



At the Center of it All.

Emergency Preparedness Resource Guide

MCOA Emergency Planning Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

Societies sometimes change in a violent and radical way as ours did after the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. We all witnessed the lack of coordination among agencies whose mission was to assist in public emergencies. Steps have since been taken at the federal and state levels to correct the situation so that our response to an emergency will be effective and efficient utilizing appropriate and available resources.

On November 17, 2006, members of the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging and Senior Center Directors' Emergency Planning Task Force met to explore what roles COAs currently perform or might assume at the local level to improve how elders fare during emergencies and to develop materials to support COA personnel in performing those roles. We tried to anticipate the potential roles a COA may perform during emergencies and delineate the issues you need to consider as you undertake various roles.

The Emergency Planning Task Force identified two goals:

1. to develop an educational manual about emergency management protocols and issues that will help the membership acquire a fundamental understanding of emergency management issues and planning protocols, and
2. to produce outreach and education materials that can support the memberships' efforts to build a culture of personal preparedness.

In this manual, we have provided you with an overview of the planning process, issues and basic operations for specific emergency response roles that COAs may perform. In addition, we have assembled a series of newsletter articles (that can also serve as fact sheets) to help you to integrate personal preparedness information into your COA's overall outreach efforts. The manual also includes information on how individuals can achieve personal preparedness, how to prepare yourself to be a responder, ways of communicating alerts to the community, the importance of using a registry to identify individuals who need additional assistance to respond to emergencies, monitoring programs for ensuring the well-being of those who self shelter at home, and how to operate a shelter if your site becomes one.

In designing this manual, the MCOA Taskforce members recognized the uniqueness of each COA and its community and Emergency Management Team. It therefore included "**DON'T FORGET BOXES**" and additional directories for information specifically for your town. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU TAKE THE ACTION STEPS RECOMMENDED BY EACH OF THESE BOXES. They will supply you with effective "tools" to be prepared for your roles in responding to emergencies.

COA'S ROLE

To meet the needs of the clients we serve, it is imperative that we understand what role Councils on Aging may play in emergency situations. The information provided in this manual was prepared to assist you to determine and fulfill whatever emergency planning and/or support roles you will be engaged in within your community.

PLANNING

1. Become part of the EMD's management team. Play an integral role in developing strategies to ensure the safety of seniors.
2. Maintain the registry that helps emergency planners, first responders and COA staff plan to be able to support individuals who need assistance to respond quickly or safely to emergencies.
3. Incorporate personnel preparedness training and information into educational programs, policies and activities.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

1. Monitor the well-being of elders sheltering at home and have an understanding that in emergency situations law enforcement and fire departments will intervene to ensure the safety of elders.
2. Serve as an emergency shelter, if your building has been designated as such.

PLANNING ACTIVITY #1

Becoming Part of the Emergency Management Team

Massachusetts communities all have an Emergency Management Director (EMD). The coordination of planning activities rests with the elected officials. That authority is typically delegated to the EMDs who work with a local emergency planning committee to develop a comprehensive response plan, including supervising evacuations, monitoring the safety and well-being of citizens, opening shelters, and requesting mutual aid from neighboring towns or from MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) when that becomes necessary.



EMD'S NAME	
TELEPHONE #	
CELL PHONE #	
EMAIL ADDRESS	

The following excerpt from the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics, *Public Officials' Emergency Resource Guide* provides useful information that will help COA staff understand how public officials plan for emergencies. Once you understand what the planning scope and content are, then you can be a valuable partner in your community's emergency planning and response processes.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

The primary tool enabling a municipality to address an emergency in a preplanned, organized, predictable, and professional manner is its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) or Emergency Management Plan (EMP). To be effective, the plan must be thorough, coordinated, practiced, and frequently reviewed.

Elected officials will not be writing their municipality's EOP, but they can ensure that it identifies:

- ❖ all types of possible hazards;
- ❖ the priority hazards most likely to affect the specific community;
- ❖ the resources available to respond to an emergency—including nonprofit organizations, volunteer groups, possible shelters, transportation resources, equipment, and supplies—and a means of ensuring that adequate resources will be available to do the job; and
- ❖ how and by whom various functions will be carried out in an emergency. These functions might include communications and warnings, evacuation, shelter and feeding (also referred to as “mass care”), public information, health and medical services, emergency medical services, law enforcement services, search and rescue, and radiological survey.

In addition, an effective emergency management program includes approaches to educating citizens in advance as to how they can protect themselves in various emergency situations.

- ❖ The EOP must be practiced. Lessons learned from training exercises—or from actual emergencies—should be used to improve and update the EOP.
- ❖ The EOP must include a promulgation statement, which elected officials sign to indicate their acceptance of the plan as adequate for their municipality.
- ❖ The EOP must be reviewed periodically. A plan should be re-promulgated whenever a majority of the governing body signatories has changed since the previous promulgation approval.

Emergency preparedness is an extremely complex and thorny topic. Previous studies by the Institute of Politics at the University of Pittsburgh have shown a significant lack of clarity in a number of areas, such as where the expertise to respond to a large-scale

health or bioterrorism emergency would come from and who has the authority to quarantine citizens in the interest of public health. Interaction, practice, and analysis are all-important to bring these issues to the forefront and, insofar as possible, resolve them in advance of an unforeseen incident.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN CHECKLIST

The following excerpt from the Salt Lake County (Utah) Fire Department's emergency planning guide provides a useful list of questions that public officials may wish to use when reviewing their EOP and their community's level of emergency preparedness.

Planning:

- ❖ What kinds of disasters and emergencies could occur in your community?
- ❖ Do you have a current hazard analysis?
- ❖ What mitigation procedures, such as zoning or building codes, have been implemented to prevent or reduce the effects of disasters in your community?
- ❖ Are hazardous or radiological materials stored in or transported through your community?
- ❖ How recently has your community's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) been updated?
- ❖ How often are exercises conducted to test the plan?
- ❖ Does your Emergency Operations Plan reflect population shifts and account for new industries and land uses?
- ❖ Are members of your emergency management team getting the training and support they need?
- ❖ Are you aware of the training opportunities offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and your state emergency preparedness agency?
- ❖ What plans do you have for working with the media in an emergency?
- ❖ What plans are there for protecting and communicating with schools in your jurisdiction in an emergency?
- ❖ What about plans for people who may need additional assistance due to physical, medical, cognitive or social conditions that pose barriers to their ability to respond fully to emergencies?

Systems:

- ❖ What kinds of warning and emergency communication capabilities does your community have? Does it have Emergency Alert System linkages? Email to all municipal staff? Horns? Telephonic outbound calling alert systems such as “Reverse 911”?
- ❖ Are local emergency responders trained to operate according to the incident command system?
- ❖ Where is the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located and is it properly equipped and maintained in working order?
- ❖ Does your emergency management team have the necessary equipment to do the job?
- ❖ Do you have enough shelters and a shelter management staff for people who must be relocated in an emergency? Can they handle stranded tourists or motorists?

For your EMD, legal authority and reimbursement rules:

- ❖ Do you know your legal responsibilities in planning for emergencies?
- ❖ Do you know your authority and limitations in directing an emergency response?
- ❖ How have you prepared to deal with the liability issues involved in emergency response?
- ❖ Do you know what resources and funding the federal and state government can provide for emergency management? Do you know how to apply for them?
- ❖ Do you know what you are required to do during a disaster to qualify for federal and state relief funds?

Community relations:

- ❖ How effectively is emergency planning information getting to all of your constituents?
- ❖ Have you involved local news media in cooperative planning efforts?
- ❖ Do you have a public education program to inform citizens of ways they can prepare themselves and their families for potential emergencies?
- ❖ Does your emergency management program involve volunteer agencies, religious groups, and social or civic organizations?
- ❖ Does your program include volunteers and plans for using them during an emergency?

- ❖ Do you involve local housing administrators, social service providers, businesses and industries in your preparedness planning?

