

West Hanover Twp. Fire Co. #1

7624 Jonestown Road, Harrisburg PA 17112

"Whatever It Takes"

Proudly Serving Dauphin County Since 1946

30 September, 2014

Pennsylvania House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee
House Bill 2427

Chief Timothy L. Shatto: Length of Service 32 Years

The West Hanover Twp. Fire Co. No. 1 (WHTFC) is the all-volunteer, primary emergency response agency for West Hanover Township, Dauphin County Pennsylvania. Our primary response area encompasses approximately 18 square miles, is home to approximately 10,000 residents and is suburban to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The WHTFC responds to approximately 425 calls for services annually and provides services utilizing three (3) fire stations, four (4) engine companies, one (1) heavy rescue company, a wildland – urban interface fire suppression team and a medical emergency response unit. These services are provided by fifty-two (52) volunteer emergency service workers and ten (10) volunteer administrative members.

The WHTFC provides services to motor vehicle accidents on the heavily traveled Central Pennsylvania corridor including Interstate 81, State Routes 22, 39, 743 and all local highways connecting these major routes. A large majority of our emergency responses are for vehicle rescue, extrication and hazardous materials / spills containment and mitigation type calls. During the provision of these services we incur expenses that cause a financial hardship.

The WHTFC has been billing for services at these incidents for the past twenty (20) years in various forms utilizing various methods. Our local government enacted legislation through local ordinance authorizing such billing. As the cost recovery process has grown continually difficult the WHTFC has utilized the services of a cost recovery agent for the past several years. We collect approximately \$15,000.00 annually to help to offset the cost of services provided on certain emergency responses. We estimate that this amount would increase significantly with the adoption of statewide legislation authorizing such billing.

The WHTFC is in support of Statewide legislation that will provide for legal, fair, reasonable and responsible billing for services rendered wherein a responsible party is identified and as such support the general intent of House Bill 2427 with the request for the following concerns to be addressed.

1. The Bill uses the term "person". We want to implore the importance of a business entity or corporation be included in the definition of "person"
2. The \$1000.00 billing limit seems arbitrary and we have had cases where materials and supplies used and an incident have exceeded this amount.
3. The Bill should allow the billing of an insurance carrier even in the case where the "person" has paid a tax or donated to an annual fund drive for the host fire company. If the insurance carrier refuses to pay then legal remedy through the Bill shall be pursued against the insurance carrier, not the "person".

4. A procedure for the timely release of necessary information from the police report, accident report or other documents from the police agency having jurisdiction to the fire company shall be required by the Bill. This needs to include both the Pennsylvania State Police and all other local jurisdictions.
5. The WHTFC respects the financial hardships facing many of our residents and as such supports the relief provided to "persons" who have paid a service tax or made a donation to the host fire company.



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