
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 751

Session of
1987

INTRODUCED BY E. Z. TAYLOR, DISTLER, McHALE, BOWSER, HALUSKA,
BUNT, ANGSTADT, JOHNSON, PHILLIPS, KASUNIC, BOOK, FISCHER,
HERMAN, FOX, SEMMEL AND R. C. WRIGHT, MARCH 10, 1987

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION, MARCH 10, 1987

AN ACT

1 Providing for the administration of search and rescue
2 operations; conferring powers and duties on the Department of
3 Environmental Resources; creating the Search and Rescue
4 Advisory Board and conferring powers and duties upon it; and
5 providing for funding.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Search and
10 Rescue Act.

11 Section 2. Legislative purpose.

12 The purpose of this act shall be to develop and administer an
13 efficient and competent response to emergencies involving the
14 search, location, rescue and treatment of lost or injured
15 persons in the outdoors while coordinating the efforts of
16 Federal, State and local government agencies and volunteer
17 organizations.

18 Section 3. Definitions.

19 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall

1 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Air Force Rescue Coordination Center" or "AFRCC." The
4 Federal agency designated for the coordination of the Federal
5 SAR response to the inland region.

6 "Board." The Search and Rescue Advisory Board.

7 "Civil Air Patrol" or "CAP." The Civil Air Patrol Division
8 of the Air Force Auxiliary responsible for coordinating air
9 searches.

10 "Department." The Department of Environmental Resources of
11 the Commonwealth, which shall be the State search and rescue
12 agency.

13 "Mission." Each separate incident in which resources,
14 personnel and facilities are applied toward the location,
15 recovery and rendering of aid to persons lost or in distress.

16 "Search and rescue" or "SAR." The procurement, coordination
17 and utilization of resources and personnel necessary for the
18 location of, relieving the distress of, preserving the lives of
19 and the recovery of the victims of a disaster or hazardous
20 incident caused by nature, or of lost, stranded or injured
21 persons.

22 "Search and rescue coordinator." The officer within the
23 Department of Environmental Resources who is responsible for
24 coordinating search and rescue resources and administering the
25 Commonwealth's plan.

26 "Secretary." The Secretary of Environmental Resources of the
27 Commonwealth.

28 Section 4. Powers and duties of department.

29 The department shall:

30 (1) Compile, maintain and have access to an inventory of

1 Federal, intrastate and interstate resources available for
2 search and rescue.

3 (2) Develop guidelines and programs for the training of,
4 and standards for the certification of, SAR personnel.

5 (3) Act as the central clearinghouse for the procurement
6 and mobilization of SAR resources for search missions.

7 (4) Develop and review standards and requirements for
8 the insurance coverage of SAR personnel.

9 (5) Maintain a central repository for mission records
10 and statistics relating to search and rescue in Pennsylvania.

11 Section 5. Search and Rescue Advisory Board.

12 The Search and Rescue Advisory Board is hereby created.

13 Members of the board shall be appointed by the Governor for
14 three-year terms. Terms shall be staggered so that a maximum of
15 four board members' terms expire each calendar year. One member
16 of the board shall be appointed from each of the following:

17 (1) Pennsylvania State Police.

18 (2) Pennsylvania State Sheriffs Association.

19 (3) Civil Air Patrol.

20 (4) Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

21 (5) Pennsylvania State Fireman's Association.

22 (6) Department of Environmental Resources; Bureau of
23 State Parks.

24 (7) Department of Environmental Resources; Bureau of
25 Forestry.

26 (8) Department of Military Affairs.

27 (9) Pennsylvania Game Commission.

28 (10) General public, who shall have experience in and
29 knowledge of search and rescue activities and shall serve as
30 chairperson of the board.

1 Section 6. Powers and duties of the board.

2 The powers and duties of the board shall be to:

3 (1) Evaluate the operation of the search and rescue
4 agency.

5 (2) Evaluate the State search and rescue plan.

6 (3) Evaluate problems encountered in specific missions.

7 (4) Formulate findings of fact and make specific
8 recommendations to the secretary.

9 (5) Meet quarterly, or more frequently, at the call of
10 the chairperson.

11 Section 7. Board vacancies and attendance.

12 Vacancies shall be filled by an appointment of the Governor
13 for the unexpired term. Members missing two consecutive meetings
14 without due cause shall be automatically removed from the board.

15 Section 8. Funding.

16 The board shall have the power to reimburse witnesses for
17 their expenses. The board shall be responsible to recommend a
18 funding level to the secretary and assist in the evaluation of
19 an annual budget. The funding shall be a line item figure under
20 the budget of the Department of Environmental Resources. The
21 department shall have the power to reimburse volunteer search
22 units for travel expenses under the same criteria currently
23 authorized for State employees. The department shall have the
24 power to incur costs and pay expenses of its personnel and
25 logistic costs for any mission under preestablished policy.

26 Section 9. Effective date.

27 This act shall take effect in 60 days.