Emergency Operations Center

During an emergency, effective communication among all responding parties is essential. For this reason, the Emergency Management Services requires each municipality to have an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is the location where representatives of the major decision-making and response organizations in the community will come together. The EOC is charged with sustaining community confidence in a disaster situation. It does not necessarily exercise direct control over response agencies, but it obtains a comprehensive view of events, coordinates emergency response, and allocates resources.

The county or municipal planning process determines which agencies should have representation in the EOC. Some types of actual emergencies may not require every EOC staff member to be present; others may require calling in outside experts to assist for the duration of the emergency. Of course, to effectively use expertise and decision-making capabilities, those at the EOC must receive accurate and complete information about the emergency and about the available resources not already at the scene. Within the EOC there must be a means of obtaining and disseminating this information and of allowing the EOC staff to keep abreast of a rapidly changing situation.

The complexity of the EOC will vary according to the needs of the community and its assets. In some counties, elaborate, state-of-the-art computer equipment located in underground complexes is manned 24 hours a day; in smaller municipalities, the EOC may be a designated room in the municipal building or a community center where a map and a copy of the Emergency Operations Plan are stored.

Components of a good, suitably equipped EOC site include (1) proximity or accessibility to the seat of government; (2) adequate space and ventilation; (3) communication capacity with the disaster scene, with EOCs in other communities, and with higher-level governing bodies (i.e., county or state); (4) emergency lighting and electric power; (5) visual displays, maps, and status boards; (6) sanitary facilities, food, and water to accommodate relatively long-term stays; and (7) protection from possible hazards (e.g., not located in a floodplain). Examples of locations used by municipalities across Pennsylvania include conference rooms in the government center, training or bingo rooms in the fire hall, and recreation rooms in the community center.

Equipping the EOC need not be a major task. The most important tools are communication devices, including an ample supply of two-way radios and telephones. The primary furniture will be a conference table and chairs. There should be room for wall charts and maps, which may be rolled up and stored in a drawer during non-disaster time.

EOC planning should also include the development of an alternate site to provide for effective response and continuity of essential operations should a disaster directly affect the primary EOC site.

EOC staffs may range in size from four to more than a dozen members and may be divided into groups that handle different functions. Frequently a policy group actually makes the decisions related to emergency response. This group usually includes elected and appointed officials, the Emergency Management Coordinator, police and fire representatives, the public works/road supervisor, and the public information officer. Other specialties that may be included are health and medical care, environmental protection, evacuation and relocation, mass care and sheltering, and radiological protection.

A coordination/operations group often supports the policy group and ensures that its decisions are implemented. (This group includes communications and dispatch, volunteer organization representatives, logistics and procurement, and perhaps assistants to the members of the policy group.) Additionally, when recruiting members, you must consider a possible need for 24-hour operations, which will require a complete second shift. To cover the full range of possible response needs, members must be able to fulfill more than one of the policy or coordination/operations roles listed.

Once the EOC staff members are selected, they should be trained, mainly through a series of self-paced, tabletop exercises that will familiarize members with their responsibilities and with methods for communicating within and outside the center. Initial and ongoing participation in such exercises is essential to emergency preparedness. Public officials may wish to monitor their staffs' completion of tabletop exercises or even participate personally in some of them.

Large, elaborate, expensive EOCs are not necessarily more effective. The more complex an EOC is, the more investment and training are needed to maintain it. You can expect, in any case, that a well-planned investment in developing and maintaining your EOC will be more than repaid by the quality and efficiency of response should an emergency occur.

Emergency Response Organizations

Effective emergency management requires the coordination and training of a wide range of people, both paid and volunteer. A thorough planning process should allow for discussion of the expectations and responsibilities of all groups involved. This exchange can provide the foundation for contractual agreements and standard operating procedures (SOPs) that define how local governments and other organizations will provide for public safety in emergency situations.

Following are some of the public and private entities that should be involved in this planning, along with the roles they may be called upon to play.

- ❖ **Public officials:** directing government activities, community leadership
- ❖ **Fire department:** fire services, rescue, limited hazardous materials response, radiological monitoring, decontamination

- ❖ **Police/sheriff's department:** law enforcement, traffic control, search and rescue, warning, evacuation, emergency highway traffic regulation
- ❖ **Emergency medical services:** medical care and transportation of injured
- ❖ **Hazardous materials team:** hazardous materials response
- ❖ **Public transit:** emergency transportation
- ❖ **Public works:** engineering services, heavy rescue, emergency traffic regulation
- ❖ **Public schools:** sheltering students, public communication
- ❖ **Utility companies:** utility management or recovery
- ❖ **Health department:** emergency health and sanitation, risk assessment, immunization
- ❖ **Hospitals:** medical care, immunization, infection control
- ❖ **Other healthcare providers:** medical care in mass casualty situations
- ❖ **Public information officer:** coordination of public communications
- ❖ **Media:** public communications
- ❖ **American Red Cross or The Salvation Army:** emergency food, shelter, counseling
- ❖ **Food banks:** food coordination and distribution
- ❖ **Community organizations (COAs, Independent Living Centers, others):** shelter, social services, monitoring people while they self-shelter at home
- ❖ **Coroner:** identification of bodies, mortuary services

Emergency response planning should build on existing relationships among these organizations to develop clear understandings as to the authority and responsibilities each entity will carry in an actual emergency.

In addition, municipal leaders should be familiar with the county's emergency response personnel and capacities, and county leadership in turn should be integrated with the State's homeland security structure.

Assuring the Public

Whether you are at the emergency scene or not, you will likely receive calls from your constituents. The following steps are recommended:

- ❖ Maintain a calm, assuring tone.

- ❖ Collect any useful information that the constituent may have. You may be able to provide helpful information to the right agency or emergency responder.
- ❖ Assure callers that the appropriate authorities are responding to the situation, that government is still operating, and that trained professionals are working to get things back to normal as quickly as possible.
- ❖ Do not offer assessments or make promises that go beyond what you know with absolute certainty about the situation.

Media Relations

In an emergency, it is extremely important to disseminate accurate and consistent information. For this reason, all media requests should initially be referred to a designated public information officer.

The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) should identify a staff member from the EOC who will serve as the communications contact during an emergency, along with a backup person should the primary contact be unavailable. All local media outlets should be informed in advance of who the public information officer is and how to contact that person in an emergency. The public information officer and backup person should maintain a complete, up-to-date list of media contacts.

Public officials should expect to receive briefings from emergency response staff as the situation unfolds and throughout the recovery period.

Helping Individuals Who Need Help Responding to Emergencies

In addition to the guidelines above concerning general operations, critical consideration must be given to make sure your community's emergency management plan anticipates and is responsive to the needs of individuals who need help responding to emergencies (due to physical, mental, sensory, cognitive or social conditions that impede their ability to safely respond.) The following material from the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, describes in practical detail what types of help individuals may need and how to address these needs through enhancing emergency response operations.

MAKING LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

One of the most important roles of local government is to protect their citizenry from harm, including helping people prepare for and respond to emergencies. Making local government emergency preparedness and response programs accessible to people with disabilities is a critical part of this responsibility. Making these programs accessible is also required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

If you are responsible for your community's emergency planning or response activities, you should involve people with disabilities in identifying needs and evaluating effective

emergency management practices. Issues that have the greatest impact on people with disabilities include:

- ❖ notification;
- ❖ evacuation;
- ❖ emergency transportation;
- ❖ sheltering;
- ❖ access to medications, refrigeration, and back-up power;
- ❖ access to their mobility devices or service animals while in transit or at shelters;
and
- ❖ access to information.

In planning for emergency services, EMDs and planners should consider the needs of people who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, canes or crutches, people who and have limited stamina. Plans also need to include people who use oxygen or respirators, people who are blind or who have low vision, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and people who have a cognitive disability, people with mental illness, and those with other types of disabilities.

How can these needs be identified and incorporated into the overall emergency management plan? The following action steps outline how to do just that!

Action Step: Planning

Solicit and incorporate input from people with different types of disabilities (e.g. mobility, vision, hearing, cognitive and other disabilities) regarding all phases of your emergency management plan including:

- ❖ preparation;
- ❖ notification;
- ❖ response; and
- ❖ clean up.

