

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2015 SESSION

CHAPTER 97

An Act to amend and reenact § 44-146.18 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Department of Emergency Management; electromagnetic pulses and geomagnetic disturbances.

[S 1238]

Approved March 10, 2015

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 44-146.18 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 44-146.18. Department of Emergency Services continued as Department of Emergency Management; administration and operational control; coordinator and other personnel; powers and duties.

A. The State Office of Emergency Services is continued and shall hereafter be known as the Department of Emergency Management. Wherever the words "State Department of Emergency Services" are used in any law of the Commonwealth, they shall mean the Department of Emergency Management. During a declared emergency this Department shall revert to the operational control of the Governor. The Department shall have a coordinator who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor and also serve as State Emergency Planning Director. The Department shall employ the professional, technical, secretarial, and clerical employees necessary for the performance of its functions.

B. The ~~State~~ Department of Emergency Management shall in the administration of emergency services and disaster preparedness programs:

1. In coordination with political subdivisions and state agencies, ensure that the Commonwealth has up-to-date assessments and preparedness plans to prevent, respond to and recover from all disasters including acts of terrorism;

2. Conduct a statewide emergency management assessment in cooperation with political subdivisions, private industry and other public and private entities deemed vital to preparedness, public safety and security. The assessment shall include a review of emergency response plans, which include the variety of hazards, natural and man-made. The assessment shall be updated annually;

3. Submit to the Governor and to the General Assembly, no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly, an annual executive summary and report on the status of emergency management response plans throughout the Commonwealth and other measures taken or recommended to prevent, respond to and recover from disasters, including acts of terrorism. This report shall be made available to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports. Information submitted in accordance with the procedures set forth in subdivision 4 of § 2.2-3705.2 shall not be disclosed unless:

a. It is requested by law-enforcement authorities in furtherance of an official investigation or the prosecution of a criminal act;

b. The agency holding the record is served with a proper judicial order; or

c. The agency holding the record has obtained written consent to release the information from the ~~State~~ Department of Emergency Management;

4. Promulgate plans and programs that are conducive to adequate disaster mitigation preparedness, response and recovery programs;

5. Prepare and maintain a State Emergency Operations Plan for disaster response and recovery operations that assigns primary and support responsibilities for basic emergency services functions to state agencies, organizations and personnel as appropriate;

6. Coordinate and administer disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery plans and programs with the proponent federal, state and local government agencies and related groups;

7. Provide guidance and assistance to state agencies and units of local government in developing and maintaining emergency management and continuity of operations (COOP) programs, plans and systems;

8. Make necessary recommendations to agencies of the federal, state, or local governments on preventive and preparedness measures designed to eliminate or reduce disasters and their impact;

9. Determine requirements of the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions for those necessities needed in the event of a declared emergency which are not otherwise readily available;

10. Assist state agencies and political subdivisions in establishing and operating training programs and programs of public information and education regarding emergency services and disaster preparedness activities;

11. Consult with the Board of Education regarding the development and revision of a model school crisis and emergency management plan for the purpose of assisting public schools in establishing, operating, and maintaining emergency services and disaster preparedness activities;

12. Consult with the State Council of Higher Education in the development and revision of a model

institutional crisis and emergency management plan for the purpose of assisting public and private two-year and four-year institutions of higher education in establishing, operating, and maintaining emergency services and disaster preparedness activities and, as needed, in developing an institutional crisis and emergency management plan pursuant to § 23-9.2:9;

13. Develop standards, provide guidance and encourage the maintenance of local and state agency emergency operations plans, which shall include the requirement for a provision that the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund be contacted immediately to deploy assistance in the event of an emergency as defined in the emergency response plan when there are victims as defined in § 19.2-11.01. The Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund shall be the lead coordinating agencies for those individuals determined to be victims, and the plan shall also contain current contact information for both agencies;

14. Prepare, maintain, coordinate or implement emergency resource management plans and programs with federal, state and local government agencies and related groups, and make such surveys of industries, resources, and facilities within the Commonwealth, both public and private, as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter;

15. Coordinate with the federal government and any public or private agency or entity in achieving any purpose of this chapter and in implementing programs for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery;

16. Establish guidelines pursuant to § 44-146.28, and administer payments to eligible applicants as authorized by the Governor;

17. Coordinate and be responsible for the receipt, evaluation, and dissemination of emergency services intelligence pertaining to all probable hazards affecting the Commonwealth;

18. Coordinate intelligence activities relating to terrorism with the Department of State Police; and

19. Develop an emergency response plan to address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals in the event of a disaster and assist and coordinate with local agencies in developing an emergency response plan for household pets and service animals.

The Department of Emergency Management shall ensure that all such plans, assessments, and programs required by this subsection include specific preparedness for, and response to, disasters resulting from electromagnetic pulses and geomagnetic disturbances.

C. The State Department of Emergency Management shall during a period of impending emergency or declared emergency be responsible for:

1. The receipt, evaluation, and dissemination of intelligence pertaining to an impending or actual disaster;

2. Providing facilities from which state agencies and supporting organizations may conduct emergency operations;

3. Providing an adequate communications and warning system capable of notifying all political subdivisions in the Commonwealth of an impending disaster within a reasonable time;

4. Establishing and maintaining liaison with affected political subdivisions;

5. Determining requirements for disaster relief and recovery assistance;

6. Coordinating disaster response actions of federal, state and volunteer relief agencies;

7. Coordinating and providing guidance and assistance to affected political subdivisions to ensure orderly and timely response to and recovery from disaster effects.

D. The State Department of Emergency Management shall be provided the necessary facilities and equipment needed to perform its normal day-to-day activities and coordinate disaster-related activities of the various federal, state, and other agencies during a state of emergency declaration by the Governor or following a major disaster declaration by the President.

E. The State Department of Emergency Management is authorized to enter into all contracts and agreements necessary or incidental to performance of any of its duties stated in this section or otherwise assigned to it by law, including contracts with the United States, other states, agencies and government subdivisions of the Commonwealth, and other appropriate public and private entities.

F. The State Department of Emergency Management shall encourage private industries whose goods and services are deemed vital to the public good to provide annually updated preparedness assessments to the local coordinator of emergency management on or before April 1 of each year, to facilitate overall Commonwealth preparedness. For the purposes of this section, "private industry" means companies, private hospitals, and other businesses or organizations deemed by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management to be essential to the public safety and well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth.