



2025 Acts Affecting First Responders

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting first responders enacted during the 2025 regular legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Criminal Justice and Public Safety, are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the [General Assembly's website](#) or the Connecticut State Library.

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Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Personnel

EMS Medication Administration

Epinephrine. A new law allows EMS personnel (paramedics, emergency medical responders, and emergency medical technicians) to administer epinephrine by any device approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (including nasal spray), instead of only by auto injectors or prefilled vials or syringes as under prior law. EMS personnel must (1) be trained on administering the medication in line with national standards the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner recognizes and (2) administer the medication under the written protocol or standing order of a physician serving as an EMS medical director. By law, ambulances must be equipped with epinephrine devices ([PA 25-97](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2025).

Glucagon Nasal Powder. Another new law allows EMS personnel to administer glucagon nasal powder when they (1) are trained in administering injectable glucagon and (2) determine that administering glucagon is necessary to treat the patient. It requires all EMS personnel to receive this training from an organization designated by the DPH commissioner. It also allows licensed or certified ambulances to have glucagon nasal powder for EMS personnel to administer ([PA 25-168](#), § 181, effective upon passage).

Home-Based Virtual Education Pilot Program for EMTs

A new law requires DPH, within available appropriations, to create a pilot program providing home-based virtual education for people seeking to become an emergency medical technician (EMT) or a nurse's aide. DPH must do so by January 1, 2026, and in collaboration with a Connecticut-based educational provider or educational technology provider. The law specifies that it does not eliminate specified existing requirements for these people to receive in-person practical training ([PA 25-162](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

Loans for Paramedic Certificate Programs

A new law requires the:

1. chief workforce officer, by September 1, 2025, to evaluate DPH-approved paramedic certificate programs and identify those that qualify as high-value certificate programs;
2. Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority to create a high-value certificate loan program to provide loans to students in high-value certificate programs, including those in the identified paramedic certificate programs; and

3. Office of Workforce Strategy, starting by October 1, 2025, to annually identify, post on its website, and provide to DPH-approved paramedic certificate programs a list of public or private financial aid sources for their students ([PA 25-158](#), effective July 1, 2025).

Paramedic License Fee Eliminated

A new law eliminates the \$150 license application fee for paramedics ([PA 25-174](#), § 187, effective October 1, 2025).

UConn Supplemental Paramedic

A new law authorizes UConn's EMS organization to apply to the DPH commissioner for a certificate of authorization as a supplemental paramedic in a similar way as existing law allows supplemental first responders. These certificates allow UConn EMS paramedics to respond to emergency calls covered by other primary service area responders (PSAR). By law, a PSAR is a specific geographic area which DPH assigns a dedicated EMS provider for each category of emergency medical response service.

The act also specifies that, when any combination of PSAR, supplemental paramedic, and supplemental first responder is at the same scene, the PSAR controls and directs emergency activities. If a PSAR is not present, the supplemental paramedic must control and direct the activities ([PA 25-56](#), effective October 1, 2025).

Firefighters

Firefighters Cancer Relief

Program. This session, the legislature made several changes to a program that provides workers' compensation-like benefits to firefighters who have certain cancers and meet other criteria. To help support the program, starting January 1, 2026, a new law requires telephone service providers (including cell phone and Internet phone service providers) to charge each subscriber a new fee of five cents per month, per service line unless the subscriber opts out. The collected funds must be deposited into the firefighters cancer relief account that funds the program's benefits ([PA 25-168](#), § 407, effective upon passage).

Another new law also changed the program by, among other things, (1) adding skin cancer to the types of cancers the program covers; (2) clarifying how state-employed firefighters must apply for program benefits; and (3) requiring the program's benefits to be provided in the same way they would be if the firefighter's cancer had been caused by an occupational disease, rather than a personal injury, under the workers' compensation law ([PA 25-4](#), as amended by [PA 25-168](#), §§ 408-410, effective October 1, 2025).

Qualifying Criteria. This session, the legislature modified the definition of “cigarette” under the cigarette tax law to (1) generally align it with the definition in the tobacco master settlement agreement law (the 1998 agreement between Connecticut and leading tobacco companies) and (2) explicitly include any roll, stick, or capsule of tobacco, regardless of its shape or size, that is generally intended to be heated. By modifying the definition of cigarette for purposes of the cigarette tax, the act potentially expands the products that factor into the qualifying criteria for firefighter cancer relief benefits. By law, to qualify for the benefits, among other things, a firefighter must not have used cigarettes, as defined under the cigarette tax law, during the 15 years before the cancer diagnosis. ([PA 25-168](#), § 394, effective July 1, 2025).

Law Enforcement

Bleeding Control Kits

A new law allows (1) the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to administer a bleeding control trainer qualification program in each district health department and (2) currently qualified bleeding control trainers to provide bleeding control training to members of the public. The law also requires police officers or probationary candidates who receive bleeding control training from a qualified bleeding control trainer to be given credit for the training toward the basic or review training requirements. Finally, the law allows DPH to work with local health departments to install bleeding control kits in certain public places (e.g., public buildings) ([PA 25-160](#), effective July 1, 2025).

Choice of Towing at Accident Scenes

A new law requires generally requires municipal police officers to give vehicle operators the opportunity to select a towing company when their vehicle needs to be towed. It also codifies a similar existing regulation that currently applies to state police ([PA 25-55](#), §§ 17 & 18, effective October 1, 2025).

Chokeholds

A provision in a new law on criminal justice reforms expands the circumstances under which law enforcement officers may use a chokehold or similar restraint methods to include defending a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force ([PA 25-29](#), § 9, effective October 1, 2025).

Cigarette Dealer Licenses and Renewals

Existing law allows municipalities to adopt ordinances requiring anyone applying to renew a Department of Revenue Services cigarette dealer’s license to simultaneously give written notice of

the application to the chief law enforcement official or his or her designee in the municipality where the business is located. Among other things, a new law requires the official or designee to send written comments on the application ([PA 25-166](#), §§ 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2025).

Civil Immigration Detainers

Provisions in a new law on criminal justice matters expands who is considered a “law enforcement officer” under the civil immigration detainer law to include, among others, juvenile probation officers and prosecutors. The law also broadens the circumstances under which a person can be arrested or detained under a civil immigration detainer to apply to people convicted of one of 13 specified crimes. It also allows federal immigration authorities to interview a person in state or local law enforcement custody under these circumstances ([PA 25-29](#), §§ 4 & 6, effective October 1, 2025).

Electronic Defense Weapons

Provisions in a new criminal justice-related law exclude electronic defense weapons used by peace officers from being considered deadly force for purposes of an investigation into whether an officer’s use of force was justifiable. It correspondingly excludes these weapons from being considered a “deadly weapon” when a peace officer uses them ([PA 25-29](#), §§ 7 & 8, effective October 1, 2025).

EnCon Officer Study

A new act requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to prepare a report by February 1, 2026, on its environmental conservation (EnCon) police officers. The report must look at (1) the number of officers appointed in the last four years; (2) service call statistics; (3) statistics on EnCon officer enforcement of statutes and regulations; and (4) benchmarking this information to comparable states ([SA 25-23](#), effective upon passage).

Firearm Seizure and Recovery Federal eTrace Requirement

A new law requires law enforcement agencies to opt into sharing information on recovered firearms through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives’ electronic tracking system (eTrace). When a law enforcement agency seizes or recovers a firearm, existing law requires that agency to take all appropriate steps to identify and trace the firearm’s history.

The act requires law enforcement agencies to (1) submit all available information on the firearm’s identify to eTrace, (2) opt into allowing information to be shared via eTrace, and (3) if the firearm

was stolen or missing, enter information into the Connecticut Online Law Enforcement Communications Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system ([PA 25-157](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2025).

Handcuffs on Young Children

A new law generally prohibits police officers from using handcuffs to restrain any child the officer knows is under age 14. This prohibition begins at the point of the child's initial contact with the police officer and applies as long as the child has not been adjudicated a delinquent ([PA 25-163](#), effective October 1, 2025).

