

1 ENGROSSED HOUSE
2 BILL NO. 2426

By: Fetgatter of the House

and

Mann of the Senate

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8 [emergency weather response - Oklahoma Severe
9 Weather Media Tracking and Research Regulatory Act
10 of 2025 - severe weather trackers - vehicles -
11 criteria - Service Oklahoma - license -
12 requirements - renewal fees - punishment for
13 violations - suspension or revocation of licenses -
14 rules - Severe Weather Tracker Licensure Fund -
15 expenditures - identification and equipment -
16 authorizations - weather trackers - fines and
17 revocation of license - codification - effective
18 date]

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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:

1 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Severe
2 Weather Media Tracking and Research Regulatory Act of 2025".

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

6 As used in the Oklahoma Severe Weather Media Tracking and
7 Research Regulatory Act of 2025:

8 1. "Field research team" shall mean a privately funded research
9 team in the field of meteorology and sanctioned by a Doctor or
10 principle researcher of the National Science Foundation or National
11 Institute of Science and Technology;

12 2. "Professional severe weather tracker" shall mean a licensed
13 individual or company hired or contracted via a qualified media
14 outlet, or in a reserve role of up to two (2) years of inactivity
15 with a qualified media outlet, or is affiliated with a research
16 program at a qualified institution for higher education;

17 3. "Professional severe weather tracker's primary vehicle"
18 shall mean a primary vehicle which complies with the provisions of
19 the Oklahoma Severe Weather Media Tracking and Research Regulatory
20 Act of 2025, and defined further in Section 3 of this act;

21 4. "Qualified institution for higher education" shall mean any
22 college or university regulated by the Oklahoma State Regents for
23 Higher Education who offers a course or program in meteorology,
24 including federal or state research programs in the field of severe

1 weather, which shall include vehicles gathering atmospheric
2 conditions and radar vehicles;

3 5. "Qualified media outlet" shall mean a commercial television
4 or radio station licensed by the Federal Communications Commission
5 for the broadcast or transmission of television programming via
6 broadcast, cable, streaming, or other platforms as recognized by the
7 Federal Communications Commission; and

8 6. "Significant weather event" shall mean:

- 9 a. a confirmed tornado or tornado emergency which wholly
10 or partially covers one or more counties located in
11 the State of Oklahoma issued by the National Oceanic
12 and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National
13 Weather Service Storm Prediction Center,
- 14 b. a confirmed tornado or tornado emergency which covers
15 any county within a neighboring state, in which such
16 county borders the State of Oklahoma, issued by the
17 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's
18 National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center,
- 19 c. red flag fire warning issued by the NOAA National
20 Weather Service or the Oklahoma Forestry Services of
21 the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and
22 Forestry, or
- 23 d. flash flood warning or flood warning issued by the
24 NOAA National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center.

1 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-148.1 of Title 47, unless
3 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 Any vehicle categorized as a professional severe weather
5 tracker's primary vehicle as defined in the Oklahoma Severe Weather
6 Media Tracking and Research Regulatory Act of 2025 shall:

7 1. Be authorized to be equipped with a combination of green and
8 yellow flashing lights. The lights shall be visible at five hundred
9 (500) feet in normal sunlight;

10 2. Display markings clearly identifying such vehicle as being
11 utilized for severe weather tracking and identifying the qualified
12 media outlet or qualified institution of higher education with which
13 the tracker is affiliated;

14 3. Cause to be displayed in sharp contrasting colors visible
15 from fifty (50) feet, in conformance with the rules of Service
16 Oklahoma, on both sides of such vehicle and as applicable:

17 a. the license number issued by Service Oklahoma and the
18 Federal Communications Commission license number of
19 the qualified media outlet with whom the tracker
20 maintains the employment or contractual relationship,
21 or

22 b. the license number issued by Service Oklahoma, as well
23 as an identifying number developed by Service Oklahoma
24 for qualified institutions of higher education; and

1 4. Not be violative of the provisions of subsection B of
2 Section 264 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes as it relates to
3 restrictions on utilizing insignia from law enforcement agencies to
4 influence traffic enforcement and shall not be violative of other
5 provisions of law.