NOTIFICATION

Many traditional emergency notification methods are not accessible to or usable by people with disabilities. People who are deaf or hard of hearing cannot hear radio, television, sirens, or other audible alerts. Those who are blind or who have low vision may not be aware of visual cues, such as flashing lights. Warning methods should be developed to ensure that all citizens will have the information necessary to make sound

decisions and take appropriate, responsible action. Often, using a combination of methods will be more effective than relying on one method alone. For instance, combining visual and audible alerts will reach a greater audience than either method would by itself.

Action Step: Notification

Provide alternative ways to inform people who are deaf or hard of hearing of an impending disaster if you use emergency warning systems such as sirens or other audible alerts.

When the electric power supply is affected, it may be necessary to use several forms of notification. These might include the use of telephone calls, auto-dialed TTY (teletypewriter) messages, text messaging, E-mails, and even direct door-to-door contact with pre-registered individuals.

Also, you should consider using open-captioning on local TV/cable access stations in addition to incorporating other innovative uses of technology into such procedures, as well as lower-tech options such as dispatching qualified sign language interpreters to assist in broadcasting emergency information provided to the media.

EVACUATION

Individuals with disabilities of all ages, having either sensory, cognitive, or mobility impairments, will face a variety of challenges in evacuating, depending on the nature of the emergency.

- ◇ For example, people with a mobility disability may need assistance leaving a building without a working elevator.
- ◇ Individuals who are blind or who have limited vision may no longer be able to independently use traditional orientation and navigation methods.
- ◇ An individual who is deaf may be trapped somewhere unable to communicate with anyone because the only communication device relies on voice.

Procedures should be in place to ensure that people with disabilities can evacuate the physical area in a variety of conditions and with or without assistance.

Action Steps: Evacuation of People with Disabilities

Adopt policies to ensure that your community evacuation plans enable people with disabilities, including those who have mobility, vision, hearing, or cognitive disabilities, mental illness, or other disabilities, to safely self-evacuate or to be evacuated by others. Some communities are instituting voluntary, confidential registries of persons with disabilities who may need individualized evacuation assistance or notification. If you adopt or maintain such a registry, have procedures in place to ensure it is voluntary, guarantee confidentiality controls, and develop a process to update the registry. Also

consider how best to publicize its availability. Whether or not a registry is used, your plan should address accessible transportation needs for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility aids as well as people who are blind or who have low vision.

Both public and private transportation may be disrupted due to overcrowding, blocked streets and sidewalks, or because the system is not functioning at all. The movement of people during an evacuation is critical, but many people with disabilities cannot use traditional, inaccessible transportation.

Action Steps: Evacuation with Accessible Vehicles

Identify accessible modes of transportation that may be available to help evacuate people with disabilities during an emergency. For instance, some communities have used lift-equipped school or transit buses to evacuate people who use wheelchairs during floods

SHELTERING

When disasters occur, people are often provided safe refuge in temporary shelters. Some may be located in schools, office buildings, tents, or other areas. Historically, great attention has been paid to ensuring that those shelters are well stocked with necessities such as food, water, and blankets. However, many of these shelters have not been accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals using a wheelchair or scooter have often been able somehow to get to the shelter, only to find no accessible entrance, accessible toilet, or accessible shelter area.

Action Steps: Accessible Shelters

Survey your community's shelters for barriers to access for persons with disabilities. For instance, if you are considering incorporating a particular high school gymnasium into your sheltering plan, early in the process you should examine its parking, the path to the gymnasium, and the toilets serving the gymnasium to make sure they are accessible to people with disabilities. If you find barriers to access, work with the facility's owner to try to get the barriers removed. If you are unable to do so, consider another nearby facility for your community sheltering needs.

Until all of your emergency shelters have accessible parking, exterior routes, entrances, interior routes to the shelter area, and toilet rooms serving the shelter area; you should identify and widely publicize to the public, including persons with disabilities and the organizations that serve them, the locations of the most accessible emergency shelters.

Shelter staff and volunteers are often trained in first aid or other areas critical to the delivery of emergency services, but many have little, if any, familiarity with the needs of people with disabilities. In some instances, people with disabilities have been turned away from shelters because of volunteers' lack of confidence regarding the shelter's ability to meet their needs. Generally, people with disabilities may not be segregated or told to go to "special" shelters designated for their use. They should ordinarily be allowed to attend the same shelters as their neighbors and coworkers.

Action Steps: Input on Shelter Planning and Staff Training

Invite representatives of group homes and other people with disabilities to meet with you as part of your routine shelter planning. Discuss with them which shelters they would be more likely to use in the event of an emergency and what, if any, disability-related concerns they may have while sheltering. Develop site-specific instructions for your volunteers and staff to address these concerns.

Many shelters have a “no pets” policy and some mistakenly apply this policy to exclude service animals such as guide dogs for people who are blind, hearing dogs for people who are deaf, or dogs that pull wheelchairs or retrieve dropped objects. When people with disabilities who use service animals are told that their animals cannot enter the shelter, they are forced to choose between safety and abandoning a highly trained animal that accompanies them everywhere and allows them to function independently.

Action Steps: Service Animals

Adopt procedures to ensure that people with disabilities who use service animals are not separated from their service animals when sheltering during an emergency, even if pets are normally prohibited in shelters. While you cannot unnecessarily segregate persons who use service animals from others, you may consider the potential presence of persons who, for safety or health reasons, should not be with certain types of animals.

Individuals whose disabilities require medications, such as certain types of insulin that require constant refrigeration, may find that many shelters do not provide refrigerators or ice-packed coolers. Individuals who use life support systems and other devices rely on electricity to function and stay alive and, in many cases, may not have access to a generator or other source of electricity within a shelter.

Action Steps: Medications, Refrigeration, and Back-up Power

Ensure that a reasonable number of emergency shelters have back-up generators and a way to keep medications refrigerated (such as a cooler with ice). These shelters should be made available on a priority basis to people whose disabilities require access to electricity and refrigeration, for example, for using life-sustaining medical devices, providing power to motorized wheelchairs, and preserving certain medications, such as insulin, that require refrigeration. The public should be routinely notified about the location of these shelters. In addition, if you choose to maintain a confidential registry of individuals needing transportation assistance, this registry could also include those who would be in need of particular medications. This will facilitate your planning priorities

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may not have access to audible information routinely made available to people in the temporary shelters. Individuals who are blind or who have low vision will not be able to use printed notices, advisories, or other written information.

Action Steps: Communications

Adopt procedures to provide effective communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and for people with severe speech disabilities. Train staff on the basic procedures for providing accessible communication, including exchanging notes or posting written announcements to go with spoken announcements. Train staff to read printed information, upon request, to persons who are blind or who have low vision.

RETURNING HOME

The needs of individuals with disabilities should be considered, too, when they leave a shelter or are otherwise allowed to return to their home. If a ramp has been destroyed, an individual with mobility impairment will be unable to get into and out of the house. In case temporary housing is needed past the stay at the shelter, your emergency response plan could identify available physically accessible short-term housing, as well as housing with appropriate communication devices, such as TTY's, to ensure that individuals with communication disabilities can communicate with family, friends, and medical professionals.

Action Steps: Planning

Identify temporary accessible housing (such as accessible hotel rooms within the community or in nearby communities) that could be used if people with disabilities cannot immediately return home after a disaster if, for instance, necessary accessible features such as ramps or electrical systems have been damaged.

CONTRACTING FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

Many local governments provide emergency services through contracts with other local governments or private relief organizations. These entities may not fully understand the role they need to play in meeting your obligation to provide accessible emergency services.

Action Steps: Contracting for Emergency Services

Make sure that contracts for emergency services require providers to follow appropriate steps outlined herein. Review the terms of these contracts on a regular basis to ensure that they continue to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. Provide training to contractors so that they understand how best to coordinate their activities with your overall accessibility plan for emergency services.



See Attachment 3-1: Phone List of Contacts to Support Ongoing COA Operations.



