

2025 -- S 0713

LC000475

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Bissailon, Kallman, Quezada, Valverde, Bell, Murray,
and DiMario

Date Introduced: March 07, 2025

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

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 that receives state or
11 federal funding to operate a shelter or warming center shall be required to keep the shelter or
12 warming center open and accessible every day, twenty-four (24) hours each day, until the weather
13 alert has ended, and shall establish a plan for issuing a warming center alert to municipalities, social
14 services agencies, and nonprofit organizations that provide services to at-risk individuals and are
15 located within the city or town's borders. Upon the designation of a warming center alert, the
16 director shall coordinate with the cities and towns to provide information regarding available
17 services. This coordination shall include, but not be limited to, postings on the Rhode Island
18 emergency management agency's webpage, postings on local media and social media channels.
19 The agency or appropriate office or department shall coordinate with municipal emergency

1 management coordinators in municipalities with a documented homeless population of at least ten
2 (10), as noted in the most recent report on sheltered and unsheltered people provided by the annual
3 Point-in-Time Count, in developing consistent warming center alert plans throughout the cities or
4 towns that provide for emergency warming centers during implementation of a warming center
5 alert plan. This plan may be carried out by designated volunteer organizations. Volunteer-organized
6 warming center efforts shall receive cooperation and logistical support from the director, but shall
7 operate autonomously; provided that, they operate in response to an alert and pursuant to the
8 warming center alert plan.

9 (c) The director shall declare a warming center alert after evaluating weather forecasts and
10 advisories produced by the National Weather Service.

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

13 (e) Requirements -- Warning centers. During any warming center alert, municipalities,
14 through their respective emergency management offices, shall:

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

17 (2) Provide for notice and updates on the city or town webpage and available social media
18 outlets about the availability of resources including, but not limited to, shelters, warming centers
19 and/or community-based centers that are available to provide support or shelter.

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

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

27 **30-15-47. Cooling center alert.**

28 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

33 (b) Plan for issuance of cooling center alert. The cities and towns through their office of
34 emergency management or other appropriate office, agency, or department, that receives state or

1 federal funding to operate a shelter or cooling center shall be required to keep the shelter or cooling
2 center open and accessible every day, twenty-four (24) hours each day, until the weather alert has
3 ended and shall establish a plan for issuing a cooling center alert to municipalities, social service
4 agencies, and nonprofit organizations that provide services to at-risk individuals and are located
5 within the city or town borders. Upon the designation of a cooling center alert, the director shall
6 coordinate with the cities and towns to provide information regarding available services. This
7 coordination shall include, but not be limited to, postings on the Rhode Island emergency
8 management agency's webpage, postings on local media and social media channels. The agency or
9 appropriate office, or department, shall coordinate with municipal emergency management
10 coordinators in municipalities with a documented homeless population of at least ten (10), as noted
11 in the most recent report on sheltered and unsheltered people by the annual Point-in-Time Count,
12 in developing consistent cooling center alert plans throughout the city or town that provide for
13 emergency cooling centers during implementation of a cooling center alert plan. This plan may be
14 carried out by designated volunteer organizations. Volunteer-organized cooling center efforts shall
15 receive cooperation and logistical support from the director, but shall operate autonomously;
16 provided that, they operate in response to an alert and pursuant to the cooling center alert plan.

17 (c) The director shall declare a cooling center alert after evaluating weather forecasts and
18 advisories produced by the National Weather Service.

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

22 (e) Requirements -- Cooling centers. During any cooling center alert, municipalities
23 through their respective emergency management offices shall:

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

26 (2) Provide for updates on the city or town webpage and available social media outlets
27 about the availability of resources including, but not limited to, shelters, cooling centers and/or
28 community-based centers that are available to provide support or shelter.

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

32 (f) Any municipality not identified as a "hot spot" for people experiencing homelessness
33 according to the most recent report on sheltered and unsheltered people by the Point-in-Time Count,
34 may collaborate with neighboring municipalities to combine resources and operate a regional

1 [cooling center which would satisfy the requirements of this section.](#)

2 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 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 shelter.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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