

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30361-NBf-130

Short Title: Emergency Citizen Pilot Training Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Winslow.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN EMERGENCY CITIZEN PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 166A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
5 Article to read:

6 "Article 7.

7 "North Carolina Emergency Citizen Pilot Training Program.

8 **"§ 166A-70. Purpose; establishment.**

9 Purpose; Establishment. – There is hereby established the Emergency Citizen Pilot Training
10 Program within the Division of Emergency Management of the Department of Public Safety.
11 The purpose of the Program is to set standards and certification for citizen pilots to assist
12 emergency response and recovery operations after declared disasters. The Director of Emergency
13 Management shall administer the Program within the Division.

14 **"§ 166A-71. Definitions.**

15 Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 16 (1) Department. – The Department of Public Safety.
17 (2) Director. – The Director of the Division.
18 (3) Division. – The Division of Emergency Management of the Department of
19 Public Safety.
20 (4) Emergency citizen pilot. – An individual who has been awarded and maintains
21 a certificate from the Program.
22 (5) Program. – The Emergency Citizen Pilot Training Program.
23 (6) State Emergency Response Team. – As defined in G.S. 166A-19.3.

24 **"§ 166A-72. Program criteria.**

25 (a) Program. – The Program shall offer classes and training courses to train emergency
26 citizen pilots on how to do all of the following:

- 27 (1) Assist State and federal emergency response and recovery operations after
28 declared disasters within an emergency area.
29 (2) Establish levels of assistance and discretion between State and federal
30 response activities and the role of private assistance by air to emergency areas.
31 (3) The most efficient and safe methods for private assistance by air in emergency
32 areas, including flight paths, restricted airspace, standard operation
33 procedures, permissible aircraft, emergency communication, and coordination
34 of efforts.
35 (4) Any other metrics or standards the Division deems necessary.



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1 **(b) Fee.** – The Division may charge a reasonable fee to participate in the Program. The
2 fee shall cover costs and shall not exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per candidate.

3 **(c) Candidates.** – After graduation from the Program, candidates will receive a
4 certification that allows the pilot to sign up for the Emergency Citizen Pilot Registry established
5 by this Article.

6 **(d) Registry.** – The Division shall maintain and update an Emergency Citizen Pilot
7 Registry that lists all certificated emergency citizen pilots who have an active or inactive
8 certificate awarded by the Program.

9 **(e) Continuing Training.** – An emergency citizen pilot shall be deemed "active status" if
10 the individual has been awarded a certificate and maintains any required continuing training
11 hours necessary as determined by the Division. The Division shall maintain continuing training
12 requirements for all emergency citizen pilots who have been issued a certificate under the
13 Program, unless the certificate has lapsed and the emergency citizen pilot is in "inactive status."
14 The Division shall develop criteria to develop certificate status and continuing training
15 requirements.

16 **"§ 166A-73. Coordination.**

17 **Coordination.** – The Division shall work with the State Emergency Response Team, units of
18 local governments, the Civil Air Patrol Section of the Department, other State agencies, and the
19 Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop standards, criteria, best practices, safety
20 standards, and any other criteria necessary in the discretion of the Division to integrate
21 emergency citizen pilot training into the North Carolina Emergency Operations Plan and other
22 disaster response plans."

23 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 166A-19.76 reads as rewritten:

24 **"§ 166A-19.76. Leave options for voluntary firefighters, rescue squad workers, emergency**
25 **citizen pilots, and emergency medical service personnel called into service.**

26 **(a) Leave Without Pay.** – A member of a volunteer fire department, rescue squad,
27 emergency citizen pilot, or emergency medical services agency called into service of the State
28 after a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or by the General Assembly, or upon
29 the activation of the State Emergency Response Team in response to an emergency, shall have
30 the right to take leave without pay from his or her civilian employment. No member of a volunteer
31 fire department, rescue squad, emergency citizen pilot, or emergency medical services agency
32 shall be forced to use or exhaust his or her vacation or other accrued leave from his or her civilian
33 employment for a period of active service. The choice of leave shall be solely within the
34 discretion of the member.

35 **(b) Request in Writing Required.** – For the volunteer member to be entitled to take leave
36 without pay pursuant to this section, his or her services shall be requested in writing by the
37 Director of the Division or by the head of a local emergency management agency. The request
38 shall be directed to the Chief of the member's volunteer fire department, rescue squad, emergency
39 citizen pilot, or emergency medical services agency, and a copy shall be provided to the member's
40 employer. This section shall not apply to those members whose services have been certified by
41 their employer to the Director of the Division, or to the head of a local emergency management
42 agency, as essential to the employer's own ongoing emergency relief activities.

43 **(c) Definition of an Emergency Requiring Activation of the State Emergency Response**
44 **Team.** – For purposes of this section, an emergency requiring the activation of the State
45 Emergency Response Team means an emergency at Activation Level 2 or greater according to
46 the North Carolina State Emergency Operations Plan of November 2002. Activation Level 2
47 requires the State Emergency Operations Center to be fully activated with 24-hour staffing from
48 all State Emergency Response Team members.

49 **(d) Enforcement.** – The Commissioner of Labor shall enforce the provisions of this
50 section pursuant to Chapter 95 of the General Statutes."

51 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 166A-19.60(e) reads as rewritten:

1 "(e) Definition of Emergency Management Worker. – As used in this section, the term
2 "emergency management worker" shall include any full or part-time paid, volunteer, or auxiliary
3 employee of this State or other states, territories, possessions, or the District of Columbia, of the
4 federal government or any neighboring country or of any political subdivision thereof, or of any
5 agency or organization performing emergency management ~~services~~services, including
6 emergency citizen pilots with active status certification, at any place in this State, subject to the
7 order or control of or pursuant to a request of the State government or any political subdivision
8 thereof. The term "emergency management worker" under this section shall also include any
9 health care worker performing health care services as a member of a hospital-based or
10 county-based State Medical Assistance Team designated by the North Carolina Office of
11 Emergency Medical Services and any person performing emergency health care services under
12 G.S. 90-12.2."

13 **SECTION 4.** The Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency
14 Management, shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this act. The Division shall have
15 the Emergency Citizen Pilot Training Program operational by January 1, 2027. The Division
16 shall report to the Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee on the
17 implementation of the Program and other provisions of this act on or before October 1, 2026, and
18 one year thereafter.

19 **SECTION 5.** Sections 1, 2, and 3 of this act become effective October 1, 2025. The
20 remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.