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

	CONTACT PERSON	TELEPHONE NUMBER
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR (EMD)		
EMC SUBSTITUTE		
FIRE CHIEF		
CHIEF OF POLICE		
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES		
MUNICIPAL		
MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS		
COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS		
SCHOOL DISTRICT		
PUBLIC WORKS		
HEALTH DEPARTMENT		
ELECTRIC PROVIDER		
WATER PROVIDER		
GAS PROVIDER		
HOSPITALS		
OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS		
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER		
MEDIA		
AMERICAN RED CROSS		
THE SALVATION ARMY		
FOOD BANKS		
OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (SHELTERS, SOCIAL SERVICES)		
CORONER		

STATE SUPPORT

MEMA Coordination of Regional Resources

Towns may also request mutual aid from neighboring localities should the emergency threaten to become unmanageable for a single town. Local EMDs must inform the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) when requesting mutual aid from neighboring cities or towns. MEMA has the authority to mobilize extensive support called “emergency support functions” (ESFs). These functions consist of the following:

Emergency Support Functions:

- ❖ fire fighting
- ❖ service and rescue
- ❖ environmental protection
- ❖ hazardous materials control
- ❖ law enforcement and security

Operations Support

- ❖ resource support
- ❖ military support

Infrastructure

- ❖ transportation
- ❖ communications
- ❖ public works and engineering
- ❖ energy
- ❖ business and industry

Health and Welfare

- ❖ sheltering and feeding (referred to as “Mass Care” throughout emergency planning)
- ❖ food and water
- ❖ health and medical services

- ❖ volunteers
- ❖ donations
- ❖ animal protection

The above areas represent the eighteen support functions. Each is broken down in detail within MEMA's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). MEMA's web site www.mass.gov/mema provides copies and further details regarding the CEMP emergency support functions.



First responders are required to follow a national incident command system for organizing and referencing personnel answering an emergency. The MEMA web site gives detailed information. If your site is going to operate as a shelter you should familiarize yourself with the incident command structure.

FEDERAL SUPPORT

Under certain circumstances, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may be contacted for additional support. In such cases, the Governor must request federal assistance and the President must sign a disaster declaration in order for FEMA to be able to respond to the request. At that point, it will act in accordance with the eighteen emergency support function categories. The FEMA web site is: www.fema.gov.

PLANNING ACTIVITY #2

Creating/Updating an Emergency Management Registry

An Emergency Management Registry is a listing of individuals who voluntarily self-register and identify their needs for assistance during an emergency. It might be as simple as needing notification via TTY about a situation in their neighborhood or needing help to evacuate their home by using a wheel chair van. It is the purpose of an Emergency Registry to provide timely information on the address and specific needs of an individual to first responders and emergency planners.

The information in an Emergency Registry is protected, held confidentially and is meant for emergency use only. There are no restrictions on being included in the Registry. In communities that have already established an Emergency Registry, the local EMD, police or fire department can provide you with a copy of the enrollment form. If an Emergency Registry does not yet operate in your community, you should consider offering to work jointly with the EMD to create and manage one.

Encourage people to enroll in your community's Emergency Registry during your outreach efforts.



Remind elders it is important to include information regarding next of kin or a friend in the registry in case they need to be contacted to arrange for transportation out of the area or other supports in the case of impending hazardous weather conditions.

In Section 3, we have provided an example of a registry enrollment form that one town created to organize home monitoring service for homebound elders.

See Attachment 3-2: Town of Falmouth Emergency Preparedness Informational Survey

See Attachment 3-3: Town of Sudbury Emergency Call List

Please Note: The Disability Indicator Form is a standardized document that collects vitally important information for 911 dispatchers to know whenever they receive telephone calls from landline telephones. **This form is different from an Emergency Registry form and should be filled out too.**

The Disability Indicator Form asks if a resident uses Life Support, is mobility impaired, is blind, is deaf or hard of hearing, has a speech impairment, has a cognitive impairment, or uses a TTY. If 911 dispatchers know these details, then they can alert public safety officials that an individual residing at the specific address has a condition that may hinder their evacuation or transport and/or communication with the first responders. Again, this information appears **only** on the dispatcher's computer system and is **only** triggered with a 9-1-1- call originates from a specific address.



A copy of the Disability Indicator Form is provided for your reference as **Attachment 3-8**.

PLANNING ACTIVITY #3

Outreach and Education on Emergency Preparedness



COA's perform a vital educational role across the Commonwealth. The newsletter plays a key role in getting information out to the community. In **Section 2** of this manual, we have assembled articles that can be used as fact sheets or in your monthly newsletter to educate the senior community about how to prepare for emergencies.

It is also important that during outreach contacts, seniors are informed of emergency information that will help them in crisis situations.



In partnership with your local EMD and regional Medical Reserve Corps, develop educational programming that can be offered at your center. In 2006-2007, the Sudbury Council on Aging sponsored an Emergency Preparedness Series, an educational series of hands-on workshops to assist people in thinking through their responses to emergency situations and in developing a personal plan to survive emergencies. To learn about the topics and speakers in this series, see **Attachment 3-7**.

RESPONSE ACTIVITY #1

Monitoring Programs

Depending upon the organization of your community, programs monitoring the well-being of citizens may be as simple as knocking on doors, activating telephone trees for those enrolled in the emergency management registry or using telephonic outbound calling systems such as RU OK or Reverse 911. These systems are for municipal alerts and some have the capacity for callers to indicate they are well by pressing keys on their telephone pad.

A computerized telephone-monitoring program works by calling subscribers to check on their well-being. It is designed for people living alone but can also be beneficial for any household having one or more seniors, or a person with limited mobility. The user determines the calling time. If there is no answer the program will redial. If there still is no answer, emergency personnel will be alerted. The police or fire department will check on the resident or get in touch with a predetermined contact person.

A telephonic alert system works by sending messages to large audiences. It can be used to broadcast information to a given geographical area or to persons on a predetermined list. It enables public officials to create customized messages or choose a pre-recorded one. It is often used to inform the public regarding road closures, detours, water main breaks, and community events.



If your phone number is **UNLISTED**, then you must volunteer your information with emergency personnel to be included in a telephonic outbound calling system.

Calling seniors at home while they self-shelter during a snow or hot weather emergency is the most common service model COAs currently operate – and is a very helpful response function to perform during other types of emergencies as well.

RESPONSE ACTIVITY #2

Managing an Emergency Shelter Site

We have been asked for information on how to operate a shelter. The following section speaks to basic shelter operating procedures and protocols.

The overall goal of a shelter should be that it is comfortable and keeps guests from becoming bored or irritable. The availability of games and music will reduce boredom for seniors as well as children who also need sheltering. It is necessary to engage seniors in some form of low impact exercise to prevent the possibility of blood clotting from sitting down for long periods. Some elders will also need assistance with toileting, taking medications and bedding down.

SAMPLE SHELTER PROTOCOLS

(From the “Guide for Local Jurisdictions in Care and Shelter Planning”, Alameda County Operational Area Emergency Management Organization, September 2003)

Local Leadership and Authority

- ❖ Local officials (i.e., field operations -- generally fire or law enforcement) identify the need for care and shelter operations. A large disaster event will also require activation of the community’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- ❖ Local jurisdiction identifies the extent of shelter needed and then selects appropriate shelter facility(ies).

If the Red Cross is Available to Open the Shelter

- ❖ If the Red Cross is Available to Open the Shelter, the local jurisdiction will provide a staff person assigned to the shelter the responsibility to work in cooperation and delegate with the American Red Cross and the shelter facility liaison.

- ❖ The local jurisdiction will assist the Red Cross as needed to ensure that adequate food supplies, equipment, staff and services are available to launch and sustain shelter operations.

If the Red Cross is NOT Available to Open the Shelter

If the Red Cross is NOT Available to Open the Shelter, the local jurisdiction deploys the shelter manager and support personnel, along with startup supplies, to open and run the shelter.

