

2025 -- H 5618

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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

RELATED TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- THE MANDATORY CARRYING OF  
EPINEPHRINE AUTOINJECTORS BY POLICE OFFICERS ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Cotter, Ajello, Noret, Potter, Carson, Fogarty, Donovan,  
Spears, and Bennett

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The general assembly by hereby finds and declares:

2 (1) That a necessary course of action is needed to improve the safety of those in the State  
3 of Rhode Island.

4 (2) While EMS employees, vehicles, and stations all carry epinephrine autoinjectors, police  
5 officers are more likely to respond to a scene first.

6 (3) Saving time can save lives, and mandating police officers to carry epinephrine  
7 autoinjectors will greatly reduce the complications and fatalities from anaphylaxis.

8 (4) Many allergens are unknown, whether by the patient or someone around them, and  
9 anaphylaxis can set in quickly depending on the severity of the allergy. The longer the patient's  
10 throat is closed, the longer their body goes without receiving oxygen, which can lead to organ  
11 failure, brain damage, and even death. That means that the time spent waiting for EMS to arrive  
12 can mean the difference between full recovery and death.

13 (5) Additionally, police officers are often patrolling the streets of Rhode Island, unlike  
14 EMS, and may notice or be drawn to an anaphylactic emergency in their district. Having no way to  
15 help the patient(s) other than calling for EMS is a dangerous risk to take. Having an epinephrine  
16 autoinjector available, as well as the skills necessary to administer it, is incredibly important when  
17 there is no time to be wasted.

18 (6) It can be argued that police officers do not need more medical training than federally

1 mandated, as that is what EMS is for, but in reality, the more people who have the knowledge,  
2 skills, and supplies to save lives, the better it is for everyone.

3 SECTION 2. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby  
4 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

5 CHAPTER 6.6

6 THE MANDATORY CARRYING OF EPINEPHRINE AUTOINJECTORS BY POLICE

7 OFFICERS ACT

8 **23-6.6-1. Short title.**

9 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as “The Mandatory Carrying of Epinephrine  
10 Autoinjectors by Police Officers Act.”

11 **23-6.6-2. Definitions.**

12 For purposes of this chapter, the following words shall have the following meanings:

13 (1) “Epinephrine” means a hormone/medication which is used to regulate visceral  
14 functions and reduce/treat patients who are in anaphylactic shock.

15 (2) “Epinephrine autoinjector” means the device used to administer a premeasured dose of  
16 epinephrine to treat one suffering from anaphylactic shock.

17 (3) “Anaphylactic shock” or “Anaphylaxis” means the severe allergic reaction which  
18 causes, but is not limited to, swelling of the tongue/throat, trouble breathing, weak pulse, and  
19 potentially death.

20 (4) “Peace officer” means any state or municipal police officer serving in Rhode Island as  
21 defined in § 12-7-21.

22 (5) “Police vehicles” means any motor vehicle used by police officers.

23 (6) “Police station” means any building which is used to accommodate police officers and  
24 other members of police staff.

25 (7) “Police department” means any state or municipal department with jurisdiction within  
26 Rhode Island.

27 (8) “EMS” means all emergency medical services in Rhode Island.

28 **23-6.6-3. Duties and obligations of police officers and police departments.**

29 (a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of the general laws that prohibit a peace officer  
30 from administering epinephrine, a controlled substance, or utilizing an epinephrine autoinjector:

31 (1) All peace officers shall henceforth be authorized to administer epinephrine  
32 autoinjectors.

33 (2) All peace officers shall carry epinephrine autoinjectors in their police vehicles.

34 (3) If a peace officer does not have a police vehicle, they shall carry an epinephrine

1 autoinjector on their person.

2 (4) All peace officers shall attend biannual mandatory training on the use of epinephrine  
3 autoinjectors.

4 (5) The cost of epinephrine autoinjectors and officer training shall be incorporated into the  
5 budget of each police department.

6 (b)(1) Police departments shall purchase all epinephrine autoinjectors necessary to carry  
7 out the purposes of this chapter.

8 (2) Police departments shall comply with the mandates of this chapter and beginning in the  
9 fiscal year 2026 each entity controlling or authorizing the budget of a police department shall fund  
10 the budget to effect compliance with the mandates of this chapter.

11 **23-6.6-4. Penalties for failure to comply.**

12 (a) Any peace officer that fails to carry epinephrine autoinjectors due to their own  
13 negligence, shall be fined fifty dollars (\$50.00) per hour the officer was without the officer's issued  
14 epinephrine autoinjector(s).

15 (b) Any police department that fails to distribute epinephrine autoinjectors as mandated by  
16 this chapter, shall be fined five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per month until the department comes  
17 into compliance.

18 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would require all peace officers to carry epinephrine autoinjectors in their vehicles  
2 or on their person and all police departments budgets are required to be allocated sufficient funds  
3 to purchase the epinephrine autoinjectors and for training of every peace officer. Individual peace  
4 officers and police departments would be subject to monetary fines for failure to comply.

5           This act would take effect on January 1, 2026.

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