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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 TOWNS AND CITIES -- PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES -- RELIEF OF  
INJURED AND DECEASED FIRE FIGHTERS AND POLICE OFFICERS

Introduced By: Representatives Casey, Noret, Craven, O'Brien, Dawson, Read, Hull,  
Corvese, Solomon, and Casimiro

Date Introduced: January 31, 2025

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 45-19-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 45-19 entitled "Relief of  
2 Injured and Deceased Fire Fighters and Police Officers" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **45-19-1. Salary payment during line of duty illness or injury.**

4 (a)(1) Whenever any police officer of the Rhode Island airport corporation or whenever  
5 any police officer, firefighter, crash rescue crewperson, fire marshal, chief deputy fire marshal, or  
6 deputy fire marshal of any city, town, fire district, or the state of Rhode Island is wholly or partially  
7 incapacitated by reason of injuries received or sickness contracted in the performance of his or her  
8 duties or due to their rendering of emergency assistance within the physical boundaries of the state  
9 of Rhode Island at any occurrence involving the protection or rescue of human life which  
10 necessitates that they respond in a professional capacity when they would normally be considered  
11 by their employer to be officially off-duty, the respective city, town, fire district, state of Rhode  
12 Island, or Rhode Island airport corporation by which the police officer, firefighter, crash rescue  
13 crewperson, fire marshal, chief deputy fire marshal, or deputy fire marshal, is employed, shall,  
14 during the period of the incapacity, pay the police officer, firefighter, crash rescue crewperson, fire  
15 marshal, chief deputy fire marshal, or deputy fire marshal, the salary or wage and benefits to which  
16 the police officer, firefighter, crash rescue crewperson, fire marshal, chief deputy fire marshal, or  
17 deputy fire marshal, would be entitled had he or she not been incapacitated, and shall pay the  
18 medical, surgical, dental, optical, or other attendance, or treatment, nurses, and hospital services,

1 medicines, crutches, and apparatus for the necessary period, except that if any city, town, fire  
2 district, the state of Rhode Island, or Rhode Island airport corporation provides the police officer,  
3 firefighter, crash rescue crewperson, fire marshal, chief deputy fire marshal, or deputy fire marshal,  
4 with insurance coverage for the related treatment, services, or equipment, then the city, town, fire  
5 district, the state of Rhode Island, or Rhode Island airport corporation is only obligated to pay the  
6 difference between the maximum amount allowable under the insurance coverage and the actual  
7 cost of the treatment, service, or equipment. In addition, the cities, towns, fire districts, the state of  
8 Rhode Island, or Rhode Island airport corporation shall pay all similar expenses incurred by a  
9 member who has been placed on a disability pension and suffers a recurrence of the injury or illness  
10 that dictated his or her disability retirement, subject to the provisions of subsection (j) herein.

11 (2) A police officer or firefighter diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (as  
12 described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, current edition, published  
13 by the American Psychiatric Association) by an individual who holds the title of an independent  
14 licensed mental health professional with a master's degree, related to the exposure of potentially  
15 traumatic events, resulting from their acting within the course of their employment or from the  
16 rendering of emergency assistance in the state of Rhode Island, at any occurrence involving the  
17 protection or the rescue of human life while off-duty, as set forth in subsection (h) of this section,  
18 shall be presumed to have sustained an injury in the line of duty, as that term is used in subsection  
19 (a)(1) of this section, unless the contrary is proven by a fair preponderance of the evidence that the  
20 post-traumatic stress injury/PTSD is not related to their job as a police officer or firefighter. The  
21 benefits provided for under this section shall not be extended to a police officer or firefighter, if  
22 their post-traumatic stress injury/PTSD diagnosis arises out of any disciplinary action, work  
23 evaluation, job transfer, layoff, demotion, termination, or similar adverse job actions.

24 (b) As used in this section, "police officer" means and includes any chief or other member  
25 of the police department of any city or town regularly employed at a fixed salary or wage and any  
26 deputy sheriff, member of the fugitive task force, or capitol police officer, permanent  
27 environmental police officer or criminal investigator of the department of environmental  
28 management, ~~or~~ airport police officer, [or correctional officer at the department of corrections](#).