- ❖ The shelter manager is responsible for the overall operation of the shelter.
- ❖ The local jurisdiction should have a current roster of shelter managers who are qualified to open and run the shelter.
- ❖ In addition, identify backup personnel who can assist the shelter manager with operations.
- ❖ Secure additional shelter staff from the EOC's Logistics Section (Personnel Unit). In advance of an emergency, recruit and train a volunteer cadre to work at the shelter.

The Process of Opening the Shelter

The Shelter Manager and staff arrive at site and begin the process of opening the shelter.

1. Perform a facility walk-through to survey the condition of the shelter before occupancy (along with shelter owner or other representative if available).
2. Arrange the building for shelter operation and occupancy (see next page).
3. Check availability of existing supplies at facility.
4. Establish communications with the EOC; works with the Logistics Section for additional resources.
5. Arrange for the care of pets, as needed.
6. Organize any available human resources as a shelter operations team. Involve shelter residents to help in running the shelter. Note: If shelterees are already outside, set aside an area within the shelter for people to wait comfortably.

Public Information

Once shelters are confirmed, the Public Information Officer (PIO) can inform the public of the shelter location(s) and status.

- ❖ Public information messages should clearly identify the location of shelters and encourage persons to bring a "Go Kit" with them to include their own blankets, a change of clothes and basic toiletries including prescription medications.

- ❖ The shelter will need a high visibility sign to identify its location.

Beginning Relief Operations at Shelters

Shelter Manager begins relief operations at shelters by:

1. Registering shelter residents
2. Providing emergency first aid as needed
3. Offering beverages and snacks as soon as people register
4. Beginning regular meal service soon thereafter
5. Arranging for individual and family support services

Notes:

- ❖ The sooner that "routines" are established within the shelter, the better for the adjustment of shelter residents.
- ❖ Shelter personnel will need to ration limited resources initially. Resources will trickle in faster and faster as mutual aid and outside assistance becomes available.
- ❖ If multiple shelters are operating, activate a central database of shelter registrations and a welfare inquiry system to coordinate information on missing/displaced persons.
- ❖ Document the names and number of persons sheltered; keep records on all activities and expenses incurred by shelter operations.
- ❖ Maintain ongoing contact with the local EOC to report on (1) the number of people being sheltered and number of meals served, (2) the status of supplies and (3) any problem areas.

Closing Down Shelter Operations

In closing down shelter operations, coordinate the transition of shelter operations to the American Red Cross (if the Red Cross will assume control after the initial startup). Then, return the facility to its original condition upon closing. Document any damages.

Red Cross Shelter Layout Recommendations

In allocating space, give consideration to the following needs:

- ❖ Reception and Registration
- ❖ Sleeping
- ❖ Feeding

- ❖ Emergency Medical Care
- ❖ Counseling/Interviewing Space
- ❖ Manager's Office
- ❖ Storage for Food and Supplies
- ❖ Storage for Personal Belongings
- ❖ Recreation
- ❖ Child Care
- ❖ Rest Room for Staff (in larger shelters)

Additional Shelter Layout Tips (from the American Red Cross):

- ❖ Shelterees should first proceed to the registration desk before going to their lodging area.
- ❖ Set up a bulletin board near the registration table. Post messages received for shelter residents and shelter rules and relief information.
- ❖ Set-up the sleeping area, so each person (cot) has 40 square feet of space (5'x8'). Space cots or bedding to allow access for people with mobility disabilities and ensure clear paths to all fire exits. If space permits, set up separate sleeping areas for the elderly, people who are ill, and families with small children.
- ❖ Provide adequate space for a shelter manager and associated staff to function 24 hours per day. This includes space for staff meetings, administrative functions, communications and volunteer coordination.
- ❖ Organize the space so that it is accessible for people with visual or mobility disabilities; make space for disabled parking.
- ❖ In addition, provide adequate ventilation.
- ❖ Locate medical and health services in a well-lighted room or area that is away from public view. If possible, keep medications and medical equipment in a lockable storage compartment.
- ❖ Create an additional quiet area for counseling or interviewing persons.
- ❖ The food storage area should be secure and accessible by truck.
- ❖ Ensure that garbage is stored away from food storage and occupied shelter areas.

- ❖ Designate an outdoor smoking area away from air intake vents and flammable materials.
- ❖ Create an area outside for the handling of pets (service animals must be permitted inside the shelter).
- ❖ Ensure that the shelter address is clearly visible from the nearby street; post a sign that clearly marks the building as a disaster shelter.

SHELTER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management / Command

1. Shelter Manager

The Shelter Manager makes staffing assignments based on the functions necessary to carry out shelter operations (see Operations below). It is up to the shelter manager to ensure that the needs of shelter residents are met and to provide for the overall health and safety of all residents and staff.

- ❖ Inspect the facility to ensure the safety of all areas for shelter operations use. Block off unsafe areas and areas not to be used (only use areas that can be directly supervised by staff).
- ❖ Establish communications with the local city EOC and report on needs equipment, supplies or personnel needs and shelter status.
- ❖ Assign arriving staff to shelter functions. Provide ongoing supervision of shelter staff to ensure effective accomplishment of all shelter operations. Conduct daily meetings with staff on shelter management issues.
- ❖ Coordinate activities with the media and clear any news releases with the local city EOC (specifically the PIO or Public Information Officer).



Rotate shelter staff positions. The shelter manager position can be rotated on a daily shift schedule, or instead the shelter manager may serve on site for the duration of the operation and employ 2 or 3 shift supervisors or Assistant Shelter Managers who rotate. Other staff positions may work an 8 to 12 hour shift).

2. Assistant Shelter Manager

Larger shelter operations of more than 100 persons will require an assistant shelter manager. Assistant shelter managers can assume a more "field level" role and assume some of the functions below, given staff shortages.

OPERATIONS

1. Registration

The Registration Coordinator oversees the registration of shelter occupants. In addition to collecting basic registration data, registration is also an opportunity to identify shelter residents with needs that may require additional staff support.

- ❖ Choose one entrance for registration. Set up a registration table and chairs. Post a Shelter Registration Point sign, as well as a sign indicating that no weapons, drugs, alcohol, or pets are allowed in the facility. Translate signs into other languages (Spanish, Chinese, etc.), based on the demographics of the community.
- ❖ Ensure an adequate supply of registration forms. Have persons entering the shelter fill out one registration form for each household.
- ❖ Identify any additional needed support – needs for medical care, counseling, medications, dietary restrictions, or other accommodations.
- ❖ Refer persons who are injured or ill to health care staff, if available.
- ❖ Identify any shelter residents with medical training.
- ❖ Maintain a sign-out log for shelter residents who leave temporarily.

2. Food Services

The Meals Coordinator is responsible for planning, preparing and/or ordering meals for shelter residents. This person also supervises other food service staff.

- ❖ If applicable, inspect the food preparation area at the shelter site. Obtain any keys necessary to access food storage areas. Determine if cooking equipment is functioning and safe to use.
- ❖ Coordinate with Logistics for food supplies (or in ordering pre-prepared food) and any additional staff or equipment needs. Coordinate with Health Services for any special dietary needs. Plan meals 2-3 days ahead of time.
- ❖ Set up a dining area. Post meal times in a conspicuous place. Keep meal times as consistent as possible. A large shelter may require more than one seating to serve everyone.
- ❖ Recruit shelter residents to assist with food preparation, cooking, serving, and clean up.
- ❖ Keep a log of the number of meals served and supplies ordered. Keep receipts for food that is delivered.

3. Dormitory

The Dormitory Coordinator is responsible for setting up, supervising, and closing down the sleeping area.

- ❖ Inspect the dormitory area(s). Move aside anything that might present a hazard to shelter residents. Request any needed supplies and equipment (such as cots, blankets, mats and personal hygiene kits) through Logistics.
- ❖ Set up the sleeping area(s) and distribute any available blankets and personal hygiene supplies.
- ❖ To provide adequate ventilation open doors and windows of the dormitory area during the day. If custodial services are not available, recruit shelter residents to assist in daily dormitory clean up.
- ❖ Post sleeping area rules. Example of rules include: 1) Quiet Hours or Time for Lights Out, 2) No Alcohol, 3) Always use the same cot, etc.
- ❖ Monitor sleeping area (this requires establishing staff shifts).
- ❖ Ensure shelter occupants do not consume food or liquids in the dormitory area
- ❖ Stay alert for such potential dormitory problems as drug use or sale, unattended children, fighting, theft, or residents becoming ill.
- ❖ Keep the shelter manager informed of any suspicious actions, health concerns and the status of dormitory resources.

