

ASSEMBLY, No. 815

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 217th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2016 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman R. BRUCE LAND

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

Assemblyman BOB ANDRZEJCZAK

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

SYNOPSIS

Requires county emergency management coordinators to establish Code Blue Program to shelter homeless during severe weather events.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning emergency shelters for at-risk individuals
2 during severe weather events and supplementing chapter 9 of
3 Appendix A.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7

8 1. a. As used in this act,

9 “At-risk individual” means an individual living outside, or in a
10 building not meant for human habitation or which the person has no
11 legal right to occupy.

12 “Coordinator” means the county emergency management
13 coordinator appointed pursuant to section 12 of P.L.1953, c.438
14 (C.App.A:9-42.1).

15 “Severe weather event” means, but is not limited to, a snow
16 emergency, excessive cold or heat, storms or other weather-related
17 conditions, which may include temperatures equal to or below 40
18 degrees Fahrenheit.

19 b. Each coordinator shall establish a Code Blue Program for at-
20 risk individuals who require shelter during a severe weather event.
21 The purpose of the Code Blue Program shall be to identify at-risk
22 individuals prior to, or during, a severe weather event and assist
23 those individuals in voluntarily finding appropriate shelter.

24 c. A coordinator shall declare a code blue alert within 24 hours
25 prior to the onset of a severe weather event. The code blue alert
26 shall continue until 8 a.m. the following day after the declaration,
27 unless the severe weather event worsens or continues for a
28 prolonged period of time. Upon the declaration of a code blue alert,
29 the coordinator shall inform each municipal law enforcement
30 agency in that county as well as the county police department, as
31 appropriate, of the need to identify and locate at-risk individuals
32 who may be in need of shelter during a severe weather event.
33 Following the code blue alert, each municipal law enforcement
34 agency and county police department shall conduct patrols to locate
35 at-risk individuals, and transport or arrange for the transportation of
36 those individuals to an appropriate shelter. In conducting patrols,
37 law enforcement officers shall give specific attention to areas where
38 at-risk individuals may congregate.

39 d. Following the declaration of a code blue alert, the
40 coordinator shall inform each county and municipal welfare agency
41 responsible for placing homeless families and persons in shelters of
42 the need to increase bed capacity within each shelter. During a
43 code blue alert, each county shall establish, in addition to existing
44 shelters for the homeless, emergency shelters which have been
45 authorized by a public officer of a municipality or the Department
46 of Community Affairs to provide shelter, or food and shelter, to a
47 specified number of individuals because of a severe weather event.

1 e. Each county office of emergency management shall conduct
2 a public awareness campaign, utilizing the Internet and any other
3 available resources, to inform the general public of the code blue
4 program and the importance of identifying at-risk individuals prior
5 to a severe weather event so that appropriate preparations may be
6 made to ensure that these individuals receive shelter.

7
8 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month
9 following enactment.

10

11

12

STATEMENT

13

14 This bill requires county emergency management coordinators to
15 establish a Code Blue Program for at-risk individuals who require
16 shelter during a severe weather event. The purpose of the Code
17 Blue Program is to identify at-risk individuals prior to, or during, a
18 severe weather event and assist those individuals in voluntarily
19 finding appropriate shelter.

20 The bill defines at-risk individual as an individual living outside,
21 or in a building not meant for human habitation or which the person
22 has no legal right to occupy. The phrase "severe weather event" is
23 defined to include a snow emergency, excessive cold or heat, storms
24 or other weather-related conditions, which may include
25 temperatures equal to or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

26 Under the Code Blue Program, county emergency management
27 coordinators are required to declare a code blue alert within 24
28 hours prior to the onset of a severe weather event. Upon the
29 declaration of a code blue alert, the county emergency management
30 coordinator is to inform each municipal law enforcement agency in
31 that county as well as the county police department, if appropriate,
32 of the need to identify and locate at-risk individuals who may be in
33 need of shelter. Municipal law enforcement agencies and county
34 police departments would then conduct patrols to locate at-risk
35 individuals, and transport or arrange for the transportation of those
36 individuals to an appropriate shelter.

37 The bill also requires county emergency management
38 coordinators to inform each county and municipal welfare agency
39 responsible for placing homeless families and persons in shelters of
40 the need to increase the shelter bed capacity. The bill further
41 requires counties to establish emergency shelters for the homeless,
42 which have been authorized by a public officer of the municipality
43 or the Department of Community Affairs, to provide shelter, or food
44 and shelter, to a specified number of individuals in excess of its
45 licensed capacity because of emergency conditions.

46 Finally, the bill requires each county office of emergency
47 management to conduct a public awareness campaign, utilizing the
48 Internet and any other available resources, to inform the general

A815 LAND, ANDRZEJCZAK

4

- 1 public of the code blue program and the importance of identifying
- 2 at-risk individuals prior to a severe weather event so that
- 3 appropriate shelter preparations may be made.