

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 94

PRINTER NO. 940

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

State Workers' Insurance Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

January 24, 2019

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Martin

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 94 amends the Workers' Compensation Act to expand the definition of employee to include volunteers performing duties at a fire company, ambulance corps or rescue squad member.

The definition clarifies that a member of a volunteer fire department or ambulance corps includes:

- An active volunteer responding to emergency calls;
- A member of a fire police unit;
- An officer or director of the department or corps;
- A member who provides support including maintaining the station, organizing fundraisers, providing IT support, assisting with recruitment or other administrative tasks.

The definition does not include social members of a company or corps.

The legislation also requires that when volunteer members are injured while performing duties on state game land, they are deemed to be an employee of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Senate Bill 94 is expected to have no fiscal impact on the State Workers' Insurance Fund (SWIF). It is the Department of Labor and Industry's opinion that the bill will have an impact on municipalities that insure their volunteer fire and ambulance with SWIF. SWIF anticipates that broadening the definition will increase claims for workers' compensation benefits, increase the amount of "loss benefits" that will be paid, and require higher premiums.

There are 1,550 volunteer fire and 92 ambulance organizations that insure with SWIF who would be affected by this legislation. Currently volunteer ambulance organizations insuring with SWIF pay \$1,403 annually in premiums, while volunteer fire companies pay a minimum of \$4,408, an amount which increases as the serviced population increases. Based on the annual premium data, each three percent increase in premiums will add \$42 and \$132 of cost to volunteer ambulance and fire organizations, respectively.