4. First Aid and Health Care Services

- ❖ The Health Services Coordinator promotes and maintains good public health standards within the shelter. This includes overseeing the provision of basic first aid and ensuring access to other health care services as needed.
- ❖ Establish procedures for handling medical emergencies (presumably, the local fire department or paramedic services will be the first contact).
- ❖ Set aside an area within the shelter as a health station. Refer persons with health concerns or illnesses to the health station. Check with the registration coordinator and ask if persons who register with medical or nursing training can volunteer at the health station. Establish a 24-hour shift rotation for the health station.
- ❖ Document all health care performed (injuries/illnesses treated, medications issued, etc.). Use Logistics to request supplies, equipment, or additional personnel.

- ❖ Advise the Meals Coordinator about special dietary needs of residents (such as persons with diabetes).
- ❖ Stay alert for anyone with a communicable disease. If necessary, prepare a separate room as a quarantine area.

5. Mental Health Counseling

- ❖ Shelter conditions are stressful for shelter occupants (especially children) and staff. The Mental Health Coordinator provides or arranges for counseling services.
- ❖ Secure a quiet area or room away from public view. Work with Logistics to find local mental health resources and counseling services to support shelter residents.
- ❖ Monitor the stress conditions for staff and shelter occupants. Intervene in crisis situations when practical. Coordinate with the health services coordinator and registration coordinator to identify shelter residents who might welcome counseling support.
- ❖ Work with the shelter manager to plan activities or entertainment that will help morale and reduce the stress of the living environment. If possible, provide shelter residents with access to local news via television or radio. Lack of information following a disaster often contributes to rumors, hysteria, and fear.
- ❖ Debrief shelter staff before they are released.

6. Additional Shelter Services

Other staff may be assigned as needed. Coordinate with Logistics for supplies, equipment, and personnel (personnel may include community volunteers).

Recreation

- ❖ Obtain/provide items such as books, games, videos and recreational equipment.
- ❖ Organize activities for shelter residents. Examples of possible activities include sports tournaments, birthday parties, entertainment, and religious services.

Child Care

- ❖ Select a safe area for child care away from the general shelter population; remove any hazardous furniture, equipment, or other items from the area.
- ❖ Request supplies appropriate for kids through Logistics: toys, coloring books, stuffed animals, puzzles, etc.

Animal/Pet Care

- ❖ Select a fenced-in area outside and away from the shelter for pets.
- ❖ Post a notice that pet owners are responsible for the care and restraint of their animals (i.e., ensure shelter residents restrain their pets on leashes).
- ❖ Use Logistics to contact the local SPCA, Animal Control, and nearby kennels for assistance in boarding and caring for animals.

Security/Safety

- ❖ Maintain the following safety suggestions: 1) Regularly inspect the facility to see that all areas are safe; 2) Keep exits clear and unblocked; 3) Locate all fire extinguishers and ensure compliance with fire safety regulations (e.g., ensure that garbage, debris, or refuse does not pose a fire hazard or block doorways).
- ❖ Work with Logistics to provide signs that clearly identifies all rules and safety regulations. Monitor compliance.
- ❖ Establish a "patrol team" to roam the shelter during the night and ensure night safety.
- ❖ When necessary, coordinate with local Law Enforcement and Fire Services for assistance with shelter security.

PLANNING

The shelter manager may assume the role of shelter operations planning. However, a staff planning position can assist the shelter manager by obtaining timely and accurate information, (which is often hard to come by immediately after a large disaster).

- ❖ Gather as much information as possible from sources both within and outside the shelter on needs, resource availability, services, and the status of events.
- ❖ Monitor media sources to keep current on all disaster-related news, especially news about relief services, recovery operations and outside assistance.
- ❖ Maintain close and ongoing contact with the local EOC to ensure a reciprocal sharing of planning information.
- ❖ Develop action plans based on the information above and from information gathered at planning meetings. Work with the shelter manager in planning for anticipated shelter needs and in planning for the next 24 to 48 hours of shelter activity. Plan staffing schedules and determine staffing rotations.

- ❖ Provide information on available recovery assistance (especially information on the availability of temporary or long-term housing); keep information up-to-date and post in a visible place for shelter residents (e.g., bulletin boards).
- ❖ Keep a disaster activity log with detailed records of meetings, decisions and actions (e.g., who made what decisions). Record important inter-agency contacts and agreements. This is vital for after-action reports and for future planning.
- ❖ Support information needs related to helping reunite family members.

Logistics

The Logistics Coordinator at the shelter works in close coordination with the Logistics Section at the local EOC to accomplish the following:

- ❖ Obtain all resources necessary to operate the shelter facility in coordination with the EOC Logistics Section.
 - Personnel
 - Food
 - Transportation
 - Supplies and Equipment
 - Communication Resources
 - All other personal services as applicable for shelter residents (health, mental health, translation, etc.)
- ❖ Work with the Finance Coordinator to set up vendor agreements with local businesses as necessary for the purchase of supplies and equipment to operate the shelter.

Finance

The position of Finance/Administration Coordinator maintains financial records, processes purchase orders and manages all financial agreements including vendor contracts and leases.

- ❖ Develop a financial tracking system for authorizing and recording all shelter expenditures, including staff time beyond normal working hours. Save copies of all receipts. This helps to ensure later cost recovery by reimbursement agencies such as the American Red Cross, City or County and FEMA. Reimbursement depends on complete, detailed and accurate records from the first hour forward.

- ❖ Maintain contact with EOC Finance Section to ensure disaster reimbursement claims follow appropriate procedures. Complete reports detailing expenses to date and projected future expenses.
- ❖ Determine pre-existing MOUs and agreements for goods or services. Set up and monitor vendor contracts and agreements. Obtain a block of Purchase Orders.
- ❖ Work closely with the Logistics Section on procedures for getting needed equipment and supplies. Records will also include documentation of all data about the shelter operation (numbers sheltered, meals served, etc.).
- ❖ Set up a system for archiving all documents and notify shelter staff of system, types of documents required and location to bring documents (this may be as simple as labeling a box "Archives" and placing at shelter staff office).



In July, 2007, the U.S. Department of Justice published a new technical assistance document is entitled "The ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments" that focuses upon emergency management planning, with extended treatment on shelters. The links to sections of this toolkit are provided in **Attachment 3-4.**

EXAMPLES OF SHELTER RULES AND REGULATIONS

[Information Source – American Red Cross]

Example of rules or safety regulations:

- ❖ Indicate any restricted areas within the shelter facility
- ❖ Encourage shelter residents to keep valuables elsewhere. If this is not possible, encourage residents to keep valuables with them at all times
- ❖ Establish quiet hours, but provide a place for those who cannot sleep
- ❖ Establish shower and bathing schedule and post prominently
- ❖ Establish a curfew and stick to it
- ❖ Establish policies regarding use of telephones
- ❖ Establish outdoor smoking areas
- ❖ No abusive or belligerent behavior toward staff or other shelter residents
- ❖ No stealing or destruction of property
- ❖ No food in the dormitory area
- ❖ Children must be accompanied by _____
- ❖ Shelter residents must be dressed appropriately at all
- ❖ No alcohol or drugs are allowed in the shelter and no admittance into the shelter is allowed while a person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- ❖ No weapons in the shelter
- ❖ No pets in the shelter

PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE TRAINED VOLUTNEERS IN EMERGENCIES:

CERT AND MRC

Shelter volunteers serve a core role and are needed to:

1. register shelter guests and organize them into manageable groups
2. prepare and serve meals
3. assist with toileting as necessary
4. take blood pressures and help with taking medications
5. help frail individuals to bed down
6. provide captivating activities for children
7. assist the emergency team with calls from elders.

