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SB09-109

The Bill

- This bill continues indefinitely the Fire Service Training and Certification Program and its Advisory Board in the Division of Fire Safety within the Department of Public Safety.
- There is no fiscal impact.
- Without the bill, the Fire Service Training and Certification Program sunsets July 1, 2009.

Background

Annually there are approximately 15,000 fires in Colorado. The average annual costs of fires in Colorado include: 20 civilian fire deaths, 300 hospitalizations due to home fires, 1,425 hospitalizations due to other fire-related burns or smoke inhalation, \$140 million in direct property loss, one firefighter fatality (4 in 2008), and 235 injured firefighters.

The Colorado Firefighter Voluntary Certification Program was originally created on June 21, 1979, with the enactment of House Bill 79-1243. The program provides a voluntary certification program for all-hazards response: firefighters, EMS first responders and for hazardous materials responders. For firefighters and EMS first responder certification, procedures are established in conjunction with a nine member advisory board, in accordance with recognized national standards

The program allows for the evaluation of the proficiency of firefighters and first responders, irrespective of their department affiliation and regardless of whether they are paid or volunteer.

The program is voluntary in the sense that there is no statutory requirement that firefighters become certified. Nevertheless, a number of fire departments in the state require state certification as a condition of employment and/or promotion.

Participation

In FY08:

- 215 Fire departments participated in the certification program
- Participating departments protected the vast majority of Colorado's population
- The program issued 3,689 firefighting certificates
- The program issued 3,051 National Incident Management System (NIMS) certificates