29 (c) As used in this section, "firefighter" means and includes any chief or other member of  
30 the fire department or rescue personnel of any city, town, or fire district, and any person employed  
31 as a member of the fire department of the town of North Smithfield, or fire department or district  
32 in any city or town.

33 (d) As used in this section, "crash rescue crewperson" means and includes any chief or  
34 other member of the emergency crash rescue section, division of airports, or department of

1 transportation of the state of Rhode Island regularly employed at a fixed salary or wage.

2 (e) As used in this section, “fire marshal,” “chief deputy fire marshal,” and “deputy fire  
3 marshal” mean and include the fire marshal, chief deputy fire marshal, and deputy fire marshals  
4 regularly employed by the state of Rhode Island pursuant to the provisions of chapter 28.2 of title  
5 23.

6 (f) Any person employed by the state of Rhode Island, except for sworn employees of the  
7 Rhode Island state police, who is otherwise entitled to the benefits of chapter 19 of this title shall  
8 be subject to the provisions of chapters 29 — 38 of title 28 for all case management procedures and  
9 dispute resolution for all benefits.

10 (g) In order to receive the benefits provided for under this section, a police officer or  
11 firefighter must prove to his or her employer that he or she had reasonable grounds to believe that  
12 there was an emergency that required an immediate need for their assistance for the protection or  
13 rescue of human life.

14 (h) Any claims to the benefits provided for under this section resulting from the rendering  
15 of emergency assistance in the state of Rhode Island at any occurrence involving the protection or  
16 rescue of human life while off-duty, shall first require those covered by this section to submit a  
17 sworn declaration to their employer attesting to the date, time, place, and nature of the event  
18 involving the protection or rescue of human life causing the professional assistance to be rendered  
19 and the cause and nature of any injuries sustained in the protection or rescue of human life. Sworn  
20 declarations shall also be required from any available witness to the alleged emergency involving  
21 the protection or rescue of human life.

22 (i) All declarations required under this section shall contain the following language:

23 “Under penalty of perjury, I declare and affirm that I have examined this declaration,  
24 including any accompanying schedules and statements, and that all statements contained herein are  
25 true and correct.”

26 (j) Any person, not employed by the state of Rhode Island, receiving injured-on-duty  
27 benefits pursuant to this section, and subject to the jurisdiction of the state retirement board for  
28 accidental retirement disability, for an injury occurring on or after July 1, 2011, shall apply for an  
29 accidental disability retirement allowance from the state retirement board not later than the later of  
30 eighteen (18) months after the date of the person’s injury that resulted in the person’s injured-on-  
31 duty status or sixty (60) days from the date on which the treating physician certifies that the person  
32 has reached maximum medical improvement. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit or alter  
33 any and all rights of the parties with respect to independent medical examination or otherwise, as  
34 set forth in the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Notwithstanding the forgoing, any

1 person receiving injured-on-duty benefits as the result of a static and incapacitating injury whose  
2 permanent nature is readily obvious and ascertainable shall be required to apply for an accidental  
3 disability retirement allowance within sixty (60) days from the date on which the treating physician  
4 certifies that the person's injury is permanent, or sixty (60) days from the date on which the  
5 determination of permanency is made in accordance with the independent medical examination  
6 procedures as set forth in the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

7 (1) If a person with injured-on-duty status fails to apply for an accidental disability  
8 retirement allowance from the state retirement board within the time frame set forth above, that  
9 person's injured-on-duty payment shall terminate. Further, any person suffering a static and  
10 incapacitating injury as set forth in subsection (j) above and who fails to apply for an accidental  
11 disability benefit allowance as set forth in subsection (j) shall have his or her injured-on-duty  
12 payment terminated.

