



Local Government

Laws passed during the 2019 session related to local government addressed a number of topics. This summary provides an overview of legislation concerning safety, county operations, special districts, property rights, business owners, and emergency service providers.

Safety

Senate Bill 19-019 allows county governments to limit or forbid the use of fireworks between May 31 and July 5 if dry conditions create high fire danger. Counties must approve the ban or restriction, which applies to sales, use, and possession of fireworks. Later, if there is no longer high-fire danger, the county may drop the ban or restriction.

With the passage of *Senate Bill 19-158*, animal shelters and facilities that care for pets may not allow adoption of cats or dogs unless spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian. Facilities or shelters in areas where there may be a shortage of licensed veterinarians may be exempt from the requirement.

In the past, persons adopting a pet could provide a form agreeing to spay or neuter the pet later or paperwork after adoption from a licensed veterinarian stating that a pet had been spayed or neutered. A deposit that the shelter returned for proof of spaying or neutering was part of the paperwork.

County Business

The process for lodging a protest against how property is valued for tax purposes is changing with the passage of *House Bill 19-1175*. Counties can choose to use an alternate protest process. If counties use the alternate process, the county assessor must send notice to the property owner by August 15 when the property value does not change. As part of the protest, owners who object to the value of a property rented out for business purposes must give rent roll information about a property as of the date the property is valued. Rent roll information includes renter names, addresses of properties, lease start and end dates, amount of rent, and other items.

With the passage of *House Bill 19-1087*, counties, cities, school boards, and special districts may post their public meeting notices on their website, no less than 24 hours before a meeting. Having the notice posted on the website meets the requirement for providing notice. Counties, cities, school boards, and special districts are still allowed to post meeting notices in other ways, such as on a bulletin board in the office where they are located.

House Bill 19-1295 directs that as of July 1, 2020, the county treasurer in each county will serve as the public trustee for the county, except for the city and county of Denver. A public trustee is a county officer who handles business like foreclosures or property tax holdings due in the future for persons buying real estate.

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Currently, the county treasurer acts as the public trustee in smaller counties, and the Governor usually appoints a public trustee in larger Denver Metro area counties, except for the city and county of Denver.

House Bill 19-1274 allows county administrators to take care of some planning issues that a board of county commissioners used to handle. County administrators may approve final plats or plans for developing an area, subdivision contracts, and other paperwork included with a plat, such as studies or surveys. The board must make decisions about spending public money related to plats and subdivisions, as well as appeals related to a county administrator's planning decision.

Districts

Special districts. *House Bill 19-1052* creates a new type of special district to provide early childhood development services. Early childhood development services include care and education, health care, and mental health care for children from birth through eight years. Voters living in or owning property in the planned special district must approve creating the district and any taxes that the district plans to collect and use to provide services.

House Bill 19-1047 adds fire protection districts to the list of metropolitan districts that may collect sales taxes to provide services to district residents. Voters must approve the sales tax.

Entertainment districts. Currently, a city may create an entertainment district, which is an area with businesses, like a brewpub, winery, or tavern, that serve alcohol. *Senate Bill 19-141* expands the definition of an entertainment district and allows a city and county or unincorporated county to create the district. It also includes another type of business, optional premises, in the definition.

Property Rights

The timeline for notice to property owners that an area where their property is located is a slum or blighted changes with the passage of *House Bill 19-1084*. Property owners within the area will now receive a notice within 7 days instead of 30 days if an area is categorized as a slum or blighted. The determination of blighted or slum is usually made as part of a redevelopment or urban renewal plan.

House Bill 19-1078 requires the consent of all property owners on a request for listing properties on the National Register of Historic Places. This change only affects requests that include several properties.

Business Owners

Under *House Bill 19-1210*, effective January 1, 2020, counties and cities may set a minimum wage above the current state minimum wage. The wage applies to work within the boundaries of the city or county and to workers who work four hours or more each week. Employees who receive tips may receive a wage lower than the local minimum wage to account for the tips.

Emergency Services Providers

House Bill 19-1244 expands the Peace Officers Mental Health Support Grant Program. The program will add assistance for law enforcement officers involved in a shooting or fatal use of force. *Senate Bill 19-091* requires law enforcement agencies in Colorado to develop a plan to support law enforcement officers involved in a shooting or fatal use of force.

House Bill 19-1250 adds unlawful sexual conduct by a police officer as a criminal offense against a person. The offense may be a class 3 or 4 felony, depending on the contact.

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A police officer may be subject to intensive supervision probation for sex offenders if convicted of the crime.

With the passage of *Senate Bill 19-166* a law enforcement officer may lose certification if he or she makes an untruthful statement during an internal affairs investigation or when testifying. Law enforcement officers working in Colorado are usually required to obtain certification.

The passage of *House Bill 19-1279* means that persons or fire departments putting out flammable liquid fires during trainings or while testing may not use firefighting foam that contains PFAS chemicals. Violation of the law results in a penalty of up to \$5,000. Manufacturers and sellers of the foam have similar restrictions and penalties. Some locations are exempt from the requirements of the bill, including the Eisenhower-Edwin C. Johnson tunnel.