

Title 30

Military Affairs and Defense

Chapter 15

Emergency Management

R.I. Gen. Laws § 30-15-15

§ 30-15-15. Immunity from liability — Compensation for death or injury of disaster response workers.

(a) All functions under this chapter, and all other activities relating to disaster response, are hereby declared to be governmental functions. Neither the state, nor any political subdivision thereof, nor other agencies of the state or political subdivision thereof, nor, except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence, or bad faith, any disaster response worker complying with, or reasonably attempting to comply with this chapter, or any order, rule, or regulation promulgated pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, or pursuant to any ordinance relating to precautionary measures enacted by any political subdivision of the state, shall be liable for the death of, or injury to, persons, or for damage to property, as a result of disaster response activity. The provisions of this section shall not affect the right of any person to receive benefits to which he or she would otherwise be entitled under this chapter, nor under the Workers' Compensation Act, chapters 29 — 38 of title 28, nor under any pension law, nor the right of any person to receive any benefits or compensation under any act of Congress.

(b) Any requirement for a license to practice any professional, mechanical, or other skill shall not apply to any authorized disaster response worker who shall, in the course of performing his or her duties as such, practice such professional, mechanical, or other skill during a disaster emergency.

(c) In the absence of any other benefits as provided by law, all disaster response workers who shall be killed or sustain disability or injury while in training for or on disaster response duty shall be construed to be employees of the state, any other provisions of the law to the contrary notwithstanding, and shall be compensated in like manner as state employees are compensated under the provisions of chapters 29 — 38 of title 28.

(d) In the absence of any other benefits as provided by law, any and all authorized disaster response workers who shall, in the course of performing their duties as such, practice professional, architecture, mechanical, engineering or other skill during a disaster emergency shall be entitled to all rights in like manner as state employees under the provisions of chapters 29 — 38 of title 28 and under § 9-31-8.

(e) As used in this section, the term “disaster response worker” shall include any full- or part-time paid, volunteer, or auxiliary employee of this state, other states, territories, or possessions, the District of Columbia, the federal government, any neighboring country, or any political subdivision thereof, or any agency or organization, or any private person, firm, or corporation performing disaster response services at any place in this state subject to the order or control of, or pursuant to a request of, the state government or any political subdivision thereof.

History of Section.

P.L. 1973, ch. 67, § 2; P.L. 2003, ch. 185, § 4; P.L. 2003, ch. 189, § 4; P.L. 2016, ch. 511, art. 2, § 38; P.L. 2025, ch. 403, § 1, effective July 2, 2025; P.L. 2025, ch. 404, § 1, effective July 2, 2025.