

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 751
Finance

(Senator Simonaire)

**First Responders and Emergency Responders – Definition – 9–1–1 Dispatchers
Included**

This bill establishes and/or expands definitions of “first responder” and “emergency responder” in State law to include 9-1-1 dispatchers, operators, and specialists.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State government operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: In various Articles of State law, the definition of “first responder and “emergency responder” is either established or expanded to include an employee of a county public safety answering point (PSAP), or an employee working at a PSAP, whose duties and responsibilities include (1) receiving and processing 9-1-1 requests for emergency services; (2) performing other support functions directly related to 9-1-1 requests for emergency services; and (3) dispatching law enforcement officers, fire rescue services, emergency medical services, and other public safety services to the scene of an emergency. Broadly, the bill makes the following changes:

- in the Criminal Law Article, the definitions of “first responder” and “emergency responder” are established, which adds clarity to the prohibition against

intentionally causing physical injury to another if the person knows or has reason to know that the other is a first responder engaged in providing emergency medical care or rescue services;

- in the Transportation Article, the definitions of “first responder” and “emergency responder” are established, which adds clarity to the process by which a bridge or other transportation structure may be dedicated to an emergency responder who died in the line of duty;
- in the Education Article, the definition of “emergency responder” is established;
- in the Health-General Article, the definition of “first responder” is expanded, meaning that these employees must be notified after coming into contact with a person who died of a contagious disease or virus, as specified;
- in the Human Services Article, the definition of “first responder” is clarified; and
- in the Public Safety Article, the definition of “emergency responder” is expanded, which may allow certain organizations in Harford County to obtain an alcoholic beverages license, as described below.

9-1-1 Specialists

The State’s 9-1-1 system operates primarily through PSAPs, which are generally owned and operated by local governments. 9-1-1 specialists working within PSAPs answer, redirect, and take action on 9-1-1 calls received based on the location of the originating 9-1-1 call.

In the Public Safety Article, “9-1-1 specialist” means an employee of a county PSAP, or an employee working in a county PSAP, whose duties and responsibilities include (1) receiving and processing 9-1-1 requests for emergency services; (2) other support functions directly related to 9-1-1 requests for emergency services; or (3) dispatching law enforcement officers, fire rescue services, emergency medical services, and other public safety services to the scene of an emergency.

Harford County – Alcoholic Beverages Licenses

Under current law, the Harford County Board of Licenses Commissioners may issue a 6-day Class C-3 beer, wine, and liquor license or a 7-day Class C-3 beer, wine, and liquor license to a social organization that:

- may be operated for profit or not for profit;
- has at least 100 members paying dues of at least \$200 per year per member;

- has at least 51% of its membership consisting of (1) active members of the U.S. Armed Forces; (2) veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces; (3) active or retired first responders; and (4) the spouses and children of these eligible members; and
- meets other specified requirements.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 1109 (Delegate Kipke) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Department of Natural Resources; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Harford and Wicomico counties; City of College Park; Maryland Municipal League; Department of Legislative Services

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