

Section 4 Emergency Response Personnel

Page 9 line 3

city within which it is organized and, in which may include ~~directing~~ coordinating the

Recommendation:

Replace directing with coordinating.

Local EMD's will not be directing local first responders. They will be coordinating resources and supporting the first responder's actions but will not be in charge (directing) them.

Section 10 Urban Search & Rescue

Page 31 line 13

Commissioner shall appoint a USAR Team ~~chief~~ program manager to carry out the duties and

Recommendation:

Replace chief with program manager. The USAR Team uses "program manager" as the title of the lead position and not "chief". The State of Vermont job code 525805 cites "Urban Search and Rescue Program Manager".

Page 31 Line 16 & 17

organize the State USAR Team to assist local emergency ~~planning committees, fire chiefs, and other~~ emergency management officials ~~response personnel~~ in response to emergencies and other hazards

Recommendation:

Emergency Response Personnel, as defined in Section 4 of this bill, covers the entities that USAR may be assisting.

Page 31 Line 19 & 20

hire persons for the USAR Team from fire, police, and emergency ~~organizations~~ medical services and persons with specialty backgrounds in emergency response or search and rescue;

Recommendation:

Emergency Organization is not defined in this statute, replace with emergency medical services (EMS)

Page 32 Line 1-4

~~negotiate with municipalities that maintain emergency response teams to secure appropriate facilities and personnel to house and maintain the USAR Team's vehicles and equipment and to provide drivers for USAR Team response vehicles;~~

Recommendation:

Strike - Remove this section because this is covered in the Memorandum of Understanding that USAR has with local teams – see page 32 line 10

Page 32 line 10 -12

~~ensure that appropriate regional mutual aid agreements are created so that emergency management or search and rescue teams within the region may participate with the USAR Team;~~

Recommendation:

Strike - USAR does not establish regional agreements they set up MOU with each team that allows them to be deployed across the state.

Page 32 line 19-20 & page 33 line 1-2

~~The State shall reimburse a municipality for the actual costs expended to cover the duties of a municipal employee who is an employee of the USAR Team and who is requested to leave employment at the municipality to respond to an emergency or other hazard or attend USAR Team training.~~

Recommendation:

Stike - The USAR team's budget does not include funding to cover the cost of backfill as described in this paragraph.

Section 12 Reverse e-911 Policy During Emergency

Page 34 line 7

harm to persons and property. ~~The Board~~ Vermont Emergency Management shall issue its policy on or before

Recommendation:

Replace Board with Vermont Emergency Management as VEM is the one developing the policy.

Section 14 VEM review and best practices

Page 35 Line 11-16

Review. On or before June 30, 2024, the Department of Public Safety's Division of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) shall conduct a After Action review of the State's disaster preparedness leading up to, during, and after the 2023 summer flooding events throughout the State, overseen by the Director of VEM. The disaster preparedness review shall examine ~~the adequacy of: (1) early warning and evacuation orders; (2) designated evacuation routes and emergency shelters; (3) the present system of local emergency management directors in wide-spread emergencies; and (4) the State's present emergency communications systems.~~ all aspects of the state's response and shall include input from the whole community.

Recommendation:

VEM already conducts After Action Reviews (AAR) for all SEOC activations. VEM follows the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) process for incorporating the whole community in developing an AAR and subsequent Improvement plan. This ensures the AAR will cover all aspects of the response (not just the above four) and will include both strengths and areas for improvement. This process includes an improvement plan that details how the areas for improvement will be addressed. VEM can also include specific inquires to ensure each of the suggested elements are included in the AAR.

I propose this section be re-worded to recognize the ongoing work of the AAR (with appropriate customizations) as meeting the requirements of this section.

Section 15 VEM shelter

Page 37 line 12-16

On or before January 15, 2025, ~~VEM~~ Agency of Human Services shall submit a proposal to the General Assembly on how the State shall fund the operation of municipal emergency shelters during a declared emergency. The proposal shall address funding for staff, supplies, utilities, and other expenses that municipalities currently fund when the State declares an emergency.

Recommendation:

Emergency sheltering is one component of Mass Care. Under the current State Emergency Management Plan, Mass Care is tasked to the VT Agency of Human Services. AHS should be consulted, on this

Section 16 Interpretation Services

If an all-hazards event occurs, the Vermont Emergency Management Division shall provide interpretation services for all State communications regarding the all-hazards event, including press conferences from the Governor's office. Interpretation services shall be provided for:

individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind, including the provision of Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) and the Picture in Picture (PIP) techniques; and

individuals with limited English proficiency.

Recommendation:

VEM does not have broadcast capabilities and, therefore, relies on the broadcaster to have CART and PIP capabilities. VEM also relies on broadcaster to provide technology to translate to other languages for broadcast.

I recommend a study committee be formed, including broadcasters, DAIL, VEM, and other interested parties, to determine how these services can best be provided. This is an acute issue during a disaster, but it is a bigger issue across all state agencies every day.

Line 19

Within three months following an all-hazards event or on an annual basis, whichever occurs first, the Vermont Emergency Management Division shall hold a public meeting ~~with certain members of Vermont Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind Advisory Council to be determined by the Council to~~ review the adequacy and efficacy of Division's provision of emergency communications ~~to individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind.~~

Recommendation

This meeting should be with a larger group; as outlined above, it is not just the deaf and hard of hearing, it is also English as a second language.

Section 17 Chief Resiliency Officer.

Recommendation:

Form a study committee to assess where this position should be established and what its responsibilities would be. Almost all state agencies have an interest in resiliency and there is also the Climate Council and Climate Action Office.