13 (2) A person who so applies shall continue to receive injured-on-duty payments, and the  
14 right to continue to receive IOD payments of a person who so applies shall terminate in the event  
15 of a final ruling of the workers' compensation court allowing accidental disability benefits. Nothing  
16 herein shall be construed to limit or alter any and all rights of the parties with respect to independent  
17 medical examination or otherwise, as set forth in the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

18 (k) Any person employed by the state of Rhode Island who is currently receiving injured-  
19 on-duty benefits or any person employed by the state of Rhode Island who in the future is entitled  
20 to injured-on-duty benefits pursuant to this chapter, and subject to the jurisdiction of the state  
21 retirement board for accidental retirement disability, shall apply for an accidental disability  
22 retirement allowance from the state retirement board not later than sixty (60) days from the date on  
23 which a treating physician or an independent medical examiner certifies that the person has reached  
24 maximum medical improvement, and in any event not later than eighteen (18) months after the date  
25 of the person's injury that resulted in the person being on injured-on-duty. Nothing herein shall be  
26 construed to limit or alter any and all rights of the parties with respect to independent medical  
27 examination or otherwise, as set forth in the applicable collective bargaining agreement.  
28 Notwithstanding the forgoing, any person receiving injured-on-duty benefits as the result of a static  
29 and incapacitating injury whose permanent nature is readily obvious and ascertainable shall be  
30 required to apply for an accidental disability retirement allowance within sixty (60) days from the  
31 date on which a treating physician or an independent medical examiner certifies that the person's  
32 injury is permanent, or sixty (60) days from the date on which such determination of permanency  
33 is made in accordance with the independent medical examination procedures as set forth in the  
34 applicable collective bargaining agreement.

1 (1) If a person employed by the state of Rhode Island with injured-on-duty status fails to  
2 apply for an accidental disability retirement allowance from the state retirement board within the  
3 time frame set forth in subsection (k) above, that person's injured-on-duty payment shall terminate.  
4 Further, any person employed by the state of Rhode Island suffering a static and incapacitating  
5 injury as set forth in subsection (k) above and who fails to apply for an accidental disability benefit  
6 allowance as set forth in subsection (k) shall have his or her injured-on-duty payment terminated.

7 (2) A person employed by the state of Rhode Island who so applies shall continue to receive  
8 injured-on-duty payments, and the right to continue to receive injured-on-duty payments of a  
9 person who so applies shall terminate upon final adjudication by the state retirement board  
10 approving or denying either ordinary or accidental disability payments and, notwithstanding § 45-  
11 31.2-9, this termination of injured-on-duty benefits shall not be stayed.

12 (3)(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all persons employed by the state of  
13 Rhode Island entitled to benefits under this section who were injured prior to July 1, 2019, and who  
14 have been receiving injured-on-duty benefits pursuant to this section for a period of eighteen (18)  
15 months or longer as of July 1, 2019, shall have up to ninety (90) days from July 1, 2019, to apply  
16 for an accidental disability retirement benefit allowance. Any person employed by the state of  
17 Rhode Island receiving injured-on-duty benefits for a period less than eighteen (18) months as of  
18 July 1, 2019, shall apply for an accidental disability retirement benefit allowance within eighteen  
19 (18) months of the date of injury that resulted in the person receiving injured-on-duty pay; provided  
20 however, said person shall have a minimum of ninety (90) days to apply.

21 Applications for disability retirement received by the state retirement board by any person  
22 employed by the State of Rhode Island receiving injured-on-duty payments that shall be deemed  
23 untimely pursuant to § 36-10-14(b) shall have ninety (90) days from July 1, 2019, to apply for an  
24 accidental disability retirement benefit allowance. Failure to apply for an accidental disability  
25 retirement benefit allowance within the timeframe set forth herein shall result in the termination of  
26 injured-on-duty benefits.

27 (ii) Any person employed by the state of Rhode Island receiving injured-on-duty payments  
28 who has been issued a final adjudication of the state retirement board on an application for an  
29 ordinary or accidental disability benefit, either approving or denying the application, shall have his  
30 or her injured-on-duty payments terminated.

31 (4) If awarded an accidental disability pension, any person employed by the state of Rhode  
32 Island covered under this section shall receive benefits consistent with § 36-10-15.

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2 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES -- RELIEF OF  
INJURED AND DECEASED FIRE FIGHTERS AND POLICE OFFICERS

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1           This act would add department of corrections' correctional officers to the list of public  
2 safety employees that are entitled to their full salary if they are injured and become disabled as a  
3 result of performance of their job duties.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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