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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that fire protection  
2 services play a critical role in protecting communities and  
3 ensuring public safety. The legislature further finds that  
4 firefighting staffing directly affects the delivery of those  
5 fire protection services. Reduced staffing levels equate to  
6 reduced service levels.

7           The legislature also finds that firefighting is one of the  
8 most dangerous occupations in North America. When staffing is  
9 reduced below the level necessary for aggressive firefighting  
10 tactics, the inevitable result is that firefighters must resort  
11 to defensive, rather than offensive, operations or risk their  
12 own safety. Understaffing forces firefighters to accept an  
13 increased level of risk to their own health and safety.

14           The legislature additionally finds that poorly staffed  
15 companies can result in an increased likelihood of property and  
16 life loss. An early, aggressive offensive attack can greatly  
17 reduce property damage and loss of life. However, one of the



1 most important elements in limiting fire spread is the quick and  
2 sufficient number of personnel. Thus, if the community  
3 continuously expects the delivery of aggressive attacks on  
4 fires, then fire departments must be adequately provided with  
5 the minimum resources necessary to meet the community  
6 expectation.

7 The legislature further finds that multiple studies have  
8 concluded that inadequate firefighting staffing directly causes:

- 9 (1) A higher risk for victims due to delays, which are  
10 indirectly related to likelihood of survival;
- 11 (2) A loss of critical function;
- 12 (3) An increased loss of overall effectiveness as a result  
13 of combined delays and loss of critical functions;
- 14 (4) Higher physiological stress on firefighters as they  
15 attempt to compensate for lower crew size; and
- 16 (5) Higher risk to firefighter safety, as aggressive  
17 procedures are conducted without necessary support.

18 The legislature finds that an Austin Fire Department study  
19 concluded that increasing the staffing from three to four  
20 firefighters provided substantial benefits, including a smaller  
21 number of multiple alarms; lower fire damage dollar loss and



1 higher loss/save ratio; fewer injuries and deaths for civilians  
2 and fire fighters; fewer workers' compensation claims for  
3 firefighters; retainment of tax base properties; and lower civil  
4 liability for the cities, counties, and fire departments.

5 The purpose of this Act is to implement a minimum company  
6 staffing level of no less than four on-duty firefighters in each  
7 company.

8 SECTION 2. Chapter 89, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
9 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to  
10 read as follows:

11 "§89- Firefighters; minimum company staffing. (a)  
12 Notwithstanding a collective bargaining agreement or executive  
13 policy in effect on or after July 1, 2025, beginning July 1,  
14 2028, an employer of firefighters shall maintain its fire  
15 service staffing at a level of no less than four on-duty  
16 firefighters in each company.

17 (b) For purposes of this section, "company" means a group  
18 of firefighters:

19 (1) Under the direct supervision of an officer;

20 (2) Trained and equipped to perform assigned tasks;



- 1       (3) Usually organized and identified as engine companies,
- 2       ladder companies, rescue companies, squad companies,
- 3       or multi-functional companies;
- 4       (4) Operating with one piece of fire apparatus, such as a
- 5       pumper, aerial fire apparatus, elevating platform,
- 6       quint, rescue, squad, or ambulance, except where
- 7       multiple apparatus are assigned that are dispatched
- 8       and arrive together, continuously operate together,
- 9       and are managed by a single company officer; and
- 10      (5) Arriving at the incident scene on fire apparatus."

11      SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

12      SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Firefighters; Minimum Company Staffing; Collective Bargaining Agreement

**Description:**

Notwithstanding a collective bargaining agreement or executive policy in effect on and after 7/1/2028, requires that an employer of firefighters maintains its fire staffing service at a level of not less than four on-duty firefighters in each company. Takes effect 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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