

1 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

4 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
5 FOR
6 HOUSE BILL NO. 2426

By: Fetgatter of the House

and

Mann of the Senate

8
9 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

10 An Act relating to emergency weather response;
11 creating the Oklahoma Emergency Weather Response and
12 Tracking Regulatory Act of 2025; defining terms;
13 authorizing Service Oklahoma to create certain
14 license; stating requirements for Professional Severe
15 Weather Trackers; providing for licensing and renewal
16 fees; directing deposit of certain collected fees;
17 authorizing Service Oklahoma to provide punishment
18 for violations; providing Service Oklahoma with
19 certain discretion for suspension or revocation of
20 licenses; requiring certain return of license;
21 requiring Service Oklahoma promulgate certain rules;
22 providing for the application of certain act;
23 creating the Severe Weather Tracker Licensure Fund;
24 stating type of fund; stating purpose of fund;
 authorizing expenditures from fund; requiring
 vehicles have certain identification and equipment;
 making certain authorizations for Professional Severe
 Weather Trackers; establishing provisions for severe
 weather tracking during certain significant weather
 events; exempting professional severe weather
 trackers from certain traffic regulations under
 certain circumstances; providing exceptions to
 certain exemptions; providing for fines and
 revocation of license; stating fines or revocation
 shall be in addition to other penalties; allowing
 storm chasing without a license; restricting use of
 license to certain purposes; amending 47 O.S. 2021,
 Section 1-103, which relates to authorized emergency

1 vehicles; designating certain vehicles as authorized
2 emergency vehicles in certain circumstances; amending
3 47 O.S. 2021, Section 12-218, which relates to
4 distinctive markings of emergency vehicles; providing
5 for distinctive markings for primary vehicles of
6 professional severe weather trackers; updating
7 statutory language; providing for codification; and
8 providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

18 As used in the Oklahoma Emergency Weather Response and Tracking
19 Regulatory Act of 2025:

20 1. "Professional Severe Weather Tracker" shall mean a licensed
21 individual or company hired or contracted via a qualified media
22 outlet, or is affiliated with a research program at a qualified
23 institution for higher education;

24 2. "Qualified institution for higher education" shall mean any
college or university regulated by the Oklahoma State Regents for

1 Higher Education who offers a course or program in meteorology,
2 including federal or state research programs in the field of severe
3 weather, which shall include vehicles gathering atmospheric
4 conditions and radar vehicles;

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

10 4. "Significant weather event" shall mean:

11 a. tornado or severe thunderstorm warning that partially
12 or wholly covers one or more counties located in the
13 State of Oklahoma issued by the National Weather
14 Service,

15 b. tornado or severe thunderstorm warned storms that are
16 located in any county within a neighboring state in
17 which that county borders the State of Oklahoma,

18 c. red flag fire warning issued by the National Weather
19 Service or the Oklahoma Forestry Services of the
20 Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and
21 Forestry, or

22 d. flash flood warning or flood warning issued by the
23 National Weather Service or the chief meteorologist
24 employed by a qualified media outlet.

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

4 A. Service Oklahoma shall be authorized to create a
5 Professional Severe Weather Tracker license.

6 B. Any Professional Severe Weather Tracker employed or
7 contracted with by any qualified media outlet shall be eligible to
8 apply for a license authorized in this subsection. Such licensee
9 shall:

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

12 2. Cause to be displayed in sharp contrasting colors visible
13 from fifty (50) feet, in conformance with the rules of Service
14 Oklahoma, on both sides of every primary vehicle utilized by the
15 Professional Severe Weather Tracker, his or her license number
16 issued by Service Oklahoma and the Federal Communications Commission
17 license number of the qualified media outlet with whom the tracker
18 maintains the employment or contractual relationship;

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;

23
24

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 powers and duties of the license responsibly;

9 6. Provide a copy of valid and continuing insurance coverage
10 for the vehicle to Service Oklahoma;

11 7. Take an emergency driving course provided by an institute of
12 higher education or a private driving school before receiving a
13 license and upon every renewal; and

14 8. Carry minimum vehicle insurance of One Million Dollars
15 (\$1,000,000.00) of combined single liability.