6 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
7 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-302 of Title 47, unless there
8 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

9 A. Service Oklahoma shall be authorized to create a
10 professional severe weather tracker license.

11 B. Any professional severe weather tracker employed or
12 contracted with by any qualified media outlet shall be eligible to
13 apply for a license authorized in this subsection. Such licensee
14 shall:

15 1. Cause a copy of his or her license issued by Service
16 Oklahoma to be kept on file with such outlet;

17 2. Ensure the professional severe weather tracker's primary
18 vehicle conforms with the requirements of Section 3 of this act;

19 3. Shall have been employed or contracted with a qualified
20 media outlet no less than one (1) year and shall not have been
21 terminated for cause by a qualified media outlet in the last four
22 (4) years;

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1 4. Submit to an electronic national criminal history record
2 check pursuant to Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma
3 Statutes;

4 5. Supply Service Oklahoma with a letter from the hiring entity
5 of the qualified media outlet stating the belief of such hiring
6 entity that the prospective professional severe weather tracker
7 possesses the knowledge, experience, and training to exercise the
8 privileges and duties of the license responsibly;

9 6. Provide a copy of valid and continuing insurance coverage as
10 required by Sections 7-101 et seq. of Title 47 of the Oklahoma
11 Statutes to Service Oklahoma;

12 7. Take an emergency driving course provided by an institute of
13 higher education, a technology center school district, or a private
14 instructor who is certified by the Council on Law Enforcement
15 Education and Training before receiving a license and upon every
16 renewal; and

17 8. Carry minimum vehicle insurance of One Million Dollars
18 (\$1,000,000.00) of combined single liability or other coverage of
19 the same amount.

20 C. Any professional severe weather tracker employed, contracted
21 with, or otherwise affiliated with any qualified institution for
22 higher education shall be eligible to apply for a license authorized
23 in this subsection. Such licensee shall:

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

6 2. Ensure the professional severe weather tracker's vehicle
7 conforms with the requirements of Section 3 of this act;

8 3. Submit to an electronic national criminal history record
9 check pursuant to Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma
10 Statutes;

11 4. Supply Service Oklahoma with a letter from the dean,
12 director, or other designated individual by the institution who
13 shall be responsible for the maintenance of records associated with
14 the institution's meteorology program stating the belief of such
15 person that the prospective professional severe weather tracker
16 possesses the knowledge, experience, and training to exercise the
17 privileges and duties of the license responsibly;

18 5. Provide a copy of valid and continuing insurance coverage as
19 required by Sections 7-101 et seq. of Title 47 of the Oklahoma
20 Statutes to Service Oklahoma;

21 6. Take an emergency driving course provided by an institute of
22 higher education, a technology center school district, or a private
23 instructor who is certified by the Council on Law Enforcement
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1 Education and Training before receiving a license and upon every
2 renewal; and

3 7. Carry minimum vehicle insurance of One Million Dollars
4 (\$1,000,000.00) of combined single liability or other coverage of
5 the same amount.

6 D. Any professional severe weather tracker who is a member of a
7 field research team as defined in Section 2 of this act and is led
8 by an individual who has received his or her Doctorate of
9 Meteorology shall be eligible to apply for a license authorized in
10 this subsection. Such licensee shall:

11 1. Cause a copy of his or her license issued by Service
12 Oklahoma to be kept on file with the Doctor or other designated
13 individual by the Doctor who shall be responsible for the
14 maintenance of records associated with the research being conducted;

15 2. Ensure the professional severe weather tracker's primary
16 vehicle conforms with the requirements of Section 3 of this act;

17 3. Submit to an electronic national criminal history record
18 check pursuant to Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma
19 Statutes;

20 4. Supply Service Oklahoma with a copy of the completion of the
21 Doctor's doctoral degree in the field of meteorology, a copy of the
22 funding statement from or scope of research to be performed for the
23 National Science Foundation or National Institute of Science and
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1 Technology, and a letter from the Doctor attesting the applicant is
2 a member of the research team;

3 5. Provide a copy of valid and continuing insurance coverage
4 for the vehicle as required by Section 7-101 et seq. of Title 47 of
5 the Oklahoma Statutes to Service Oklahoma;

6 6. Take an emergency driving course provided by an institution
7 of higher education, a technology center school district, or a
8 private instructor who is certified by the Council on Law
9 Enforcement Education and Training before receiving a license and
10 upon renewal; and

11 7. Carry minimum vehicle insurance of One Million Dollars
12 (\$1,000,000.00) of combined single liability, or other coverage of
13 the same amount.

