

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 768
Judiciary

(Delegate McComas, *et al.*)

Public Safety - Handgun Qualification License Training Requirement -
Exceptions

This bill establishes an exemption to the completion of the firearms safety training course required for the issuance of a handgun qualification license (HQL) for an applicant who is a retired law enforcement officer of another state or a subdivision of another state, in good standing, who (1) served as a law enforcement officer for at least 10 years or separated from service due to a service-connected injury and during the most recent calendar year has met firearms training qualification standards in another state that are equivalent to the standards required in Maryland or (2) is an active or retired correctional officer or deputy who has successfully completed initial correctional officer or deputy training in Carroll, Cecil, or Harford counties.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The change is procedural and does not directly affect governmental finances. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 427 of 2013 (the Firearm Safety Act of 2013) created a new licensing scheme for handguns under the licensing authority of the Department of State Police. An HQL authorizes a person to purchase, rent, or receive a handgun. A licensed firearms manufacturer, a specified active or retired law enforcement officer, a member or

retired member of the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard, and a person purchasing, renting, or receiving an antique, curio, or relic firearm (as defined under federal law) are exempt from the requirements of the licensing provisions.

The Secretary of State Police must apply for a State and national criminal history records check for each applicant. As part of the application for a criminal history records check, the Secretary must submit one complete set of fingerprints of the applicant.

The application fee for an HQL is to cover administrative costs and may be up to \$50. The term of the license is 10 years. License renewal fees are set at up to \$20. Generally, the Secretary of State Police must issue an HQL to a person who (1) is at least age 21; (2) is a State resident; (3) has completed a firearms safety training course; and (4) is not prohibited by federal or State law from purchasing or possessing a handgun.

The firearms safety training course must include (1) a minimum of four hours of instruction by a qualified handgun instructor; (2) classroom instruction on State firearm law, home firearm safety, and handgun mechanisms and operation; and (3) a firearms orientation that demonstrates that the person can safely operate and handle a firearm. An applicant is not required to complete an approved firearms safety training course if the applicant has previously completed a certified firearms training course, has completed a hunting safety course prescribed by the Department of Natural Resources, is currently a qualified handgun instructor, is an honorably discharged member of the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard, is a certain employee of an armored car company, or lawfully owns a regulated firearm. Renewal applicants are not required to complete the firearms safety training course or submit to a State and national criminal history records check.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Carroll and Harford counties, Department of State Police, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 10, 2016
kb/lgc

Analysis by: Shirleen M. E. Pilgrim

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510