

2024 -- S 2405

LC004489

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Gu, Murray, Kallman, Valverde, Bissaillon, Acosta,  
Lawson, DiMario, and Ujifusa

Date Introduced: February 12, 2024

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

1 throughout the cities or towns that provide for emergency warming centers during implementation  
2 of a code blue alert plan. This plan may be carried out by designated volunteer organizations.  
3 Volunteer-organized code blue efforts shall receive cooperation and logistical support from the  
4 director, but shall operate autonomously; provided that, they operate in response to an alert and  
5 pursuant to the code blue alert plan.

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

9 (1) Temperatures will reach thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit (32° F) or lower; or

10 (2) The National Weather Service wind chill temperature will be zero degrees Fahrenheit  
11 (0° F) or less for a period of two (2) hours or more.

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

14 (e) Code blue requirements-warning centers. During any code blue alert, municipalities,  
15 through their respective emergency management offices, shall:

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

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

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

24 (f) Any municipality receiving state or federal funding to operate a shelter or warming  
25 center shall be required to keep the shelter or warming center open and accessible every day for  
26 twenty-four (24) hours each day.

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

31 **30-15-47. Code red alert.**

32 (a) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

19 (c) The director shall declare a code red alert after evaluating weather forecasts and  
20 advisories produced by the National Weather Service that predicts the following:

21 (1) The heat index is forecast to reach a daily high temperature of ninety-five degrees  
22 Fahrenheit (95° F) to ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit (99° F) for at least two (2) consecutive days;  
23 or

24 (2) The daily high temperature is forecast to reach a high of at least one hundred degrees  
25 Fahrenheit (100° F) for any length of time.

26 (d) Review of weather forecasts. The director, or designee, shall review weather forecasts  
27 from the National Weather Service on a regular and consistent basis to determine when a code red  
28 alert is warranted.

29 (e) Code red requirements-cooling centers. During any code red alert, municipalities  
30 through their respective emergency management offices shall:

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

33 (2) Provide for updates on the city or town webpage and available social media outlets  
34 about the availability of resources including, but not limited to, shelters, cooling centers and/or

1 community-based centers that are available to provide support or shelter.

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

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

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

12 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 code blue and code red alerts to trigger certain procedures
- 2 municipalities must follow during extreme heat or cold to help at-risk individuals with shelter.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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