

CHAPTER 137**(HB 767)**

AN ACT relating to emergency management and declaring an emergency.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. KRS 39A.050 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) The Division of Emergency Management shall coordinate for the Governor all matters pertaining to the comprehensive emergency management program and disaster and emergency response of the Commonwealth. The division shall be the executive branch agency of state government having primary jurisdiction, responsibility, and authority for the planning and execution of disaster and emergency assessment, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery for the Commonwealth; the coordination of all disaster and emergency response by and between all state agencies, all agencies of city, county, and urban-county or charter county government, all local entities, and all political subdivisions of the Commonwealth for an emergency, declared emergency, disaster, or catastrophe as contemplated in KRS 39A.010, 39A.020, or 39A.030; the coordination of, and liaison with, related or concerned federal government agencies, elected officials of other states, private organizations or private sector companies dealing with disaster and emergency response; the coordination of all recovery operations and mitigation initiatives subsequent to disasters or emergencies; and the coordination of all public information activities regarding state government disaster and emergency response operations.
- (2) The Division of Emergency Management shall have and exercise the following powers, authorities, and duties:
 - (a) To develop, administer, and maintain a statewide comprehensive emergency management program for the Commonwealth, and through it an integrated emergency management system for the disaster and emergency response of the Commonwealth, which shall be coordinated with the emergency management programs, and other related public safety, emergency response, mitigation, or disaster recovery programs, of all appropriate federal government agencies including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the federal Department of Homeland Security, the State Department, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Department of Defense, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Justice, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the National Transportation Safety Board, the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Security Council, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Railroad Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the American Red Cross, the other states, and other appropriate public or private agencies, to the fullest appropriate extent;
 - (b) To coordinate the development, implementation, and maintenance of comprehensive emergency management programs by local emergency management agencies in the cities, counties, and urban-county or charter county governments of the Commonwealth to ensure that all such programs, agencies, and organizations are organized, administered, and operated as functional components of the integrated emergency management system of the Commonwealth;
 - (c) To develop and maintain a comprehensive, risk-based, all-hazards disaster and emergency response plan entitled "Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan," the provisions of which shall establish the organizational structure to be utilized by state government for managing disaster and emergency response, and set forth the policies, procedures, and guidelines for the coordination and execution of all disaster and emergency response for an emergency, declared emergency, disaster, or catastrophe in the Commonwealth. The Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan shall be submitted to the Governor for approval when the Governor assumes office following each gubernatorial election, or at other times as the director deems appropriate. The Governor shall provide written approval of the Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan through issuance of an executive order, and the division shall file a copy of the executive order with the Legislative Research Commission. The Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan shall be the primary strategic disaster and emergency response planning component of the integrated emergency management system of the Commonwealth, and shall be utilized and followed by all state agencies, all local government agencies, all local public agencies or entities, and all other

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political subdivisions of the Commonwealth which may be involved in disaster and emergency response in the Commonwealth. The Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan shall be updated by the division not less than annually;

- (d) To maintain and operate the State Emergency Operations Center facility, which shall be the official and primary state government twenty-four (24) hour warning point, communications, and command center, from which the Governor, cabinet secretaries, department heads, and other state agency officials can, at any time, rapidly, adequately, and effectively manage the disaster and emergency response of the Commonwealth. The State Emergency Operations Center facility shall be the primary state direction and control component of the integrated emergency management system of the Commonwealth for the coordination of all disaster and emergency response in the Commonwealth;
- (e) To develop, monitor, and operate, on a twenty-four (24) hour per day basis, the appropriate alerting or warning systems, public safety telecommunications systems, or radio networks; any state trunked, fiber, or interactive communication systems; computer, fax, other telecommunications or information networks; and systems needed for communication and coordination with all necessary or appropriate federal, state, or local public safety, law enforcement, emergency management, or other disaster and emergency response agencies, and state or local dispatch centers in the Commonwealth, and other appropriate interests, and through these agencies and systems to receive or disseminate emergency information, or to receive timely notification of, and continual assessment of, all threatened or actual emergency incidents or disaster situations occurring anywhere in or near the Commonwealth;
- (f) To immediately notify the Governor, the adjutant general, and the executive director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security, or his or her designee, in the event of any major emergency incidents or disaster occurrences, or the threatened or impending occurrence of any of these events, and to keep the Governor, the adjutant general, and the executive director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security, or his or her designee, informed of all actions being taken in response to these events;
- (g) To respond to the scenes of emergencies or disasters, or their threatened or impending occurrence and to directly and immediately investigate, analyze, and assess the nature and seriousness of these situations; to convene meetings, gather information, conduct briefings, and evaluate ongoing emergency response activities; take actions to execute the appropriate provisions of the Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan; coordinate the establishment and operation of a state incident management system; establish or manage sub-state or area emergency operations centers, or on-scene command posts; and fully expedite and coordinate the disaster and emergency response of the Commonwealth;
- (h) To establish and operate area field offices of the division, each office to be headed by an area manager, responsible for administering the policies, plans, programs, and duties of the division in specific geographic areas of the Commonwealth, including the coordination of comprehensive emergency management programs developed by the cities, counties, urban-county, or charter county governments in the areas;
- (i) To provide funds to the cities, counties, and urban-county or charter county governments of the Commonwealth to support the development, administration, operation, and maintenance of local emergency management agencies created pursuant to KRS Chapters 39A to 39F;
- (j) To require the regular submission of program administration data, records, materials, reports, or documents from local emergency management agencies as may be necessary and sufficient to conduct performance reviews and assessments to ensure compliance with all state or federal funding and program requirements, and to ensure local program compatibility and consistency with the mission, goals, and objectives of the comprehensive emergency management program and integrated emergency management system of the Commonwealth;
- (k) To ascertain the requirements of the Commonwealth and its cities and counties for emergency resources and the necessities of life in the event of disaster or emergency; institute an emergency resource management plan and procure emergency supplies, materials, and equipment; and use or employ in time of emergency any of the property, services, and resources of state or local government in the Commonwealth for the purposes set forth in KRS Chapters 39A to 39F;
- (l) To institute public information and education programs, emergency management training programs, and exercise programs to test and evaluate emergency operations plans and disaster and emergency response and recovery capabilities;~~and~~

- (m) *To institute and maintain the Kentucky Qualification System, which shall be used to establish qualification procedures, certification programs, and credentialing standards for professionals involved in disaster and incident management, including incident management teams and emergency operations centers; and*
- (n) To promulgate administrative regulations to carry out the provisions of KRS Chapters 39A to 39F.

➔Section 2. Whereas it is critical to the safety of the citizens of the Commonwealth to provide a process for creating a deployable workforce of qualified, certified, and credentialed personnel to prepare for and respond to natural disasters and emergencies of all types and sizes, an emergency is declared to exist, and this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law.

Signed by Governor April 13, 2026.