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S.B. 343
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Passed by the Senate

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Manning

Paul Luzzi, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Makes individuals who are members of a designated urban search and rescue team employees of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency for purposes of workers' compensation coverage.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Workers' compensation coverage for urban search and rescue teams

For purposes of the Workers' Compensation Law,¹ the bill makes individuals who are members of a designated urban search and rescue team employees of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA), within the Department of Public Safety, if all of the following apply:

- The individual sustains an injury or contracts an occupational disease that is compensable under the Workers' Compensation Law;
- The individual sustains the injury or contracts the occupational disease while rendering assistance or aid in Ohio in the individual's capacity as a member of the designated urban search and rescue team;
- The individual rendered the assistance or aid at the request of and pursuant to a written agreement with the OEMA Executive Director.²

¹ R.C. Chapters 4121 and 4123.

² R.C. 5502.301, by reference to R.C. 4123.01, not in the bill.

The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency designates urban search and rescue teams to participate in the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System. The System organizes federal, state, and local emergency response teams to respond to disasters or in anticipation of a disaster to expedite support services. Local personnel execute disaster response, with state and federal assistance as needed.³

Under current law, political subdivision personnel rendering mutual assistance or aid outside their respective political subdivisions under a mutual assistance or aid agreement with another political subdivision or the Ohio Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact are employees or agents of their respective political subdivisions for workers' compensation coverage. Under the bill, they remain employees of their political subdivisions for all other employment-related benefits, but compensation or benefits paid under the Workers' Compensation Law are charged to OEMA's workers' compensation policy for designated urban search and rescue team members meeting the bill's requirements.⁴

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	01-22-26
Reported, S. Financial Institutions, Insurance, and Technology	05-13-26
Passed Senate (30-0)	05-20-26

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³ 42 United States Code 5165f and Federal Emergency Management Agency, [Urban Search & Rescue](#).

⁴ R.C. 5502.29 and 5502.41.