

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 SENATE BILL 158

By: Mann

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5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to weather tracking licensure;
8 creating the Oklahoma Emergency Weather Response and
9 Tracking Regulatory Act of 2025; providing short
10 title; defining terms; establishing certain
11 requirements for media outlets; establishing certain
12 requirements for certain institutions of higher
13 education; requiring certain fees; establishing
14 certain violations; promulgating certain rules;
15 creating the Severe Weather Tracker Licensure Fund;
16 providing requirements for certain vehicles;
17 authorizing certain actions; providing certain
18 exceptions; establishing fines for certain
19 violations; providing for codification; providing an
20 effective date; and declaring an emergency.

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

22 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
23 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-300 of Title 47, unless there
24 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

25 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma
26 Emergency Weather Response and Tracking Regulatory Act of 2025".

27 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
28 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-301 of Title 47, unless there
29 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1 As used in this act:

2 1. "Professional severe weather tracker" means a licensed
3 individual or company hired or contracted with by a qualified media
4 outlet or affiliated with a research program at a qualified
5 institution of higher education;

6 2. "Qualified media outlet" means a television station licensed
7 by the Federal Communications Commission for the broadcast or
8 transmission of television programming via broadcast, cable,
9 streaming, or other platforms as recognized by the Federal
10 Communications Commission;

11 3. "Qualified institution of higher education" means any
12 college or university regulated by the Oklahoma State Regents for
13 Higher Education that offers a course or program in meteorology; and

14 4. "Significant weather event" means:

15 a. a day of enhanced, moderate, or high risk conditions
16 in one or more counties located in this state by the
17 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's
18 National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center,

19 b. any tornado or severe thunderstorm watch issued by the
20 National Weather Service or the chief meteorologist
21 employed by a qualified media outlet,

22 c. any storm in one or more counties located in this
23 state, or anticipated to enter this state, for which a
24 tornado or thunderstorm warning has been issued by the

1 National Weather Service or the chief meteorologist
2 employed by a qualified media outlet,

3 d. a blizzard warning, ice storm warning, winter weather
4 advisory, winter storm warning, or winter storm watch
5 as declared by the National Weather Service or the
6 chief meteorologist employed by a qualified media
7 outlet,

8 e. a red flag fire warning declared by the National
9 Weather Service or the Forestry Services Division of
10 the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and
11 Forestry, or

12 f. a flash flood warning or flood warning issued by the
13 National Weather Service or the chief meteorologist
14 employed by a qualified media outlet.

15 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
16 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-302 of Title 47, unless there
17 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

18 A. Service Oklahoma shall be authorized to create a
19 professional severe weather tracker license.

20 B. Any professional severe weather tracker employed or
21 contracted with by any qualified media outlet shall:

22 1. Cause a copy of his or her license issued by Service
23 Oklahoma to be kept on file with the outlet;

1 2. Cause to be displayed on both sides of every primary vehicle
2 utilized by the professional severe weather tracker, the license
3 number issued by Service Oklahoma, and the Federal Communications
4 Commission license number of the qualified media outlet with whom
5 the tracker maintains the employment or contractual relationship;

6 3. Pass a criminal background check;

7 4. Supply Service Oklahoma with a letter from the chief
8 meteorologist of the qualified media outlet stating the belief of
9 such meteorologist that the prospective professional severe weather
10 tracker possesses the knowledge, experience, and training to
11 exercise the powers and duties of the license responsibly; and

12 5. Provide to Service Oklahoma a copy of valid and continuing
13 insurance coverage for every primary vehicle utilized by the
14 professional severe weather tracker.

