

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 164

BY SENATOR MCMATH

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. Provides relative to first responders. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 23:1017.1(6) and R.S. 29:739(C) and to enact R.S. 29:723(21),
3 relative to first responders; to expand the definition of "first responder" to include
4 public works employees; to provide for a definition of "public works employee"; to
5 provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 23:1017.1(6) is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

8 §1017.1. Definitions

9 Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following words and
10 terms, when used in this Part, shall have the following meanings:

11 * * *

12 (6) "First responder" means a volunteer engaged in activities involving the
13 Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness pursuant to
14 R.S. 29:721 et seq., and first responders as defined in R.S. 29:723 including but not
15 limited to medical personnel, emergency and medical technicians, volunteer firemen,
16 auxiliary law enforcement officers, state agency essential workers, emergency
17 service dispatchers, emergency response operators, electrical linemen as defined by

1 R.S. 29:723, **public works employees as defined in R.S. 29:723**, and members of
2 the Civil Air Patrol.

3 * * *

4 Section 2. R.S. 29:739(C) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 29:723(21) is
5 hereby enacted to read as follows:

6 §723. Definitions

7 As used in this Chapter:

8 * * *

9 **(21)(a) "Public works employee" means an employee of a municipal or**
10 **parish public works department who is responsible for the maintenance and**
11 **improvement of municipal or parish infrastructure. Public works employees**
12 **shall be considered first responders only in instances involving emergencies as**
13 **declared by the governor pursuant to R.S. 29:721 et seq.**

14 **(b) The term "first responder" may be displayed on the uniform of a**
15 **public works employee.**

16 * * *

17 §739. Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact

18 * * *

19 C. Definitions

20 As used in this Section, "first responder" refers to those individuals who in
21 the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of
22 life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response
23 providers as defined in Section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, 6 U.S.C.
24 101, as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works,
25 and other skilled support personnel, such as equipment operators, ~~and~~ electrical
26 linemen, **and public works employees** that provide immediate support services
27 during prevention, response, and recovery operations consistent with Homeland
28 Security Presidential Directive 8.

29 * * *

1 Section 3. The Louisiana State Law Institute is hereby authorized and directed to
 2 renumber the definitions in R.S. 29:723 to ensure that the definitions are in alphabetical
 3 order.

4 Section 4. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
 5 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
 6 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
 7 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
 8 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

DIGEST

SB 164 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

McMath

Present law with regard to the La. Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act, defines "first responder" as a volunteer engaged in activities involving the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness pursuant to R.S. 29:721 et seq., and first responders as defined in R.S. 29:723, including medical personnel, emergency and medical technicians, volunteer firemen, auxiliary law enforcement officers, state agency essential workers, emergency service dispatchers, emergency response operators, and members of the Civil Air Patrol.

Present law provides that "first responder" refers to those individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel, such as equipment operators that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations consistent with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8.

Proposed law adds public works employees to the definition of "first responder".

Proposed law defines "public works employee" as an employee of a municipal or parish public works department who is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of municipal or parish infrastructure.

Proposed law provides that public works employees shall be considered first responders only during emergencies as declared by the governor pursuant to R.S. 29:721 et seq.

Proposed law provides that the term "first responder" may be displayed on the uniform of a public works employee.

Proposed law includes public works employees as other skilled support personnel for purposes of the Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 23:1017.1(6) and R.S. 29:739(C); adds R.S. 29:723(21))