

New laws affect EMS and trauma systems

The 82nd session of the Texas Legislature ended on May 31 after 140 days in the Capitol in Austin. How did EMS and trauma systems fare this session? Below is a synopsis of bills relevant to EMS and trauma that were passed and sent to the governor for signature. For more detailed information on each bill, go to www.capitol.state.tx.us and enter the bill number. Then click on “Text” and “Enrolled Version.” These laws take effect on September 1, 2011, unless vetoed by the governor by June 19.

HB 554, Howard, Rodriguez. Chapter 143 of Local Government Code was amended to allow civil service status for EMS personnel in municipalities with a population of 460,000 or more. It requires a petition and local election to adopt and a similar process to repeal that action. Civil service status may affect qualified employees through certain provisions relating to eligibility lists, examinations, promotions, appointments, educational incentive pay, longevity or seniority pay, assignment pay, salary, vacation leave and disciplinary appeals. Effective September 1, 2011.

HB 577, McClendon. This bill adds clarification to Health and Safety Code §166.102 by specifying that EMS personnel have no duty to review, examine, interpret or honor written directives other than an Out-of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate order. It also adds new §773.016 to Chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code, detailing the responsibilities of the patient’s physician, if present, and if not present, the responsibilities of the medical director or online physician as it relates to directing the termination of resuscitation by EMS personnel. Effective September 1, 2011.

HB 1476, Riddle. Regarding the mandate for revocation of an EMS personnel certification, §773.0614 was amended to add the *previous* placement on deferred adjudication or deferred disposition for certain egregious offenses listed in Article 42.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The word “is” was changed to “has been” to incorporate this change. Effective September 1, 2011.

HB 901, Hegar. This legislation adds a restriction prohibiting a grant recipient from disposing of an ambulance before the fourth anniversary of the grant date, unless the department has been given prior approval. The amendment adds subsection (a-1) to the Health and Safety Code, §773.122 and §780.004. Effective September 1, 2011.

– Phil Lockwood

FROM THIS SIDE



Kelly Harrell
Editor

I’m feeling a little tech-shy right now. When we decreased the number of pages in the magazine to help with the budget, my column seemed a natural place to cut. I was convinced that no one besides my mother read it, anyway. (Thanks, mom!) Now I’m about to step off into a brave new world for this column. Starting in July, instead of looking to my column each issue, you can find news about Texas EMS Conference on Twitter. Yep, that’s right! I’m moving into the digital age – and it wasn’t without some hesitation. Heck, I had to look up exactly what Twitter is before I could even get started. But I am in now, and our new Twitter address is @TXEMSConference. You can also find Texas EMS Conference on Facebook.

Hope to see you in the digital world! And if you have questions about how to Twitter or Facebook, your best bet is to ask the nearest 16-year-old. I’ll still be trying to figure it out.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly".