
HOUSE BILL 1201

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Leavitt and Ryu

Prefiled 01/08/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to identifying accommodations allowing pets in an
2 emergency or extreme weather event; adding a new section to chapter
3 38.52 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that natural
6 disasters and extreme weather events, including wildfire, flooding,
7 earthquakes, extreme heat, and extreme cold present severe risks to
8 public health and safety in Washington.

9 The legislature further finds that pets are particularly
10 vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, including risk of
11 heatstroke-related illness and death.

12 The legislature further finds that many families consider their
13 pets to be family members. One of the most significant factors
14 affecting evacuation decisions is pet ownership. Pet owners may
15 refuse evacuation, attempt to reenter evacuated sites to rescue their
16 pets, and experience grief, depression, and posttraumatic stress
17 disorder due to separation from their pet during an emergency. In
18 addition, zoonotic disease risks increase when pets are abandoned or
19 left to roam during an evacuation.

1 The legislature further finds that gaps in public preparedness
2 and cosheltering opportunities during a disaster or extreme weather
3 event increase the risk to public health and safety.

4 The legislature further finds that partnerships with
5 nongovernmental organizations support emergency planning and
6 preparedness and may be used to support identification and operation
7 of coshelters.

8 Therefore, the legislature intends to provide guidance in
9 increasing public preparedness and identifying shelters that can
10 accommodate pets so that in the event of a disaster or extreme
11 weather event, Washington residents will not have to choose between
12 seeking safety and staying with their pets.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 38.52
14 RCW to read as follows:

15 (1) A county or city, under existing plan structures, shall, to
16 the extent practicable based on available resources and site-specific
17 circumstances, consider emergency shelters, cooling centers, and
18 warming centers able to accommodate persons with pets in each update
19 of its local comprehensive emergency management plan required by RCW
20 38.52.070.

21 (a) A local comprehensive emergency management plan must:

22 (i) Identify at least one emergency shelter within a county or
23 city's jurisdiction, to the extent practicable, that can accommodate
24 persons with pets;

25 (ii) Identify at least one cooling center within a county or
26 city's jurisdiction, to the extent practicable, that can accommodate
27 persons with pets; and

28 (iii) Identify at least one heating center within a county or
29 city's jurisdiction, to the extent practicable, that can accommodate
30 persons with pets.

31 (b) An emergency shelter that is identified to accommodate
32 persons with pets must have safety procedures regarding the
33 sheltering of pets and comply with disaster assistance policies and
34 procedures published by the federal emergency management agency.

35 (2) A county or city shall provide pet emergency preparedness
36 information on its website, including:

37 (a) To the extent practicable, whether each designated emergency
38 shelter, cooling center, or heating center can accommodate pets;

1 (b) Information for creating a pet evacuation plan and emergency
2 checklist, consistent with the federal emergency management agency
3 recommendations; and

4 (c) Identification of local organizations that provide emergency
5 pet assistance.

6 (3) The following definitions apply to this section:

7 (a) "Cooling center" means a facility that mitigates the public
8 health impacts of extreme heat;

9 (b) "Emergency shelter" means a temporary location that provides
10 basic shelter for individuals affected by an emergency or disaster;

11 (c) "Pet" means a domesticated animal, such as a dog or cat, that
12 is commonly kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial
13 purposes; and

14 (d) "Warming center" means a facility that mitigates the public
15 health impacts of extreme cold.

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