15 C. Any professional severe weather tracker employed, contracted
16 with, or otherwise affiliated with any qualified institution of
17 higher education shall:

18 1. Cause a copy of his or her license issued by Service
19 Oklahoma to be kept on file with the dean, director, or other
20 designated individual of the institution who shall be responsible
21 for the maintenance of records associated with the institution's
22 meteorology program;

23 2. Cause to be displayed on both sides of every primary vehicle
24 utilized by the professional severe weather tracker, the license

1 number issued by Service Oklahoma, as well as an identifying number
2 developed by Service Oklahoma for the qualified institution of
3 higher education;

4 3. Pass a criminal background check;

5 4. Supply Service Oklahoma with a letter from the dean,
6 director, or other designated individual of the institution who
7 shall be responsible for the maintenance of records associated with
8 the institution's meteorology program stating the belief of such
9 person that the prospective professional severe weather tracker
10 possesses the knowledge, experience, and training to exercise the
11 powers and duties of the license responsibly; and

12 5. Provide to Service Oklahoma a copy of valid and continuing
13 insurance coverage for every primary vehicle utilized by the
14 professional severe weather tracker.

15 D. The fees for a license issued pursuant to this section shall
16 not exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per year for the initial
17 application, shall expire at the end of the calendar year, and may
18 be renewed annually for Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00). Such
19 fees shall be deposited into the Severe Weather Tracker Licensure
20 Fund created pursuant to Section 4 of this act and shall be utilized
21 by Service Oklahoma for the administration of the provisions of this
22 act.

23 E. Service Oklahoma may issue a letter of reprimand, cancel,
24 suspend, revoke, refuse to issue, or refuse to renew the license of

1 an operator when it finds the licensee or applicant has violated any
2 of the provisions of this act or any rules adopted by Service
3 Oklahoma. A suspension shall be for a period of time deemed
4 appropriate by Service Oklahoma for the violation. Any canceled,
5 suspended, or revoked license shall be returned to Service Oklahoma
6 by the licensee, and the licensee shall not be eligible to apply for
7 another license until the period of suspension or revocation has
8 elapsed.

9 F. Service Oklahoma shall promulgate rules for the
10 implementation of this act.

11 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
12 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-303 of Title 47, unless there
13 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

14 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund
15 for Service Oklahoma to be designated the "Severe Weather Tracker
16 Licensure Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject
17 to fiscal year limitations. All monies accruing to the credit of
18 the fund are hereby appropriated and shall be budgeted and expended
19 by Service Oklahoma for the restricted purposes of the monies as
20 prescribed by law. Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon
21 warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as
22 prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of Management and
23 Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

1 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-304 of Title 47, unless there
3 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. Primary vehicles utilized by a professional severe weather
5 tracker shall:

6 1. Display markings clearly identifying such vehicle as being
7 utilized for severe weather tracking and identifying the qualified
8 media outlet or institution of higher education with which the
9 tracker is affiliated; and

10 2. Be authorized to be equipped and to use the visual signals
11 described in Section 12-218 of Title 47 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

12 B. Once the conditions of a significant weather event have been
13 met, a professional severe weather tracker may:

14 1. Activate the visual signals authorized for use in this act;

15 2. Be considered an emergency vehicle for the purposes of this
16 act; and

17 3. Travel upon roads, highways, and country roads closed by the
18 Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, any
19 city or county, or any law enforcement agency by reason of
20 conditions triggered by the significant weather event.

21 C. Upon instruction by any law enforcement officer, a
22 professional severe weather tracker shall provide a copy of his or
23 her license issued by Service Oklahoma. Failure to comply shall be
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1 enforced in accordance with the provisions of Section 6-112 of Title
2 47 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

3 D. The provisions of this section shall not limit the liability
4 of a professional severe weather tracker.

5 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
6 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-305 of Title 47, unless there
7 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

8 Any professional severe weather tracker found to be in violation
9 of the provisions of this act may be subject to a fine not to exceed
10 Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or revocation of his or her license
11 by Service Oklahoma. Such fine or revocation shall be in addition
12 to any criminal or civil penalties the tracker may be subject to for
13 the violation of the laws of this state.

14 SECTION 7. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

15 SECTION 8. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
16 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
17 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
18 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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