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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Introduced By: Representatives Tanzi, Shanley, McGaw, Potter, Alzate, Boylan,
Speakman, Cortvriend, Batista, and Cruz

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

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 section:

3 **30-15-48. Warming and cooling center emergency action plans.**

4 (a) By November 15, 2026, each city and town shall prepare a local emergency action plan
5 addressing coordination and communication procedures related to the operation of warming and
6 cooling centers during periods of extreme weather. The Rhode Island emergency management
7 agency (RIEMA), as established pursuant to the provisions of § 30-15-5, shall develop uniform
8 guidelines for the preparation of municipal emergency action plans under this section. The Rhode
9 Island executive office of housing established pursuant to the provisions of § 42-167-1 and the
10 Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns shall cooperate with RIEMA in developing the
11 guidelines.

12 (b) All municipal emergency action plans prepared pursuant to this section shall not be
13 considered final or complete until approved by RIEMA, with the cooperation of the executive office
14 of housing. Upon approval, the municipality shall formally adopt the plan.

15 (c) Each local plan shall:

16 (1) Identify communication protocols for informing the public during a declared warming
17 or cooling center alert including, but not limited to:

18 (i) Posting updates on the municipal website, social media channels, and United Way's 211
19 system;

1 (ii) Sharing the availability of resources including shelters, warming or cooling centers,
2 and community-based support locations.

3 (2) Outline coordination procedures with nonprofit partners, volunteer organizations, and
4 state agencies for operational support, including:

5 (i) Provision of basic comfort items to include blankets, cots, mats, meals, and beverages
6 when a shelter or center is open for twenty-four (24) hours or more, with the comfort items to be
7 supplied through RIEMA coordination and/or donations.

8 (3) Include contact points for municipal departments and agencies, and identify potential
9 locations for activation in extreme weather.

10 (d) Municipalities may collaborate with neighboring cities or towns, regional agencies,
11 nonprofit service providers, or community volunteers to develop and implement emergency action
12 plans under this section. Volunteer-led initiatives may be included in municipal plans, provided
13 they coordinate with RIEMA and operate under the approved framework.

14 (e) Emergency action plans shall be updated every three (3) years, or more frequently if
15 required by RIEMA, and filed with the following:

16 (1) The Rhode Island emergency management agency;

17 (2) The Rhode Island executive office of housing;

18 (3) The municipal emergency management director, or designee;

19 (4) The chief of the municipal police department.

20 (f) RIEMA shall establish a statewide notification system in coordination with the National
21 Weather Service to initiate warming or cooling center alerts. The system shall be designed to trigger
22 the communication and coordination protocols set forth in municipal emergency action plans.

23 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

1 This act would create a local emergency action plan addressing coordination and
2 communication procedures related to the operation of warming and cooling centers during periods
3 of extreme weather by November 15, 2026, in each city and town in the state. This act would also
4 establish a statewide notification system in coordination with the National Weather Service to
5 initiate warming or cooling center alerts through RIEMA.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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