
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6965

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL, A DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL, THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL AND A FIRE AND CATASTROPHIC RESTORATION BUSINESS LICENSE.

SUMMARY

This bill:

1. establishes conditions under which the administrative services commissioner may dismiss the state fire marshal from her duties;
2. eliminates the administrative services commissioner's authority to appoint a deputy fire marshal who is under her supervision and has the same powers as the state fire marshal and instead requires the state fire marshal to appoint a deputy fire marshal to help her carry out her duties (§§ 1 & 4);
3. reduces, from 12 to 9, the Fire Marshal Training Council's membership and changes its composition; and
4. requires fire and catastrophic restoration businesses to be licensed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, subjects violators to a fine of up to \$1,000 per violation, and requires the state fire marshal to adopt implementing regulations for these licensing provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the Fire Marshal Training Council and license provisions take effect October 1, 2025.

§ 1 — STATE FIRE MARSHAL

By law, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner appoints the state fire marshal. Under the bill, to dismiss the state fire marshal from her duties, the DAS commissioner must give her (1) written notice stating the specific grounds for her dismissal and

(2) an opportunity to present her own defense (personally or by counsel) at a public hearing before the commissioner. The hearing must be held according to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA).

By law, unless otherwise specified, appointed officials serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority but no longer than the term of the appointing authority or until a successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is longer (CGS § 4-1a).

§ 2 — FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL

The bill reduces the Fire Marshal Training Council's membership from 12 to 9 and changes its composition, as shown in the table below. Principally, the bill:

1. eliminates the members appointed by the governor (two chief elected officials and two public members), Board of Regents for Higher Education (one member), and Board of Trustees for the Community-Technical Colleges (two members) and
2. adds four members appointed by specified entities.

The bill allows out-of-state residents to serve on the council by eliminating the requirement that the council's members be state residents. It also eliminates the provision requiring that members serve without compensation but allowing them to be reimbursed for necessary expenses.

**Table: Fire Marshal Training Council Composition
Under Current Law and the Bill**

<i>Current Law</i>	<i>Bill</i>
State fire marshal or her designee	State fire marshal or her designee
Codes and Standards Committee member elected by the committee	Codes and Standards Committee member elected by the committee
Three members of the Connecticut Fire Marshals' Association who are local or deputy fire marshals or fire inspectors (one volunteer, one part-time paid, and one full-time)	Three members appointed by an association representing fire marshal interests in the state who are local or deputy fire marshals or fire inspectors (one part-time paid and two full-time)
One member appointed by the Board of Regents for Higher Education	One member appointed by a professional association of architects

<i>Current Law</i>	<i>Bill</i>
Two members appointed by the Board of Trustees for the Community-Technical Colleges	One member appointed by DAS' Office of Education and Data Management
Two chief elected officials appointed by the governor, one from a municipality with more than 70,000 people and the other from a municipality with less than 70,000 people	One member appointed by a statewide organization of municipal leaders
Two public members appointed by the governor	One member appointed by an organization that advocates for small towns in Connecticut

§ 3 — FIRE AND CATASTROPHIC RESTORATION BUSINESS LICENSE

The bill requires entities engaged in the fire and restoration business to hold a fire and catastrophic restoration license (“license”) issued by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Under the bill, these are entities that:

1. assess, mitigate, repair, restore, or reconstruct real or personal property damaged or destroyed by fire, smoke, water, mold, a natural disaster, or any catastrophic event, or
2. provide related emergency response services, consulting services, or insurance claim assistance.

To receive a license, an applicant must (1) fill out an application as directed by the office, and (2) pay an initial \$150 license fee. A license is valid for one year from when it is issued and the renewal fee is \$100. At least 45 days before a business’s license expires, the office must send the business a renewal application. Applicants aggrieved by the commissioner’s decision on an application or renewal may receive a hearing under the UAPA.

The state fire marshal must set up and maintain a registry of these licensed businesses, including (1) their names and addresses, (2) whether they are in good standing or have violated any applicable laws or regulations, and (3) the number and nature of any complaints filed against them.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/18/2025)