

2026 SESSION

SENATE SUBSTITUTE

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SENATE BILL NO. 140

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations
on January 27, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator McPike)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 9.1-203.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Department of Fire Programs; mental health awareness training.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 9.1-203.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 9.1-203.1. Firefighter mental health awareness training.

A. Each fire department as defined in § 27-6.01 shall develop curricula for mental health awareness training for its personnel, which shall include training regarding the following:

1. Understanding signs and symptoms of cumulative stress, depression, anxiety, exposure to acute and chronic trauma, compulsive behaviors, and addiction;

2. Combating and overcoming stigmas;

3. Responding appropriately to aggressive behaviors such as domestic violence and harassment;

4. Accessing available mental health treatment and resources; and

5. Managing stress, self-care techniques, and resiliency.

B. Any fire department may develop the mental health awareness training curricula in conjunction with other fire departments or firefighter stakeholder groups or may use any training program, developed by any entity, that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection A.

C. Firefighters who receive mental health awareness training in accordance with this section shall receive appropriate continuing education credits from the Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Fire Services Board.

2. That the Department of Fire Programs shall develop a standardized, two-hour virtual asynchronous training program on mental health awareness tailored for firefighters that includes training on each subject matter set forth in subsection A of § 9.1-203.1 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, no later than December 1, 2026. To meet the requirements of § 9.1-203.1 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, each fire department in the Commonwealth may use such standardized training program or may use such standardized training program as guidance in developing its own mental health awareness training for its personnel.

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