For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS OF FIREFIGHTERS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CONCERNING THE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS OF FIREFIGHTERS.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly encourages the Arkansas Fire Training Academy to make every effort to provide sixteen-hour training courses to effectuate the purposes of this Act.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 20-22-806 is amended to read as follows:

20-22-806. Certification and classification of fire departments.

(a) Fire departments in this state may apply for annual certification and classification by the Director of the Office of Fire Protection Services. Each fire department applying for certification shall submit such information as may be required by the director to determine whether the fire department meets minimum certification standards and to classify the department as to its level of service.

(b)(1) Certification standards for fire departments shall not be changed unless the changes are approved by the Arkansas Fire Protection Services Board.

(2) Any change to the certification standards under this subsection shall not be effective until twelve (12) months after the adoption
of the published change.

(c)(1) Firefighters shall maintain a minimum of twenty-four (24) sixteen (16) hours per year of certifiable training meeting the standards of the Arkansas Fire Training Academy.

(2) A firefighter who receives more certified hours than required in this subdivision (c)(1) in a year may carry over the additional certified hours to the next year only.

(d) Firefighters shall also receive within the first year of service as a firefighter:

(1) Up to sixteen (16) hours in the Introduction to Firefighting course;

(2) Up to sixteen (16) hours in the Personal Protective Equipment course; and

(3) Up to eight (8) hours in the Wildland Fire Suppression course.

(e)(1) A member of a fire department who does not engage in firefighting is exempt from the requirements of this section.

(2) A member under this subdivision (e)(1) shall be eligible for workers' compensation coverage under § 20-22-809.

(3) A member under this subdivision (e)(1) is considered a firefighter for the purpose of number of members of the fire department.

(f) A fire department that complies with this section is eligible for insurance premium tax moneys under § 14-284-401 et seq.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 20-22-809 is amended to read as follows:

20-22-809. Workers' compensation.

(a) For the purpose of workers' compensation coverage in cases of injury to or death of an individual, volunteer firefighters of certified fire departments, other than municipal fire departments, who meet the requirements of this section shall be deemed county employees and shall receive minimum compensation. Their survivors shall receive death benefits in the same manner as regular county employees for injury or death arising out of and in the course of their activities as firefighters.

(b) Volunteer firefighters requesting workers' compensation coverage shall annually file with the county clerk evidence that:

(1) The firefighter has met the minimum training standards
recommended by the Arkansas Fire Protection Services Board; and

(2) The volunteer firefighter is a member of a certified fire
department other than a municipal fire department.

(c) A member of a fire department under § 20-22-806 who does not
engage in firefighting is eligible for workers' compensation under this
section.

APPROVED: 4/3/2009