

The House Committee on Public Safety offered the following substitute to SB 358:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To regulate fire departments, extinguishers, and suppression systems; to amend Title 25 of
2 the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to fire protection and safety, so as to change
3 certain provisions relating to general requirements for local fire departments, equipment and
4 clothing, personnel, and insurance; to change the powers and authority of the Commissioner
5 with regard to licensees or permittees who violate provisions of law governing fire
6 extinguishers and suppression systems and related rules and regulations of the Commissioner
7 and order and notices of the Commissioner; to change the grounds for suspension,
8 revocation, and refusal to issue, renew, or continue licenses and permits; to authorize the
9 Commissioner to impose fines for violations of certain provisions; to authorize the
10 Commissioner to place licensees or permittees on probation under such reasonable terms and
11 conditions as the Commissioner may determine and to revoke such probation for a violation
12 of such terms and conditions; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and
13 for other purposes.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

15 Title 25 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to fire protection and safety, is
16 amended by striking subparagraph (a)(1)(A) of Code Section 25-3-23, relating to general
17 requirements for local fire departments, equipment and clothing, personnel, and insurance,
18 and inserting in lieu thereof the following:
19

20 "(A) Be established in accordance with the provisions of National Fire Protection
21 Association Standard 1201 to provide fire and other emergency and nonemergency
22 services in accordance with standards specified solely by the Georgia Firefighter
23 Standards and Training Council and the applicable local government;"

SECTION 2.

Said title is further amended by striking Code Section 25-12-17, relating to violation of provisions governing fire extinguishers and suppression systems by licensee or permittee, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new Code Section 25-12-17 to read as follows:

"25-12-17.

(a) The violation of any provision of this chapter or any rule or regulation adopted and promulgated pursuant to this chapter or the failure or refusal to comply with any notice or order to correct a violation or any cease and desist order by any person who possesses a license or permit issued pursuant to this chapter or who is required to have a license or permit issued pursuant to this chapter is cause for denial, nonrenewal, revocation or suspension of such license or permit by the Commissioner after a determination that such person is guilty of such violations. An order of suspension shall state the period of time of such suspension, which period may not be in excess of ~~one year~~ two years from the date of such order. An order of revocation shall state the period of time of such revocation, which period may not be in excess of ~~two~~ five years from the date of such order. Such order shall effect suspension or revocation of ~~the license or permit~~ all licenses and permits then held by the person, and during such period of time no license or permit shall be issued to such person. During the suspension or revocation of any license or permit, the licensee or permittee whose license or permit has been suspended or revoked shall not engage in or attempt or profess to engage in any transaction or business for which a license or permit is required under this chapter or directly or indirectly own, control, or be employed in any manner by any firm, business, or corporation for which a license or permit under this chapter is required. If, during the period between the beginning of proceedings and the entry of an order of suspension or revocation by the Commissioner, a new license or permit has been issued to the person so charged, the order of suspension or revocation shall operate ~~effectively with respect to~~ to suspend or revoke, as the case may be, such new license or permit held by such person.

(b) The department shall not, so long as the revocation or suspension remains in effect, issue any new license or permit for the establishment of any new firm, business, or corporation of any person or applicant that has or will have the same or similar management, ownership, control, employees, permittees, or licensees, or will use the same or a similar name as the revoked or suspended firm, business, corporation, person, or applicant.

(c) The Commissioner may deny, nonrenew, suspend, or revoke the license or permit of:
 (1) Any person, firm, business, or corporation whose license has been suspended or revoked under this chapter;

1 (2) Any firm, business, or corporation if any officer, director, stockholder, owner, or
 2 person who has a direct or indirect interest in the firm, business, or corporation has had
 3 his or her license or permit suspended under this chapter; and

4 (3) Any person who is or has been an officer, director, stockholder, or owner of a firm,
 5 business, or corporation or who has or had a direct or indirect interest in a firm, business,
 6 or corporation whose license or permit has been suspended or revoked under this chapter.

7 (d) In addition to the grounds set forth in this Code section, it is cause for denial,
 8 nonrenewal, revocation, or suspension of a license or permit by the Commissioner if he or
 9 she determines that the licensee or permittee has:

10 (1) Rendered inoperative a portable fire extinguisher or preengineered or engineered fire
 11 suppression system covered by this chapter, except during such time as the extinguisher
 12 or preengineered or engineered system is being inspected, recharged, hydrottested,
 13 repaired, altered, added to, maintained, serviced, or tested or except pursuant to court
 14 order;

15 (2) Falsified any record required to be maintained by this chapter or rules or regulations
 16 adopted pursuant to this chapter or current fire codes enforced by the Commissioner;

17 (3) Improperly installed, recharged, hydrottested, repaired, serviced, modified, altered,
 18 inspected, or tested a portable fire extinguisher or preengineered or engineered fire
 19 suppression system;

