

Chapter 50

(Senate Bill 247)

AN ACT concerning

Hazardous Material Response Team Employees – Death Benefits and Funeral Expenses – Local Government Agencies

FOR the purpose of providing that certain individuals employed as hazardous material response team employees for certain local government agencies are eligible for certain death benefits and funeral expenses under certain circumstances; providing that certain benefits may only be paid if local government agencies ~~may place~~ maintain in reserve ~~each fiscal year~~ a certain amount to pay a certain death benefit and funeral benefit ~~under certain circumstances~~; requiring a local government agency, if a certain determination is made to pay a certain benefit, to pay to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services funds required to pay the benefit; and generally relating to benefits for hazardous material response team employees employed by local government agencies.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Public Safety
Section 1–202(a), (b), and (d)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2003 Volume and 2009 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Public Safety
Section 1–202(a–1), (g), and (h)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2003 Volume and 2009 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Public Safety
Section 1–202(j)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2003 Volume and 2009 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Safety

1–202.

- (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (2) (i) “Child” means a natural or adopted, legitimate or illegitimate child or stepchild of the decedent.
- (ii) “Child” includes a child or stepchild born posthumously.
- (3) “Correctional officer” has the meaning stated in § 8–201(e)(1) of the Correctional Services Article.
- (4) “Hazardous material” means any substance regulated as a hazardous material under Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- (5) “Hazardous material response team employee” means an employee of the Department of the Environment **OR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY** who is on call 24 hours a day to provide emergency response to a discharge of oil or a release of hazardous material or other emergency response activity.
- (6) (i) “Law enforcement officer” has the meaning stated in § 3–101 of this article.
- (ii) “Law enforcement officer” includes:
1. an officer who serves in a probationary status; and
 2. an officer who serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority of a county or municipal corporation.
- (7) “Performance of duties” includes, in the case of a volunteer or career firefighter, public safety aviation employee, rescue squad member, or hazardous material response team employee:
- (i) actively participating in fighting a fire;
 - (ii) going to or from a fire;
 - (iii) performing other duties necessary to the operation or maintenance of the fire company;
 - (iv) actively participating in the ambulance, advanced life support, or rescue work of an advanced life support unit or a fire, ambulance, or rescue company, including going to or from an emergency or rescue;
 - (v) providing emergency or rescue assistance, whether acting alone or at the direction of or with a fire, ambulance, or rescue company or advanced life support unit;

(vi) actively participating in flight operations as a crew member in a rotary or fixed wing aircraft; and

(vii) providing emergency response to a discharge of oil or a release of hazardous material or other emergency response activity.

(8) "Public safety aviation employee" includes a pilot and aviation maintenance technician employed by the State.

(9) "Stepchild" means a child of the surviving spouse who was living with or dependent for support on the decedent at the time of the decedent's death.

(a-1) For purposes of this section, an individual served in the Afghanistan or Iraq conflict if the individual was a member of the uniform services of the United States who served in:

(1) Afghanistan or contiguous air space, as defined in federal regulations, on or after October 24, 2001, and before a terminal date to be prescribed by the United States Secretary of Defense; or

(2) Iraq or contiguous waters or air space, as defined in federal regulations, on or after March 19, 2003, and before a terminal date to be prescribed by the United States Secretary of Defense.

(b) (1) **[Subject] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (J) OF THIS SECTION AND SUBJECT** to subsection (c) of this section and paragraph (2) of this subsection, a death benefit of \$125,000 shall be paid to the surviving spouse, child, dependent parent, or estate of each of the following individuals who is killed or dies in the performance of duties on or after January 1, 2006:

(i) a law enforcement officer;

(ii) a correctional officer;

(iii) a volunteer or career firefighter or rescue squad member;

(iv) a sworn member of the office of State Fire Marshal;

(v) a public safety aviation employee;

(vi) a Maryland resident who was a member of the uniform services of the United States serving in the Afghanistan or Iraq conflict; or

(vii) a hazardous material response team employee.

(2) For fiscal year 2009, and for each following fiscal year, the death benefit provided in the prior fiscal year shall be adjusted by any change in the calendar year preceding the fiscal year in the Consumer Price Index [(all urban consumers – United States city average – all items)] **(ALL URBAN CONSUMERS – UNITED STATES CITY AVERAGE – ALL ITEMS)**, as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(3) A death benefit under this subsection is in addition to:

- (i) any workers' compensation benefits;
- (ii) the proceeds of any form of life insurance, regardless of who paid the premiums on the insurance; and
- (iii) the funeral benefit provided under subsection (d) of this section.

(d) (1) **[Reasonable] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (J) OF THIS SECTION, REASONABLE** funeral expenses, not exceeding \$10,000, shall be paid to the surviving spouse, child, parent, or estate of each of the following individuals who is killed or dies in the performance of duties:

- (i) a law enforcement officer;
- (ii) a correctional officer;
- (iii) a volunteer or career firefighter or rescue squad member;
- (iv) a public safety aviation employee;
- (v) a sworn member of the office of State Fire Marshal; or
- (vi) a hazardous material response team employee.

(2) The funeral benefit under this subsection shall be reduced by the amount of any related workers' compensation benefits paid under § 9–689 of the Labor and Employment Article.

(g) If the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services determines that the benefits under this section are to be paid, the benefits shall be paid:

- (1) to the decedent's surviving spouse;
- (2) if no individual is eligible under item (1) of this subsection, to each surviving child of the decedent in equal shares;

(3) (i) for a death benefit under subsection (b) of this section, if no individual is eligible under item (1) or (2) of this subsection, to the decedent's surviving parent, if the parent was a dependent as defined in § 152 of the Internal Revenue Code; or

(ii) for any other benefit under this section, if no individual is eligible under item (1) or (2) of this subsection, to the decedent's surviving parent; or

(4) if no individual is eligible under item (1), (2), or (3) of this subsection, to the decedent's estate.

(h) Payments under this section shall be made out of money that the Governor includes for that purpose in the State budget.

(J) (1) THIS SUBSECTION ONLY APPLIES TO A DEATH BENEFIT UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION OR A FUNERAL BENEFIT UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION PAYABLE ON BEHALF OF A HAZARDOUS ~~MATERIALS~~ MATERIAL RESPONSE TEAM EMPLOYEE EMPLOYED BY A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY.

(2) (I) A DEATH BENEFIT OR FUNERAL BENEFIT MAY ONLY BE PAID IF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY THAT EMPLOYS THE HAZARDOUS ~~MATERIALS~~ MATERIAL RESPONSE TEAM EMPLOYEE ~~PLACES~~ MAINTAINS IN RESERVE ~~EACH FISCAL YEAR~~ THE AMOUNT NEEDED TO PAY FOR ONE DEATH BENEFIT AND ONE FUNERAL EXPENSE FOR A HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE TEAM EMPLOYEE.

(II) IF THE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DETERMINES THAT A DEATH BENEFIT OR FUNERAL BENEFIT IS TO BE PAID, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY THAT EMPLOYED THE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE TEAM EMPLOYEE SHALL PAY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES THE FUNDS REQUIRED TO PAY THE BENEFIT.

(3) (I) A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY IS NOT REQUIRED TO PLACE FUNDS IN RESERVE UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(I) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(II) IF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY DOES NOT PLACE FUNDS IN RESERVE UNDER PARAGRAPH (2)(I) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A DEATH BENEFIT OR FUNERAL BENEFIT AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THIS ~~SECTION~~ SUBSECTION MAY NOT BE PAID.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2010.

Approved by the Governor, April 13, 2010.