

Fire Districts May Now Provide Ambulance Service

by Bradley M. Pinsky

On August 19, 2003, Governor Pataki signed into law Senate Bill S2236-A, which now permits several contracts related to the provision of ambulance services.

General Municipal Law Section 122-b was amended to permit a fire district to contract directly with an ambulance company. The Comptroller has long since opined that fire districts were prohibited from such contracts. However, the law previously permitted a town, village and city to contract with an ambulance company. This new amendment does not permit both a town, village or city and a fire district to engage in such a contract, but only permits the fire district to contract for ambulance services where the town, village or city has "not has not designated itself as the primary provider of or otherwise contracted for an emergency ambulance, a general ambulance service, or a combination of such"

The district may enter into a contract with an individual, municipality, or other organization having sufficient trained personnel and vehicles to provide such services. However, the district may not form or operate its own ambulance company separate from the emergency first aid and rescue squad of the fire company. Cities, villages and towns are permitted to do so.