

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 44-146.18:3, relating to first informer broadcasters.

[H 310]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 44-146.18:3 as follows:

§ 44-146.18:3. *First informer broadcasters; coordination with Department of Emergency Management.*

A. For purposes of this section, unless the context requires otherwise, "first informer" means the critical radio or television personnel of a radio or television broadcast station engaged in (i) the process of broadcasting; (ii) the maintenance or repair of broadcast station equipment, transmitters, and generators; or (iii) the transportation of fuel for generators of broadcast stations.

B. Unless it is shown to endanger public safety or inhibit recovery efforts, or is otherwise prohibited by state or federal law, state and local government agencies shall permit first informer radio or television personnel with proper identification cards to access their broadcasting station within any area declared a state emergency area by the Governor for the purpose of provision of news, public service and public safety information and repairing or resupplying their facility or equipment.

First informer identification cards shall be issued by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters. A list of those first informers who have been issued identification cards shall be furnished to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters prior to December 30 of each year.

C. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or impair the right or ability of any news organization or its personnel to gather and report the news.