16 C. Any Professional Severe Weather Tracker employed, contracted
17 with, or otherwise affiliated with any qualified institution for
18 higher education shall be eligible to apply for a license authorized
19 in this subsection. Such licensee shall:

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

- 1 2. Cause to be displayed in sharp contrasting colors visible
2 from fifty (50) feet, in conformance with the rules of Service
3 Oklahoma, on both sides of every primary vehicle utilized by the
4 Professional Severe Weather Tracker, the license number as issued by
5 Service Oklahoma, as well as an identifying number developed by
6 Service Oklahoma for qualified institutions of higher education;
- 7 3. Submit to an electronic national criminal history record
8 check pursuant to Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma
9 Statutes;
- 10 4. Supply Service Oklahoma with a letter from the dean,
11 director, or other designated individual by the institution who
12 shall be responsible for the maintenance of records associated with
13 the institution's meteorology program stating the belief of such
14 person that the prospective Professional Severe Weather Tracker
15 possesses the knowledge, experience, and training to exercise the
16 powers and duties of the license responsibly;
- 17 5. Provide a copy of valid and continuing insurance coverage
18 for the vehicle to Service Oklahoma;
- 19 6. Take an emergency driving course provided by an institute of
20 higher education or a private driving school before receiving a
21 license and upon every renewal; and
- 22 7. Carry minimum vehicle insurance of One Million Dollars
23 (\$1,000,000.00) of combined single liability.
- 24

1 D. The fees for a license issued pursuant to this section shall
2 be sufficient to only cover the costs of the implementation and
3 administration of this act, however under no circumstances shall the
4 fee authorized in this subsection exceed Five Hundred Dollars
5 (\$500.00) for a three-year license for the initial application and
6 shall expire at the end of the calendar year of the third year. The
7 fee for any subsequent renewal shall be Two Hundred Fifty Dollars
8 (\$250.00) for any subsequent renewal.

9 E. Service Oklahoma shall issue a letter of reprimand, cancel,
10 suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue or renew the license of an
11 operator when it finds the licensee or applicant has not complied
12 with or has violated any of the provisions of the Oklahoma Emergency
13 Weather Response and Tracking Act of 2025, or any rules adopted by
14 Service Oklahoma. A suspension or revocation shall be for a period
15 of time deemed appropriate by Service Oklahoma for the violation.
16 Any canceled, suspended, or revoked license shall be returned to
17 Service Oklahoma by the licensee, and the licensee shall not be
18 eligible to apply for another license until the period of suspension
19 or revocation has elapsed.

20 F. Service Oklahoma shall promulgate rules to effectuate the
21 provisions of this act.

22 G. The provisions of the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act
23 shall apply to the implementation and administration of this act.

24

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

4 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund
5 for Service Oklahoma to be designated the "Severe Weather Tracker
6 Licensure Fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject
7 to fiscal year limitations. All monies accruing to the credit of
8 the fund are hereby appropriated and shall be budgeted and expended
9 by Service Oklahoma for the restricted purposes of the monies as
10 prescribed by law. Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon
11 warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as
12 prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of Management and
13 Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

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

17 A. Primary vehicles utilized by a professional severe weather
18 tracker shall:

19 1. Display markings clearly identifying such vehicle as being
20 utilized for severe weather tracking and identifying the qualified
21 media outlet or qualified institution of higher education with which
22 the tracker is affiliated; and
23
24

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

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

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

7 2. Be considered an authorized emergency vehicle for the
8 purposes of this act;

9 3. Travel upon roads, highways, and county roads closed by the
10 Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, any
11 city or county, or any law enforcement agency by reason of
12 conditions triggered by the significant weather event;

13 4. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only
14 after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;

15 5. Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as speeding does not
16 endanger life or property;

17 6. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement; and

18 7. Disregard regulations governing turning in specified
19 directions.

20 C. The exemptions granted to a professional severe weather
21 tracker in this section shall apply only when the tracker is
22 properly and lawfully making use of flashing green and yellow lights
23 or a combination of flashing green and yellow lights meeting the
24 requirements of Section 12-218 of Title 47 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

1 D. The provisions of this section shall not limit the liability
2 of a professional severe weather tracker. The provisions of this
3 section shall not relieve the professional severe weather tracker
4 from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all
5 persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the
6 consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others.

7 E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to exempt a
8 professional severe weather tracker from obligation to yield right-
9 of-way and stop for superseding authorized emergency vehicles, as
10 prescribed in Section 1-103 of Title 47 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

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

14 Any Professional Severe Weather Tracker found to be in violation
15 of the provisions of this act shall be subject to a fine, not to
16 exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00), and revocation of his or her
17 license by Service Oklahoma.

18 Such fine or revocation shall be in addition to any criminal or
19 civil penalties that the Professional Severe Weather Tracker may be
20 subject to for any other violations of the laws of this state.

