

Strengthening Public Safety and Rights by Addressing Vulnerabilities in Public Services: Introducing Dedicated Emergency Medical Hotlines and Mandatory Sign Language Interpretation

- In May, a total of 69 statutes, including the Emergency Medical Service Act, will take effect.

Starting in May, various new systems will be introduced to eliminate vulnerabilities in the social safety net across various areas, including operating dedicated emergency medical hotlines, strengthening transparency in the management of commercial building maintenance fees, and making sign language interpretation mandatory. The Ministry of Government Legislation (Minister Cho Won-cheol) announced that a total of 69 laws and regulations will take effect this May. Some of the key details and enforcement dates of the forthcoming statutes are as follows.

Facilitating the rapid transport of emergency patients (Emergency Medical Service Act, May 12)

In order to facilitate the rapid transport of emergency patients, dedicated emergency medical hotlines will be established and operated between emergency medical institutions and those who transport emergency patients, making it possible to promptly

confirm the capacity to accept emergency patients. The head of an emergency medical institution must report the establishment or modification of the dedicated emergency medical hotlines to the Minister of Health and Welfare. Furthermore, the head of a designated emergency medical institution must designate a responsible department or assign dedicated personnel for the always-on operation of the dedicated emergency medical hotlines. In addition, the head of an emergency medical institution must notify the National Emergency Medical Center of operational details regarding facilities, personnel, and equipment, as well as other matters necessary to confirm the capacity to accept patients. And the National Emergency Medical Center must disclose such information through an emergency medical information and communication network.

Enhancing the transparency in commercial building maintenance fees (Commercial Building Lease Protection Act, May 12)

A legal basis for commercial building maintenance fees will be established to reduce the burden on tenants caused by the opaque operation of such fees. Previously, the absence of regulations governing commercial building maintenance fees led to various issues, such as lessors raising these fees as a way to avoid restrictions on security deposit increases. In order to resolve these issues, maintenance fees will be included in standard lease agreements. When maintenance fees are paid according to a lease contract, tenants will be entitled to request the details of the fees imposed by the lessors.

Mandatory sign language interpretation for major government announcements (Korean Sign Language Act, May 12)

Information accessibility for Deaf persons (those who use sign language as their daily language) will be improved by providing sign language interpretation for major government announcements regarding disasters, infectious diseases, and national emergencies. Although there were already regulations requiring sign language interpretation when announcing important policies regarding disaster and safety management, sign language interpretation was not provided for significant government announcements, such as presidential addresses, thereby limiting the Deaf community's right to know and information accessibility. This change is intended to address that problem.

Interest exemption on student loans for youth preparing for self-reliance (Special Act on Income Contingent Loan, May 12)

In order to ensure stable independence of youth leaving child welfare facilities and preparing for self-reliance, their student loan interest will be exempted. In order to alleviate the burden of education expenses and the resulting difficulties in employment, the scope of eligible recipients will be expanded to include youth preparing for independence, in addition to the existing recipients such as basic livelihood security beneficiaries, the near-poor, and children from multi-child households.

Designating Labor Day and Constitution Day as public holidays (Act on Public Holidays, May 1 and May 11)

Labor Day (May 1) will be designated as a public holiday, making it a day off for all workers. In addition, Constitution Day (July 17), which commemorates the enactment and promulgation of the

Constitution that forms the foundation of democracy, will be designated as a public holiday.

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