

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 25-157—sHB 6859**

*Public Safety and Security Committee*

*Appropriations Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FIREARM INFORMATION, SECURITY OFFICERS, FIREARM TRANSFERS AND SCHOOL SECURITY GRANTS AND THE FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL, THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND THE CODES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

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*Establishes a working group in DAS to study the Codes and Standards committee*

**SUMMARY:** This act makes changes related to (1) the identification and tracking of seized and recovered firearms, (2) security officer credentials and carrying of certain weapons, (3) the sale and transfer of firearms, (4) the school security infrastructure competitive grant program, (5) the Fire Marshal Training Council, and (6) the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. It also (1) establishes a Codes and Standards Committee-related working group and (2) makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025, unless otherwise specified below.

## § 1 — IDENTIFICATION AND TRACKING OF SEIZED AND RECOVERED FIREARMS

*Requires law enforcement agencies to opt in to share information on recovered firearms through the ATF's eTrace system*

Under existing law, when a law enforcement agency seizes or recovers a firearm, it must take all appropriate steps to identify and trace its history. The act additionally requires law enforcement agencies to opt in to information sharing through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives' (ATF's) National Tracing Center's (NTC's) electronic tracking system (eTrace).

Under the act, a law enforcement agency must:

1. submit all available information on the firearms' identity to eTrace;
2. opt to allow the information to be shared via eTrace; and
3. if the firearm was stolen or missing, enter the information into the Connecticut on-line law enforcement communications teleprocessing system (COLLECT, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's (DESPP) digital tool to access online state and federal law enforcement resources).

Under prior law, agencies had to transmit information to the NTC or enter it into the COLLECT database for transmission to the NTC.

For this provision, a "law enforcement agency" is (1) the state police, (2) any municipal police department, or (3) the police departments of the state colleges and universities.

## §§ 2-4 — SECURITY OFFICERS

*Requires security officers to obtain a DESPP permit before they may carry an electronic defense weapon and sets certain requirements for instructors; requires security officer license applicants to complete relevant training if they intend to carry batons or pepper spray; requires licensure renewal applicants to submit fingerprints with the application*

### *Electronic Defense Weapons (§ 2)*

The act requires security officers to obtain a DESPP special permit before they may carry an electronic defense weapon and authorizes the DESPP commissioner

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to grant suitable security officers (whether employed by security firms or other entities) these permits. The act generally extends existing law's permitting framework for security officers carrying pistols, revolvers, or other firearms to electronic defense weapons. This includes, among other things:

1. limiting the carrying to work on the employer's premises and traveling to and from work;
2. authorizing the DESPP commissioner to promulgate regulations and requirements for instructors of special permit courses, including who may offer the training and its required hours and contents;
3. requiring instructors, whether they be employees of an association, corporation, or partnership, to be approved by the DESPP commissioner and abide by certain requirements (e.g., submitting a form, paying \$40, and meeting certain moral and criminal record-related requirements);
4. establishing that the fees paid are not refundable;
5. setting a \$75 fine for violations; and
6. authorizing the commissioner to suspend or revoke special permits upon a finding of a violation and establishing the appeal process.

The act prohibits licensed security services, firms, or corporations from allowing an employee to carry an electronic defense weapon on duty or directly on route unless it obtains proof that the employee has an electronic defense weapon permit. Under the act, the permit fee is \$62. It expires at the same time as the person's handgun permit and may be renewed for five-year periods.

To issue the permit, the commissioner must be given proof that the employee has successfully completed a DESPP-approved training course in the safety and use of electronic defense weapons.

The act authorizes the DESPP commissioner to grant employees temporary permits to carry electronic defense weapons while their applications are pending. To be issued a temporary permit, the applicant must have submitted an application and completed the required training courses immediately after being hired.

The act also requires all security officers who carry electronic defense weapons to undergo annual refresher and safety training as directed by the DESPP commissioner.

Electronic defense weapons are weapons that can immobilize a person temporarily through electrical impulse or current and include stun guns and other conductive energy devices.

### *Carry of Less Lethal Weapons (§§ 3 & 4)*

The act generally requires that applicants for a security officer license who intend to carry a less lethal weapon while on duty receive and complete additional DESPP-approved training. The training must teach the security officer how to use less lethal weapons legally and in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. Under the act, a "less lethal weapon" is a baton or oleoresin capsicum spray (i.e. pepper spray).