14 E. The fees for a license issued pursuant to this section shall
15 be sufficient to only cover the costs of the implementation and
16 administration of this act, however under no circumstances shall the
17 fee authorized in this subsection exceed Five Hundred Dollars
18 (\$500.00) for a three-year license for the initial application and
19 shall expire at the end of the calendar year of the third year. The
20 fee for any subsequent renewal shall be Two Hundred Fifty Dollars
21 (\$250.00) for any subsequent renewal.

22 F. Service Oklahoma shall issue a letter of reprimand, cancel,
23 suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue or renew the license of an
24 operator when it finds the licensee or applicant has not complied

1 with or has violated any of the provisions of the Oklahoma Severe
2 Weather Media Tracking and Research Regulatory Act of 2025, or any
3 rules adopted by Service Oklahoma. A suspension or revocation shall
4 be for a period of time deemed appropriate by Service Oklahoma for
5 the violation. Any canceled, suspended, or revoked license shall be
6 returned to Service Oklahoma by the licensee, and the licensee shall
7 not be eligible to apply for another license until the period of
8 suspension or revocation has elapsed.

9 G. Service Oklahoma shall promulgate rules to effectuate the
10 provisions of this act.

11 H. The provisions of the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act
12 shall apply to the implementation and administration of this act.

13 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
14 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-303 of Title 47, unless there
15 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

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

3 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-304 of Title 47, unless there
5 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 A. Professional severe weather tracker's primary vehicles shall
7 comply with the marking provisions of Section 3 of this act.

8 B. Once the conditions of a significant weather event have been
9 met, a professional severe weather tracker located in the area for
10 which the significant weather event is located may:

11 1. Activate the visual signals authorized by Section 3 of this
12 act;

13 2. Travel upon roads, highways, and county roads closed by the
14 Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, any
15 city or county, or any law enforcement agency by reason of
16 conditions triggered by the significant weather event. Provided,
17 upon the determination by any law enforcement officer that the
18 conditions which caused such closure present too grave a risk for
19 the life and safety of the professional severe weather tracker, law
20 enforcement may prevent the continued travel upon or entry to any
21 closed road;

22 3. Proceed past a red light or traffic control signal as
23 defined in Section 1-178 of Title 47 of the Oklahoma Statutes, but
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1 only after coming to a complete stop and ensuring the absence of
2 cross traffic;

3 4. Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as speeding does not
4 endanger life or property;

5 5. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement; and

6 6. Disregard regulations governing turning in specified
7 directions.

8 C. The exemptions granted to a professional severe weather
9 tracker in this section shall apply only when the tracker is
10 properly and lawfully making use of flashing green and yellow lights
11 or a combination of flashing green and yellow lights meeting the
12 requirements of Section 3 of this act.

13 D. The provisions of this section shall not limit the liability
14 of a professional severe weather tracker. The provisions of this
15 section shall not relieve the professional severe weather tracker
16 from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all
17 persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the
18 consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

19 E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require that
20 any motor vehicle yield right-of-way and stop for any professional
21 severe weather tracker.

22 F. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize a
23 professional severe weather tracker to impersonate a law enforcement
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1 officer or first responder, or to block roads or prevent the free
2 and regular flow of traffic upon the roads of this state.

3 G. Nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt a
4 professional severe weather tracker from obligation to yield right-
5 of-way and stop for authorized emergency vehicles, as prescribed in
6 Section 1-103 of Title 47 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

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

10 Any professional severe weather tracker found to be in violation
11 of the provisions of this act shall be subject to a fine, not to
12 exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00), and revocation of his or her
13 license by Service Oklahoma.

14 Such fine or revocation shall be in addition to any criminal or
15 civil penalties that the professional severe weather tracker may be
16 subject to for any other violations of the laws of this state.

17 SECTION 8. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
18 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-306 of Title 47, unless there
19 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

20 Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit or limit the
21 rights of any individual from engaging in recreational or commercial
22 storm chasing who is not in possession of or eligible to receive a
23 license authorized by this act. However, a license received
24 pursuant to this act shall not be used for the purpose of getting a