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team

CERT is short for “Community Emergency Response Team.”

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, many Americans have expressed an unselfish desire to help in emergencies. The CERTs were created as a response to such concerns.

The Citizens Corps is coordinated nationally through the Department of Homeland Security. It works hand in hand with the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) to promote volunteerism in support of homeland security and community safety. The Citizen Corps consists of: Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, and the Fire Corps. For further details go to: <http://www.citizencorps.gov>.

The CERT program endeavors to educate people about preparing for disasters that may impact their neighborhoods, and provides basic training in fire safety skills, search and rescue, team organization, and medical services. CERT members can assist neighbors or colleagues at their work place when first responders are not immediately available. They are also encouraged to support emergency response agencies by assuming active roles in preparedness projects. A CERT can supply additional staffing when a facility becomes a cooling or overnight shelter.

CONSIDERATIONS

To develop a CERT to staff a shelter or conduct personnel preparedness outreach events in your community, take the following steps:

1. gain approval from public officials to develop a CERT to support a shelter (if available).
2. recruit potential participants
3. arrange for training by a CERT instructor. To become a CERT volunteer, you must complete classroom training (approximately 16-20 hours of training) offered by a local fire or police department.
4. conduct CERT training sessions (The curriculum might include: Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Psychology, Fire Safety, Terrorism, Disaster/Medical Operations, Search and Rescue, FEMA/MEMA Disaster basics.)
5. work with CERT coordinator to request that trained CERT volunteers participate with you during regularly scheduled training exercises with your personnel.

Additional Information

For details relating to the start-up of CERTs, go to:

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/start.shtm>. Massachusetts has a liaison within MEMA who can also share helpful suggestions on how to start a CERT. Your EMD can advise you whether there is CERT training available in your area. A listing of established CERTs can be had from the CERT Directory site:

<http://www.citizenscorps.gov./cc/Certindex.do?reportsFor State&cert=stater=MA>.

MRC – Medical Reserve Corps

The need for supplemental medical and public health personnel became evident after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Numerous professionals sought to support relief efforts but a coordinating organization was missing. The MRC program provides necessary structure to coordinate medical and public health workers. It identifies specific, trained, pre-credentialed individuals who are available for emergency service.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program serves communities by offering the assistance of medical, public health, and other volunteers on a year round basis, but particularly during emergencies. MRC volunteers coordinate their activities with existing emergency response programs and supplement public health initiatives i.e., outreach, prevention, immunization, blood drives, case management, and care planning

.Locally MRCs are headed by a unit coordinator who assigns volunteers to match a community's medical and public health needs. Coordinators are mandated to sustain and manage emergency resources. For further Detailed Information go to the MRC web site: <http://medicalreservecorps.gov/HomePage>

To contact your regional MRC, the 45 MRCs within Massachusetts are listed (as of July 27, 2007) at:
<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/state.asp?State=23GO.x=12&GO.y=7>

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Massachusetts System for Advance Registration (MSAR) is a statewide, secure database of credentialed health care professionals who have expressed a desire to voluntarily offer their services in a large scale public health emergency. In general, MRCs support local public health endeavors such as immunization and prevention programs as well as emergency responses. MRC encourages its members to also register with MSAR to make their services available for a public health emergency. MSAR members are in turn encouraged to register with MRC to assist in small, local incidents which do not activate MSAR.

GOOD WEB SITES WITH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION



To learn more about emergency preparedness, **Attachment 3-5** will help – it provides you with a list of helpful **websites** as well as a list of common **acronyms** related to emergency management

For information in **alternative formats**, see **Attachment 3-6**. Many of the agencies listed provide materials in large font, audio or video cassette formats, and different languages

QUESTIONS COAS SHOULD ASK

Emergencies can and will happen. How well you respond to them depends on the information and resources available to you. You should be aware of the current status of the following issues and concerns. Complete the questions that you know the answers to, then meet with the EMD to answer the remaining questions so that your role will be clearly defined before an emergency happens.

Name, address and telephone number of the Emergency Management Director in your community.

Contact the City Manager/Selectmen/EMD professional and share your interest in joining the Emergency Management team.

Location of your Emergency Operations Center.

What types of drills are in place in the community?

How can we get involved in an emergency drill?

What roles would the COA play in an emergency?

Locations of emergency shelters in your town.

Name of the individual in charge of each shelter during an emergency.

How transportation will be provided for those who do not have their own means of transporting themselves.

What would be the role of the COA personnel in supporting temporary shelters, if any?

Do our emergency plans anticipate and accommodate the needs of frail elders and people with disabilities within shelters or during an evacuation?

Do you want the COA to perform a monitoring function to support seniors who are self-sheltering at home during extreme weather conditions, power outages and natural disasters?

Are COA resources needed for Emergency Registry outreach and enrollment activities?

Regarding a personnel preparedness campaign for all our residents, who is the project manager? How can I help with this process?

Your responsibility in updating and reviewing the special needs list in accordance with clients served by your Senior Center.

How would the COA staff be paid for overtime work performed during an emergency (if there currently is no provision for overtime)?

Check with EMD to determine if emergency plans for senior housing sites and daytime social service programs have been assessed for feasibility and intended use of municipal resources such as the COA building or vans.



Once you have answered the above questions, meet with your Board and staff to create an individualized plan that meets the needs of your community. We are hopeful that all COA's engage in a personnel preparedness campaign (using newsletter articles found in the back of the book) and decide to conduct monitoring for those sheltering in place. We expect that some COA's will want to be designated as a shelter. If that is the case for your site, please work with your staff to establish guidelines.

The Planning Activities Section of this manual should help you anticipate all the issues related with your chosen response role(s) and to assess your community's emergency operations plan.

BE READY TO COMMUNICATE YOUR NEEDS TO FIRST RESPONDERS

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

In an emergency be ready to inform the first responders about your particular needs. Ask them for help if you need it to go down stairs, getting your medicine bag or cane.

You may require an immediate rescue or relocation to a shelter – or both. Rescue operations are often confusing. People may try to shout to you over the roar of trucks, boats or helicopters. If the first responder needs to know vital information about you, make sure they get that information. If you have an auditory or perceptual disability, describe your condition in short phrases. Think now how you might best characterize your disability briefly and accurately if a pre-printed message is not available. When the first responders arrive, pay attention to the instructions you are given and follow them. If you did not understand them, look directly at the rescuer, and ask that he or she repeat the instructions. In an emergency it is vital that communications are clear and accurate.

Individuals who use communication devices (e.g., a laptop, a word board, or an artificial larynx), should try to store inexpensive back-up equipment in the same places they keep their personal preparedness “Go Bag”. Take the time now to prepare pre-printed messages to give to first responders: “I may have difficulty understanding what you are telling me, so please speak slowly and clearly.”

“This article is part of a series designed by the Councils’ on Aging Emergency Taskforce to help you plan ahead for emergencies.”

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND VITAL RECORDS

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Tips for Collecting Emergency Documents and Creating an Emergency Contact List

- ❖ Ask several relatives or friends who live outside your immediate area (approximately 100 miles away) to be your Emergency Contacts and act as a clearinghouse for information about you and your family during emergencies.
- ❖ It is often easier to place an out-of-state long distance call from a disaster area, than to call within the area. All family members should know to call the emergency contact person to report their location and condition.
- ❖ Once contact is made, have the contact person relay messages to your other friends and relatives outside the disaster area. This will help to reduce calling into and out of the affected area once the phones are working.
- ❖ Carry the Emergency Contact List in your wallet.