The act exempts active military members, and veterans within two years after a discharge, from the training requirement if they received equivalent training while

serving and apply within two years of their discharge. The same exemption applies under existing law to other training requirements for security officer license applicants.

Existing law requires employees of an association, corporations, and partnerships to receive approval from the commissioner before conducting training and abide by certain requirements (e.g., submitting a form, paying \$40, and meeting certain moral and criminal record-related standards). The act extends these same requirements to less lethal weapon training.

Prior law exempted security guards, while performing their work, from the general prohibition on carrying batons or nightsticks (or various other weapons). The act instead exempts less lethal weapons and specifies that it applies to licensed security officers or those authorized to work while their application is pending (see below).

### *Fingerprints With Renewal Application (§ 3)*

By law, applicants for a security officer license or license renewal must submit to a state and national criminal history records check.

The act requires renewal applicants to submit two sets of their fingerprints with their application. It does so by removing the exemption under prior law. The act also limits the fee exemptions to fingerprinting searches or fingerprinting, rather than other background check associated fees as under prior law.

## §§ 5-7 — TRANSFER OF FIREARMS

*Updates documentation requirements for firearm transfers, consolidates the separate process required for the private transfer of long guns into the process for gun dealers, and makes related changes*

### *Process of Transferring Handguns (§ 5)*

Generally, prior law required handgun buyers (or other transferees) to (1) complete a DESPP firearms purchase application and (2) sign a receipt with specified information after the transaction is approved (e.g., following a background check).

The act instead combines these requirements into one form, referred to as a transfer document. It requires the seller or other transferor to complete the document on a DESPP-provided form. Generally similar to prior law for the receipt, the transfer document must be signed by the buyer and contain the following:

1. the name and address of the transferor and transferee;
2. the date of sale;
3. the handgun's caliber, make, model, and manufacturer's number;
4. a general description of the handgun;
5. the identification number of the transferor's and transferee's handgun permit, permit to sell firearms at retail, or handgun eligibility certificate; and
6. the DESPP authorization number for the transfer.

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Prior law required handgun sellers to keep the transaction records for certain minimum periods (application for 20 years and receipt for 5 years). Under the act, if either party to the transfer is a federally licensed firearm dealer (i.e. a federal firearms licensee (FFL)), the dealer must keep the transfer document for at least 20 years (or until they go out of business) and keep the document available during normal business hours for inspection.

As under prior law, the above requirements do not apply to transfers (1) between FFLs, importers, and manufacturers or (2) involving antique handguns.

### *Transfer of Firearms From Deceased Persons' Estates (§ 5)*

Existing law generally prohibits the DESPP commissioner from issuing more than three authorization numbers for the retail sale of handguns to any transferee within a 30-day period (or six authorization numbers if the transferee is a certified firearms instructor).

The act exempts from these limits any firearm transferred by bequest or intestate succession, or to or from a trust upon the death of a testator or settlor.

### *Process for Transferring Long Guns (§§ 6 & 7)*

Under prior law, the procedures for long gun sales and transfers differed for gun dealers versus other sellers. For sales by dealers, the required procedures are like those governing handgun transfers. Private sellers, before transferring a long gun, were required to (1) get a DESPP authorization number or (2) ask a gun dealer to contact DESPP on his or her behalf and obtain the authorization number.

The act eliminates the separate process for sales by non-dealers. Under the act, private long gun transfers must go through the same process as transfers by gun dealers.

Similar to the handgun provisions (see above), the act also combines separate requirements for long gun transaction applications and receipts into one transfer document, with generally similar information and recordkeeping requirements as under prior law for the separate forms. The act's procedures for documenting long gun transactions generally mirror those for handgun transactions.

As under existing law, the above requirements do not apply to long gun transfers (1) to certain parties (e.g., the police); (2) between FFLs, importers, and manufacturers; or (3) involving antique firearms.

As under existing law, an "antique firearm" is any firearm manufactured on or before 1898 and any replica of it, as long as the replica is not designed or redesigned for using rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition, except for rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition that is no longer manufactured in the U.S. and not readily available in the ordinary channels of commercial trade.