Incident Reports and the Administrative Per Se Process

A new law eliminates the specific deadline for police officers to mail reports to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) after DUI arrests. The reports contain the grounds for arrest and chemical test results, among other information, and DMV uses them when imposing administrative licensing sanctions on those arrested for DUI. Prior law required that officers prepare this report and send it within six business days after the arrest. Under the new law, the report must be prepared within this timeframe, but mailing it within this timeframe is not required ([PA 25-159](#), § 61, effective July 1, 2025).

Motor Vehicle Violation Enforcement

The legislature passed a law with several changes to the enforcement of motor vehicle violations. The new law enhances penalties under the reckless driving law for drivers who drive faster than 100 mph, including increased fines and impounding the driver's vehicle for subsequent offenses. It also allows police to stop a motor vehicle for a violation of the laws against using cannabis in a vehicle if the officer sees the operator actively consuming it and smells burnt cannabis. (Prior law prohibited an officer from stopping a vehicle if the violation would be the only reason for the stop.) The new law also decreases the standard for what constitutes certain license plate, headlight, or windshield equipment violations, and is subject to a motor vehicle stop ([PA 25-19](#), effective October 1, 2025).

Police Officer Recruitment

A new law requires various entities to take specified actions to recruit and retain police officers, including conducting studies and implementing a pilot program. It requires:

1. the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to study whether college-level criminal justice courses can be substituted for its police basic training courses and create a related pilot program at the University of New Haven;

2. DESPP and POST to create a report with recommendations on awarding bonuses to new and existing police officers;
3. the Board of Regents, UConn Board of Trustees, and POST to take specific actions towards helping police officers earn higher education degrees;
4. DESPP, in conjunction with the State Board of Labor Relations, to study the feasibility of the state entering into negotiations with the State Police officers' union to set conditions for retired officers to return to service;
5. DESPP to investigate ways to develop and enhance programs addressing police officer mental health ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 195-199, effective upon passage).

Police Officer Review and Public Disclosure of Body-worn Camera and Dashboard Camera Footage

This session, the legislature passed a law that alters the procedure for a police officer's review of body-worn or dashboard camera recording equipment. It also modifies the circumstances by which certain body-worn camera and dashboard camera footage must be disclosed upon request to the public within specified time constraints. The specified disclosure timeframe (1) no longer applies to disciplinary proceedings and (2) only includes recordings that capture the use of force ([PA 25-100](#), effective October 1, 2025).

Police-Ordered Towing Council

A new law establishes the Police-Ordered Towing Council and charges it with (1) advising the DMV commissioner on policies affecting police-ordered towing and (2) developing a proposed rate schedule for police-ordered towing. The council consists of (1) the DESPP commissioner and three other commissioners or their designees, (2) representatives from the towing, trucking, and insurance industries, (3) one representative of a police chiefs association, and (4) one representative of a fire chiefs association. Appointments must be made by August 1, 2025 ([PA 25-55](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2025).

Social Work and Law Enforcement Educational Projects

A new law requires DESPP, in consultation with POST, to establish a (1) social work and law enforcement project at Southern Connecticut State University, and (2) crime scene processing, forensic evidence, and criminal investigations police training center at Central Connecticut State University ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 137 & 138, effective July 1, 2025).

Miscellaneous Acts Affecting Multiple or Other First Responders

Certain Foreign Drones Prohibited

A new law generally prohibits, beginning on varying dates between October 1, 2025, and October 1, 2028, state agencies, municipalities, and those who contract with either from purchasing or using certain unmanned aircraft (i.e. drones) assembled or manufactured by a covered foreign entity (e.g., China or Russia). The law allows the DESPP commissioner and municipal chief law enforcement officers or fire department chiefs to waive these prohibitions.

The same act also prohibits, with certain exceptions, (1) operating drones in close proximity to critical infrastructure facilities or to surveil these facilities or (2) equipping an aircraft or drone with a deadly weapon or certain other dangerous devices. The act exempts from these requirements, among others, firefighters, police officers, and emergency management directors ([PA 25-1](#), §§ 5-8, various effective dates).

Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS)

A new law creates a new benefit tier in CMERS named MERS 2.0 and generally requires participating municipalities to enroll newly eligible employees in the new tier on or after July 1, 2027. Among other things, MERS 2.0 sets the percentage of an employee's regular pay he or she must contribute, the vesting period, retirement benefit calculations, and applicable CMERS provisions, with different requirements for public safety employees, who are uniformed members of a municipality's paid fire department or regular members of its paid police department ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 183-185, effective upon passage).

