet the bill’s requirements with existing resources, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “First responder” means an individual who is licensed or certified under § 13-516 of the Education Article (*i.e.*, cardiac rescue technicians, emergency medical dispatchers, emergency medical responders, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics).

Current Law: State regulations require a police officer who is otherwise required to complete annual in-service training to successfully complete specified autism awareness training by December 31, 2013, if the police officer has not previously successfully completed autism awareness training.

Background: Chapter 221 of 2014 required, among other things, that all entrance-level and in-service training for law enforcement officers conducted by the State and each county or municipal training school to include training regarding individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In response, MPTSC implemented training objectives and a model curriculum regarding interactions with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

State and Local Expenditures: All entrance-level and in-service training for law enforcement officers is already required to include training related to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, which includes autism awareness training. Thus, adapting or expanding existing training materials for use by emergency medical responders is not anticipated to materially impact State or local government finances or operations and can likely be accomplished with existing resources, particularly since the bill requires the training to be *approved* by MPTSC, not necessarily provided by or held at MPTSC. The Department of Legislative Services notes, however, that taking emergency medical responders (referred to in the bill as first responders) out of service to complete the required training *may* result in increased personnel costs to cover portions of shifts. As it is unclear whether in-house training may be readily provided with limited disruption to shifts, any such impact cannot be reliably estimated at this time. Further, some jurisdictions already provide autism awareness training to their emergency medical responders; should that training conform to the training to be approved by MPTSC, any costs associated with the bill are mitigated.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery and Prince George's counties; cities of Annapolis and Takoma Park; Maryland Municipal League; Department of State Police; Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Department of Legislative Services

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