### §§ 8 & 9 — SCHOOL SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

*Requires that applicants for the school security infrastructure grant program conduct a school assessment using guidelines established by DESPP's Division of Emergency Management and*

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*Homeland Security; allows, rather than requires, DESPP to use the program's funds for certain communications systems and sets a cap on how much may be spent*

### *Assessment Guidelines (§ 8)*

By law, DESPP, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), and the State Department of Education (SDE) collectively administer the School Security Infrastructure Grant Program. The program reimburses approved applicants, within certain limits, for developing or improving security infrastructure, related training, or portable entrance security devices. Grants can be given to various entities, such as towns (for their public schools), private schools, and certain licensed childcare centers.

To be eligible, an applicant must, among other things, have a uniform assessment of the schools (or other applicable entities) under its jurisdiction, including security infrastructure. Under prior law, applicants had to use the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' Safe School Facilities Checklist. The act instead requires applicants to use guidelines established by DESPP's Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security that must be based on best practices for school security infrastructure.

### *Use of Bonds (§ 9)*

Existing law authorizes \$107 million in bond funding for the program. Prior law required SDE to use the bond proceeds for the program, except DESPP had to use at least \$5 million for school security projects that involve multimedia interoperable communications systems.

Under the act, DESPP may fund the projects from these proceeds, but is not required to do so. If DESPP decides to fund these projects, they may not use more than \$5 million.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the use of bonds provision is effective July 1, 2025.

## § 10 — FIRE MARSHAL TRAINING COUNCIL

*Reduces and adjusts the Fire Marshal Training Council's membership*

The act reduces the Fire Marshal Training Council's membership from 12 to nine and changes its composition, as shown in the table below. Principally, the act (1) eliminates the members appointed by the governor (two chief elected officials and two public members), Board of Regents for Higher Education (one member), and Board of Trustees for the Community-Technical Colleges (two members) and (2) adds four members appointed by specified entities.

The act allows out-of-state residents to serve on the council by eliminating the requirement that the council's members be state residents. It also allows members to be reimbursed for necessary expenses by eliminating the provision requiring that members serve without compensation. The table below shoes the council's composition under prior law and the act.

**Fire Marshal Training Council Composition Under Prior Law and the Act**

<b>Prior Law</b>	<b>Act</b>
State fire marshal or her designee	State fire marshal or her designee
A Codes and Standards Committee member elected by the committee	A Codes and Standards Committee member elected by the committee
Three members appointed by the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association who are local or deputy fire marshals or fire inspectors (one volunteer, one part-time paid, and one full-time)	Three members designated by the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association, who are local or deputy fire marshals or fire inspectors (one part-time paid and two full-time)
One member appointed by the Board of Regents for Higher Education	One member designated by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects
Two members appointed by the Board of Trustees for the Community-Technical Colleges	One member appointed by DAS' Office of Education and Data Management
Two chief elected officials appointed by the governor, one from a municipality with more than 70,000 people and the other from a municipality with less than 70,000 people	One member designated by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Two public members appointed by the governor	One member designated by the Connecticut Council of Small Towns

**§ 11 — COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

*Designates all of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control's members as voting members and specifically allows the State Fire Marshal to select a designee*

By law, beginning July 1, 2025, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control includes 21 members, including the state fire marshal. The act specifically allows the state fire marshal to select a designee to serve in her place. Under prior law, three members were nonvoting members: (1) the state fire marshal, (2) the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Forestry Division's forest protection supervisor or designee, and (3) DESPP's State Police Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit's commanding officer or designee. The act makes each a voting member.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

**§ 12 — CODES AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP**

*Establishes a working group in DAS to study the Codes and Standards committee*

The act requires the DAS commissioner to convene within the department a working group to study the Codes and Standards Committee. The study must include a review of the committee's membership and procedures for recommending needed changes.

The working group must consist of:

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1. four members appointed by the DAS commissioner,
2. one member appointed by the DESPP commissioner,
3. two members designated by the Connecticut Building Officials Association,  
and
4. two members designated by the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association.

Working group members may not be a current Codes and Standards Committee member.

The working group must submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by July 1, 2026. The working group ends on that date or when it submits the report, whichever is later.

By law, the Codes and Standards Committee works with the state building inspector and state fire marshal to enforce the state building and fire codes (CGS § 29-251).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage