

Department of Planning and Budget 2005 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number HB 2700

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Sickles

3. Committee: Commerce and Labor

4. Title: Workers' compensation; enhanced coverage for first responders during state of emergency.

5. Summary/Purpose: This bill increases workers' compensation coverage for first responders operating during a state of emergency. This includes allowing compensation for an injury incurred while traveling from home or another location outside a work location to that work location is deemed to be within the scope of employment and eliminating the seven-day waiting period before receipt of benefits. In addition, the legislation would allow employees to select their own physician by eliminating the requirement that an employee select a physician from a panel of three offered by the employer. The removal of the panel eliminates the only control the employer has in place to assure appropriate medical treatment is provided.

6. Fiscal Impact: Indeterminate.

See Item Eight

7. Budget amendment necessary: No

8. Fiscal implications: The additions to the Code proposed by this bill could have a significant fiscal impact. According to the Workers' Compensation Commission, the Commission per the Code consistently denies claims for injuries sustained while traveling to a work location during states of emergency. Expanding the scope of this section could have a fiscal impact during states of emergency that cannot be determined.

The legislation also waives the seven-day waiting period to receive workers' compensation for the first responders. Effective July 1, 2004, the maximum weekly benefit rate is \$706 and the minimum is \$176.50. Eliminating the seven-day waiting period for commencement of indemnity benefits will increase costs to the all workers' compensation claims involving first responders travel during Governor's declared state of emergency by somewhere between \$176.50 to \$706 on each covered claim. In general this legislation will affect costs for the state program, as well as cities and counties programs. Since the number of claims are unknown, the fiscal impact of this legislation on the State Employee's Workers' Compensation Program cannot be determined.

9. Specific agency or political subdivisions affected: All local governments; all state agencies with first responders

10. Technical amendment necessary: No

11. Other comments: None

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