

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1626  
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Local Government  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Firefighters are exposed to various health hazards in the line of duty, including toxic substances and contagions, which can increase their risk of contracting pathogenic diseases and cancer. Moreover, firefighters' intense physical activity during life-and-death situations can further exacerbate existing cardiac conditions. Due to these risks, fire departments across Texas are taking proactive measures to address this issue.

To ensure the well-being of firefighters, many fire departments in Texas are now offering annual screenings for infectious diseases, cardiovascular issues, and cancers. Early detection of these medical issues is crucial and can be expensive to treat when in advanced stages. By detecting these conditions earlier, firefighters can receive the necessary treatment and care to prevent disability or mortality.

In line with this, S.B. 1626 has been proposed to provide professional firefighters with access to an annual medical evaluation. This evaluation will include a comprehensive cardiac and cancer screening, a chest x-ray every five years, and a test to detect specific infectious diseases. The Texas Commission on Fire Protection will draft rules relating to these evaluations based on standards set by the National Fire Protection Association.

This legislation is crucial as it recognizes firefighters' unique health risks in the line of duty. It aims to ensure that firefighters receive the necessary care and support to continue performing their jobs effectively while minimizing the risk of long-term health consequences. This proposed bill also serves as a reminder of the invaluable services firefighters provide to the community and the need to protect their well-being.

As proposed, S.B. 1626 amends current law relating to an annual occupational medical examination for fire fighters.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection in SECTION 1 (Section 180.010, Local Government Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 180, Local Government Code, by adding Section 180.010, as follows:

Sec. 180.010. ANNUAL OCCUPATIONAL MEDICAL EXAMINATION FOR FIRE FIGHTERS. (a) Defines "fire department" and "fire fighter."

(b) Requires a fire department to offer an annual occupational medical evaluation to each fire fighter employed by the fire department at no cost to the fire fighter.

(c) Requires that the annual occupational medical evaluation be confidential and include:

(1) fluid tests;

- (2) a pulmonary function test;
- (3) an electrocardiogram;
- (4) an infectious disease screening;
- (5) a cancer screening; and
- (6) a chest x-ray, subject to Subsection (d).

(d) Provides that a fire fighter is eligible to receive a chest x-ray during an annual occupational medical examination under this section once every five years.

(e) Requires the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) to adopt rules establishing minimum standards for annual occupational medical examinations under this section by using standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association.

SECTION 2. Requires TCFP, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, but not later than June 1, 2024, to adopt rules as required by Section 180.010(e), Local Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Provides that a fire department is not required to comply with Section 180.010, Local Government Code, as added by this Act, until July 1, 2024.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.