Defining “Essential Workers” and “First Responders”

A new law establishes a working group to develop uniform statutory definitions of the terms “first responder” and “essential worker.” The working group includes at least five people appointed by the Public Safety Committee chairpersons and ranking members, as well as various commissioners and the Office of Policy and Management secretary, or their designees. The working group must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety Committee by January 1, 2026 ([SA 25-24](#), effective upon passage).

Emergency Preparedness Program for Solar Photovoltaic Facilities

A new law requires the DESPP commissioner to establish a solar photovoltaic facility emergency preparedness program, which must include, among other things, (1) the development of a solar

photovoltaic facility emergency response plan, and (2) annual training of state and local emergency response personnel concerning emergency response. It also establishes an account to fund the program and specifies that it must contain any federal reimbursements or grants related to the preparedness program ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 273 & 274, effective October 1, 2025).

Fallen Hero Fund

A new law expands the availability of the “Fallen Officer Fund” to include additional first responders, including emergency medical technicians, firefighters, and paramedics. The law also correspondingly renames it the “Fallen Hero Fund,” which gives a lump sum death benefit totaling \$100,000 to a surviving family member or beneficiary of a first responder killed in the line of duty or who sustained injuries that were the direct or proximate cause of the first responder’s death, within available appropriations. Additionally, the law also allows certain survivors to apply for or keep the health care coverage for one year after the death and to then renew the coverage annually for up to five years ([PA 25-61](#), effective July 1, 2025).

“Move Over” Law Fines

The state’s “move over” law generally requires drivers, when approaching slow or stationary emergency vehicles, to (1) slow down to a speed reasonably below the speed limit and (2) if traveling in the lane adjacent to the shoulder or lane with the emergency vehicle, move over one lane unless it would be unsafe to do so. Violators are subject to higher fines if the violation results in an emergency vehicle driver’s or occupant’s injury or death. This session, the legislature increased the maximum enhanced penalties from \$2,500 to \$5,000 (in the case of injury) and from \$10,000 to \$20,000 (in the case of death) ([PA 25-159](#), § 64, effective October 1, 2025).

Paid Sick Leave Increments

The state’s paid sick leave law generally requires employers to give their employees up to 40 hours of paid sick leave per year, and employees must accrue one hour of leave for every 30 hours worked. The Department of Labor’s implementation of the law generally requires employers to allow eligible employees to use the leave in one-hour increments, but the legislature enacted a new law that allows municipal employers to require that their police officers, firefighters, and public works department employees use their accrued paid sick leave at the increments set in their applicable collective bargaining agreement, as long as the municipality (1) gives their employees paid sick leave, or any other paid leave, that accrues at a rate greater than one hour of leave for every 30 hours worked and (2) does not prohibit the employees from using up to 40 hours of accrued leave per year ([PA 25-174](#), § 233, effective upon passage).

State Alzheimer's Plan

A new law establishes an Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Task Force and requires it to develop a State Alzheimer's Plan. Among other things, the plan must include dementia-specific training requirements for public and private employees who interact with people living with Alzheimer's or dementia, including law enforcement personnel and other first responders ([PA 25-16](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2025).

Yellow Envelopes for People With Cognitive Impairments or Physical Disabilities

The legislature enacted a new law requiring DMV in consultation with the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO) and other specified entities, to develop yellow envelopes and related public awareness materials for people with cognitive impairments or physical disabilities. The yellow envelopes must (1) be designed to hold a driver's license, registration, insurance card, and other materials about a person's cognitive impairment or physical disability and (2) have information on how first responders can accommodate and effectively interact with these individuals.

The act requires DMV to provide the yellow envelopes and public awareness materials to its department offices and certain first responders. It correspondingly requires these people and entities to give the envelopes and materials, by request and at no cost, to people with a cognitive impairment or physical disability. It also requires (1) CWCSEO to coordinate and identify related education and training programs for first responders and (2) several existing trainings for various first responders to begin providing information about the envelopes ([PA 25-159](#), §§ 29-34, various effective dates).

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