21 SECTION 7. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
22 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 19-306 of Title 47, unless there
23 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

24

1 Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit or limit the
2 rights of any individual from engaging in recreational or commercial
3 storm chasing who is not in possession of or eligible to receive a
4 license authorized by this act. However, a license received
5 pursuant to this act shall not be used for the purpose of getting a
6 better filming location. The license shall only be used for the
7 purposes of keeping up with a storm or its conditions and traveling
8 through restricted locations, not to restricted locations.

9 SECTION 8. AMENDATORY 47 O.S. 2021, Section 1-103, is
10 amended to read as follows:

11 Section 1-103. Authorized emergency vehicles - Equipment.

12 A. When equipped as prescribed in subsection B of this section:

13 1. Vehicles of fire departments;

14 2. Ambulances or vehicles specified pursuant to subsection B of
15 Section 1-2512 of Title 63 of the Oklahoma Statutes of licensed
16 ambulance service providers;

17 3. State vehicles of law enforcement agencies;

18 4. County vehicles of sheriffs and full-time commissioned
19 deputies and vehicles designated by the sheriff for support of the
20 sheriff's office including privately owned vehicles driven by the
21 sheriff and full-time, part-time and reserve commissioned deputies;
22 provided the audible sirens and flashing red lights equipped on such
23 privately owned vehicles are used only in a law enforcement capacity
24 and in the course of duty;

1 5. Municipal vehicles of police departments;

2 6. Vehicles owned and operated by the United States Marshals
3 Service or the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

4 7. Vehicles of Oklahoma National Guard units designated by the
5 Adjutant General for support to civil authorities; ~~or~~

6 8. Vehicles owned and operated by any local organization for
7 emergency management as defined by Section 683.3 of Title 63 of the
8 Oklahoma Statutes; or

9 9. Primary vehicles of professional severe weather trackers
10 hired by or contracted with a qualified media outlet or qualified
11 institution of higher education, as those terms are defined in
12 Section 2 of this act. Provided, however, such authorized emergency
13 vehicle designation shall only be provided while the professional
14 severe weather tracker is tracking a significant weather event, and
15 professional severe weather trackers shall yield right-of-way and
16 stop for vehicles described in paragraphs 1 through 8 of this
17 subsection,

18 are authorized emergency vehicles.

19 B. All Except for primary vehicles of professional severe
20 weather trackers, all vehicles prescribed in subsection A of this
21 section shall be equipped with sirens capable of giving audible
22 signals as required by the provisions of Section 12-218 of this
23 title and flashing ~~red~~ lights as authorized by the provisions of
24 Section 12-218 of this title.

1 SECTION 9. AMENDATORY 47 O.S. 2021, Section 12-218, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 Section 12-218. A. Every authorized emergency vehicle shall,
4 in addition to any other equipment and distinctive markings required
5 by this title, be equipped with flashing red or blue lights or a
6 combination of flashing red and blue lights. The lights shall be
7 visible at five hundred (500) feet in normal sunlight.

8 B. A law enforcement vehicle when used as an authorized
9 emergency vehicle may but need not be equipped with alternately-
10 flashing red or blue lights specified herein. An unmarked vehicle
11 used as a law enforcement vehicle for routine traffic enforcement
12 shall be equipped with the following combination of lights:

13 1. Three flashing red, blue, or a combination of red and blue
14 lights emitting the flashing lights to the front of the vehicle;

15 2. Two flashing white lights emitting the flashing white lights
16 to the front of the vehicle;

17 3. Flashing red, blue, white or any combination of red, blue or
18 white lights placed at and emitting the flashing lights from the
19 four corners of the vehicle so that they are visible for three
20 hundred sixty (360) degrees; and

21 4. One flashing red, blue, amber, or any combination of red,
22 blue, or amber lights emitting the flashing light to the rear of the
23 vehicle.

24

1 C. A professional severe weather tracker hired by or contracted
2 with a qualified media outlet or qualified institution of higher
3 education, as such terms are defined in Section 2 of this act, shall
4 be equipped with a combination of green and yellow flashing lights.
5 The lights shall be visible at five hundred (500) feet in normal
6 sunlight.

7 D. The use of the signal equipment described herein shall
8 impose upon drivers of other vehicles the obligation to yield right-
9 of-way and stop for authorized emergency vehicles, as prescribed in
10 Section 11-405 of this title.

11 SECTION 10. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.

12

13 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
14 OVERSIGHT, dated 03/06/2025 - DO PASS, As Amended.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24