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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Introduced By: Representatives Tanzi, Cotter, Speakman, Alzate, Carson, Cortvriend,  
Felix, Hull, Sanchez, and Potter

Date Introduced: February 28, 2025

Referred To: House Municipal Government & Housing

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 30-15 of the General Laws entitled "Emergency Management" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

3 **30-15-46. Warming center alert.**

4 (a) As used in this section:

5 (1) "At-risk individual" means an individual living outdoors, on the streets, in the parks, or  
6 in poorly insulated settings, and who is at risk for weather-related exposure and possible death.

7 (2) "Director" means the director of the emergency management agency ("agency").

8 (3) "Local governing body" means the city or town councils of the state's cities and towns.

9 (b) Plan for issuance of warming center alert. Cities and towns through their office of  
10 emergency management or other appropriate office, agency or department, shall establish a plan  
11 for issuing a warming center alert to municipalities, social services agencies, and nonprofit  
12 organizations that provide services to at-risk individuals and/or are located within the city or town's  
13 borders. Upon the designation of a warming center alert, the director shall coordinate with the cities  
14 and towns to provide information regarding available services. This coordination shall include, but  
15 not be limited to, postings on the Rhode Island emergency management agency's webpage, postings  
16 on local media, social media channels, and United Way's 211. The agency or appropriate office or  
17 department, shall coordinate with municipal emergency management coordinators in municipalities  
18 with a documented homeless population of at least ten (10), as noted in the most recent report on  
19 sheltered and unsheltered people provided by the annual Point In Time Count, in developing

1 consistent warming center alert plans throughout the cities or towns that provide for emergency  
2 warming centers during implementation of a warming center alert plan and be expected to  
3 implement the plan during the period of November 1, through April 15. This plan may be carried  
4 out by public safety, municipal employees, or designated volunteer organizations. Volunteer-  
5 organized warming center efforts shall receive cooperation and logistical support from the director,  
6 but shall operate autonomously; provided that, they operate in response to an alert and pursuant to  
7 the warming center alert plan.

8 (c) The director shall declare a warming center alert after evaluating weather forecasts and  
9 advisories produced by the National Weather Service that predict the following weather conditions  
10 in the city or town within twenty-four (24) to forty-eight (48) hours:

11 (1) Temperatures will reach thirty-six degrees Fahrenheit (36° F) or lower; or

12 (2) The National Weather Service wind chill temperature will be thirty-six degrees  
13 Fahrenheit (36° F) or less for a period of two (2) hours or more.

14 (d) The director, or designee, shall review weather forecasts from the National Weather  
15 Service on a regular and consistent basis to determine when a warming center alert is warranted.

16 (e) Warming center requirements-warning centers. During any warming center alert,  
17 municipalities, through their respective emergency management offices, shall:

18 (1) Arrange for shelters which shall be open seven (7) days a week and twenty-four (24)  
19 hours each day.

20 (2) Provide for notice and updates on the city or town webpage and available social media  
21 outlets, and United Way's 211, about the availability of resources including, but not limited to,  
22 shelters, warming centers and/or community-based centers that are available to provide support or  
23 shelter.

24 (3) When the shelter or warming center is open for twenty-four (24) hours or more, provide  
25 provisions for individuals' comfort including, but not limited to, blankets, cots, mats, meals and  
26 beverages.

27 (f) Any municipality receiving state or federal funding to operate a shelter or warming  
28 center shall be required to keep the shelter or warming center open and accessible every day for  
29 twenty-four (24) hours each day during a declared alert period.

30 (g) Any municipality not identified as "hot spot" for people experiencing homelessness  
31 according to the most recent report on sheltered and unsheltered people by the Point-In-Time  
32 Count, the city or town may collaborate with neighboring municipalities to combine resources and  
33 operate a regional warming center which would satisfy the requirements of this section.

34 **30-15-47. Cooling center alert.**

1           (a) As used in this section:

2           (1) "At-risk individual" means an individual living outdoors, on the streets, in the parks or  
3 in poorly insulated settings, and who is at risk for weather-related exposure and possible death.

4           (2) "Director" means the director of the emergency management agency ("agency").

5           (3) "Local governing body" means the city or town councils of the state's cities and towns.

6           (b) Plan for issuance of cooling center alert. The cities and towns through their office of  
7 emergency management or other appropriate office, agency, or department, shall establish a plan  
8 for issuing a cooling center alert to municipalities, social service agencies, and nonprofit  
9 organizations that provide services to at-risk individuals and/or are located within the city or town  
10 borders. Upon the designation of a cooling center alert the director shall coordinate with the cities  
11 and towns to provide information regarding available services. This coordination shall include, but  
12 not be limited to, postings on the Rhode Island emergency management agency's webpage, postings  
13 on local media, social media channels, and United Way's 211. The agency or appropriate office, or  
14 department, shall coordinate with municipal emergency management coordinators in municipalities  
15 with a documented homeless population of at least ten (10), as noted in the most recent report on  
16 sheltered and unsheltered people by the annual Point In Time Count, in developing consistent  
17 cooling center alert plans throughout the city or town that provide for emergency cooling centers  
18 during implementation of a cooling center alert plan. This plan may be carried out by designated  
19 volunteer organizations. Volunteer-organized cooling center efforts shall receive cooperation and  
20 logistical support from the director, but shall operate autonomously; provided that, they operate in  
21 response to an alert and pursuant to the cooling center alert plan.

22           (c) The director shall declare a cooling center alert after evaluating weather forecasts and  
23 advisories produced by the National Weather Service that predicts the following:

24           (1) The heat index is forecast to reach a daily high temperature of ninety-five degrees  
25 Fahrenheit (95° F), or where the humidity is taken into consideration and the "feels like"  
26 temperature is ninety-five degrees Fahrenheit (95° F), to ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit (99° F) for  
27 at least two (2) consecutive days; or

28           (2) The daily high temperature is forecast to reach a high of at least one hundred degrees  
29 Fahrenheit (100° F), or where the humidity is taken into consideration and the "feels like"  
30 temperature is one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100° F) for any length of time.

31           (d) Review of weather forecasts. The director, or designee, shall review weather forecasts  
32 from the National Weather Service on a regular and consistent basis to determine when a cooling  
33 center alert is warranted.

34           (e) Cooling center requirements-cooling centers. During any cooling center alert,

1 municipalities through their respective emergency management offices shall:

2 (1) Arrange for cooling centers which shall be open seven (7) days a week and twenty-four  
3 (24) hours each day.

4 (2) Provide for updates on the city or town webpage and available social media outlets, and  
5 United Way's 211, about the availability of resources including, but not limited to, shelters, cooling  
6 centers and/or community-based centers that are available to provide support or shelter.

7 (3) When the shelter or cooling center is open for twenty-four (24) hours or more, provide  
8 provisions for individuals' comfort including, but not limited to, blankets, cots, mats, meals and  
9 beverages.

10 (f) Any municipality receiving state or federal funding to operate a shelter or cooling  
11 center, shall be required to keep the shelter or cooling center open and accessible seven (7) days a  
12 week for twenty-four (24) hours each day during a declared alert period.

13 (g) Any municipality not identified as "hot spot" for people experiencing homelessness  
14 according to the most recent report on sheltered and unsheltered people by the Point-In-Time  
15 Count, may collaborate with neighboring municipalities to combine resources and operate a  
16 regional cooling center which would satisfy the requirements of this section.

17 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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1           This act would provide for warming center and cooling center alerts to trigger certain  
2 procedures municipalities shall follow during extreme heat or cold to help at-risk individuals with  
3 resources including, but not limited to, warming and cooling centers.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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