20 (4) While holding a permit or license, allowed another person to use the permit or license
 21 or permit number or license number or used a license or permit or license number or
 22 permit number other than his or her own valid license or permit or license number or
 23 permit number;

24 (5) Failed to provide proof of or failed to maintain the minimum comprehensive liability
 25 insurance coverage as set forth in paragraph (3) of Code Section 25-12-11;

26 (6) Failed to obtain, retain, or maintain one or more of the qualifications for a license or
 27 permit required by this chapter;

28 (7) Used credentials, methods, means, or practices to impersonate a representative of the
 29 Commissioner or the state fire marshal or any local fire chief, fire marshal, or other fire
 30 authority having jurisdiction;

31 (8) Installed, recharged, hydrottested, repaired, serviced, modified, altered, inspected,
 32 maintained, added to, or tested a portable fire extinguisher or preengineered or engineered
 33 fire suppression system without a current, valid license or permit when such license or
 34 permit is required by this chapter;

35 (9) Made a material misstatement, misrepresentation, or committed a fraud in obtaining
 36 or attempting to obtain a license or permit; or

1 (10) Failed to notify the Commissioner, in writing, within 30 days after a change of
 2 residence, principal business address, or name.

3 (e) In addition, the Commissioner shall not issue a new license or permit if the
 4 Commissioner finds that the circumstance or circumstances for which the license or permit
 5 was previously suspended or revoked still exist or are likely to reoccur."

6 SECTION 3.

7 Said title is further amended by striking Code Section 25-12-18, relating to additional
 8 grounds for revocation of license or permit, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new
 9 Code Section 25-12-18 to read as follows:

10 "25-12-18.

11 ~~In addition to the grounds set forth in Code Section 25-12-17, it is cause for revocation or~~
 12 ~~suspension of a license or permit by the Commissioner if he determines that the licensee~~
 13 ~~or permittee has:~~

14 ~~(1) Rendered inoperative a fire suppression system or portable fire extinguisher covered~~
 15 ~~by this chapter, except during a reasonable time the system or extinguisher is being~~
 16 ~~inspected, recharged, repaired, serviced, or tested;~~

17 ~~(2) Falsified any record required to be maintained by this chapter or rules or regulations~~
 18 ~~adopted pursuant to this chapter;~~

19 ~~(3) Improperly installed, recharged, repaired, serviced, or tested a fire suppression system~~
 20 ~~or portable fire extinguisher;~~

21 ~~(4) While holding a permit or license, allowed another person to use the permit or license~~
 22 ~~or permit number or license number or used a license or permit or license number or~~
 23 ~~permit number other than his own valid license or permit or license number or permit~~
 24 ~~number;~~

25 ~~(5) Used credentials, methods, means, or practices to impersonate a representative of the~~
 26 ~~Commissioner or the state fire marshal or any local fire chief, fire marshal, or other fire~~
 27 ~~authority having jurisdiction; or~~

28 ~~(6) Failed to maintain the minimum comprehensive liability insurance coverage as set~~
 29 ~~forth in paragraph (3) of Code Section 25-12-11~~

30 (a) Whenever the Commissioner shall have reason to believe that any individual is or has
 31 been violating any provisions of this chapter, the Commissioner, his or her deputy, his or
 32 her assistant, or other designated persons may issue and deliver to the individual an order
 33 to cease and desist such violation.

34 (b) Violation of any provision of this chapter or failure to comply with a cease and desist
 35 order is cause for revocation of any or all certificates and licenses issued by the
 36 Commissioner for a period of not less than six months and not to exceed five years. If a

1 new certificate or license has been issued to the person so charged, the order of revocation
2 shall operate effectively with respect to such new certificates and licenses held by such
3 person. Decisions under this subsection may be appealed as provided by law.

4 (c) Any person who violates this chapter or any rule, regulation, or order issued by the
5 Commissioner under this chapter shall be subject to a civil penalty imposed by the
6 Commissioner of not more than \$1,000.00 for a first offense, not less than \$1,000.00 and
7 not more than \$2,000.00 for a second offense, and not less than \$2,000.00 or more than
8 \$5,000.00 for a third or subsequent offense for each day a violation persists after such
9 person is notified of the Commissioner's intent to impose such penalty and the right to a
10 hearing with respect to same.

11 (d) Any order shall contain or be accompanied by a notice of opportunity for hearing
12 which may provide that a hearing will be held if and only if a person subject to the order
13 requests a hearing within ten days of receipt of the order and notice. The order and notice
14 shall be served by delivery by the Commissioner or his or her agent or by registered or
15 certified mail or statutory overnight delivery, return receipt requested. Any person who
16 fails to comply with any order under this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor and may
17 be punished by law."

18 SECTION 4.

19 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.