Emergency Documents (includes important information typically needed after a disaster). Make copies of the following documents:

- ❖ Specifications for adaptive equipment (in case it needs to be replaced)
- ❖ List style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers.
- ❖ Proof of ownership or lease of your residence. (This is important when applying for disaster assistance.)*
- ❖ Social security numbers of family members.*
- ❖ Vehicle, boats, etc. make, identification and license numbers.*
- ❖ Charge and bank account numbers.*
- ❖ Insurance policy numbers.*
- ❖ Securities, deeds and loan numbers including company name, address and telephone numbers.*
- ❖ Will/living trust and letter of instructions.*
- ❖ Photos or video of all valuables for documentation of insurance claim. (This inventory should be backed up on disk if it is on computer. Consider documenting

your inventory by going through your areas with a video or camera and capture all your possessions on film.)*

- ❖ Important business documents.*
- ❖ Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates).*

* *Store these documents only in your home emergency supply kit in a tightly sealed freezer bag.*

Store Emergency Documents

- ❖ Store Emergency Contact List and Emergency Documents in a tightly sealed freezer bag in your emergency supplies. Send a copy to an out of state contact and keep another copy in safety deposit box.
- ❖ Additional copies of Emergency Contact List and all Emergency Documents (except for those followed by an *) should be stored:
 - in emergency “carry with you” supply kits
 - in wallet
 - give to personal support network

Update Every Six Months (i.e. when you change the clocks).

- ❖ Emergency Health Information Card
- ❖ Emergency Contact List

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/otherdocs.html>

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DEVELOPING A FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance how you will contact one another, how you will get back together. You should have a plan for a number of different situations. Include your neighbors if possible.

You will be better prepared to safely reunite with your family and loved ones during an emergency if you plan ahead and communicate with others in advance. You might designate one of your neighbor’s homes as the meeting place your family should all go to if there is a fire in your home and you need to evacuate.

Take these factors into consideration as you establish an emergency communication plan with your family:

- ◇ During emergencies, local phone lines may be jammed. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than call across town. An out-of-town contact may be in a better position to get in touch with separated family members.
- ◇ Be sure every member of your family knows what number to call and has a cell phone, coins or a prepaid phone card to reach the emergency contact.
- ◇ If you are a caregiver (parent, grandparent or guardian) for an elderly or disabled adult or child, make sure that schools and day care centers have an emergency response plan.
- ◇ Determine how they will communicate with caregiver families during a crisis
- ◇ Find out if they store adequate food, water and other basic supplies
- ◇ Ask how they would "shelter-in-place" if need be, and where they would plan to move if they must leave.

For more information on developing emergency preparedness plans for schools, please visit the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan>.

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IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR SURVIVING DISASTER

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Personal Support Network

Establishing solid relationships with neighbors and other people in your support network is one of the most effective means of getting help and surviving a disaster.

Create a network of trusted individuals, family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, personal attendants, etc. who can assist you during an emergency.

Post this network at important locations (e.g. home, work, day care center) making sure you have listed at least two people at each site.

The individuals you have chosen should take part in your planning and be familiar with your functional abilities and limitations. Explain to each one why you need their help. For example, if you are hard of hearing or deaf, tell them you may not be able to hear an alarm or a television or radio alert. Ask them, “Please contact me directly whenever an emergency alert is broadcast.”

To Create a Personal Support Network within your neighborhood:

- ❖ Talk to your neighbors about working together during a snow storm or other type of emergency
- ❖ Find out if anyone has specialized equipment or medical expertise that might help in a crisis.
- ❖ Determine who will check on you or your elderly or disabled neighbors.
- ❖ Make plans for taking care of children whose parents or grandparents can't get home in an emergency.

Sharing plans and communicating in advance is a good strategy.

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CHILD-PROOF YOUR HOME FOR GRANDCHILDREN

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

About 2-1/2 million children are injured or die from hazards at home each year. Fortunately, many of these incidents can be prevented with simple child safety devices on the market today.

Any safety device you buy should be easy to use, reliable and not subject to breaking or injuring your child. Follow installation instructions carefully. In addition, if there are older children in the house, be sure they re-secure safety devices after use. However, no device is completely child-proof. Children have been known to disable many of them.

Safety devices are readily available at hardware stores, baby equipment shops, supermarkets, drug stores, home and linen stores, and through mail order catalogues.

- ❖ **Safety Latches and Locks** Safety latches and locks on cabinets and drawers help prevent children from gaining access to medicines household cleaners, knives and other sharp objects.
- ❖ **Safety Gates** Safety gates help prevent falls down stairs and to keep children away from dangerous areas, or rooms that have hazards in them. Choose a safety gate that children cannot dislodge easily, but that adults can open and close without difficulty. For the top of stairs, gates that are attached to the wall are more secure than pressure gates.
- ❖ **Door Knob Covers and Door Locks** Use door knob covers and door locks to help prevent children from entering rooms with possible dangers, including swimming pools.
- ❖ **Anti-Scald Devices** Install anti-scald devices for faucets and shower heads. Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water.
- ❖ **Smoke Detectors** Smoke detectors are mandated on every level of your home within ten feet of every bedroom
- ❖ **Window Guards and Safety Netting** Use window guards and safety netting to help prevent falls from windows. Use guard rails on balconies, decks, and landings
- ❖ **Corner and Edge Bumpers** Corner and edge bumpers can be used with furniture. Bumpers can also be used around fireplaces – when not in use - to help prevent injuries from falls or to soften falls against sharp or rough edges.

- ❖ **Outlet Covers and Outlet Plates** Outlet covers and outlet plates can help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution.
- ❖ **Carbon Monoxide (CO)** Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors help prevent CO poisoning. They must be installed within ten feet of sleeping areas in households that have natural gas or oil heat or are attached garages.
- ❖ **Window Blind Cords** Avoid window blinds that have cords. Use safety tassels and inner cord stops to help prevent children from strangling themselves with blind cord loops.
- ❖ **Door Stops and Door Holders** Door stops and door holders on doors and door hinges can help prevent small fingers and hands from being pinched or crushed in doors and door hinges.
- ❖ **Cordless Phone** Cordless phones provide quick access to a telephone while monitoring children taking baths, swimming, or occupy other areas where they need supervision.
- ❖ **Remove Glass Hazards or Make Glass Safer** If possible, remove glass furniture (such as glass coffee tables) while you have young children in the house. When buying new or replacement windows, choose safety glass, especially for internal or patio doors. It is tempered and rarely breaks. Safety film will provide additional protection for glass doors, windows and glass furniture. It consists of a self-adhesive, transparent film that prevents glass from shattering when it breaks. Even a colored sticker attached to a glass area will remind children that the glass is there and help prevent them from walking into it.

(This information is from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. For more information, please visit [Childproofing Your Home](#).)

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MAKING YOUR HOME SAFE FOR OLDER GUESTS

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Most people experience decreased mobility as they age. Even if an elder doesn't use a walker or a wheelchair, he or she will move slower. Older adults also tend to have reduced strength and stamina. Vision, hearing and the sense of smell also decrease as one gets older. Bear this in mind as you consider home safety improvements. Here are some easy ways to make your home safer for older adults.

- ❖ **Remove scatter rugs:** Unless they're attached firmly to the floor, remove scatter rugs as they are easy to snag and trip on.
- ❖ **Brighten your lighting:** Bright light is essential to helping older adults see their way inside and outside their home, and reduce the risk of falling. Bright lighting in kitchen work areas reduces the risk of burns and cuts. Use at least 60-watt bulbs in most rooms and at least 100-watt bulbs for reading. Illuminate key pathways in your home, access to the bathroom and kitchen.
- ❖ **Make steps stand out:** Make sure the staircase is free of clutter and brightly lit. Consider ways to make your steps easier to see. One idea — use brightly colored tape to mark the edge of each step. If you have a sunlit window at the top or bottom of a staircase pull its shade to reduce glare. Install an overhead light instead.
- ❖ **Hide electrical cords:** Move lamps and other appliances close to the walls so that electrical cords don't extend into trafficked areas. Older adults with low vision may have difficulty spotting cords and could trip on them. If you must extend a cord across an area where your people will walk, use tape to secure the cord to the floor with tape so that it will attract attention to it. Don't cover the cord with a rug.
- ❖ **Rearrange your furniture:** Move low furniture, such as coffee tables, out of high-traffic areas. When you're rearranging, chairs, move them close together. This can make conversation easier for hearing impaired guests.
- ❖ **Lower the water temperature:** Most hot water heaters are set at 150 F — hot enough to scald within seconds. If you have access to your water heater, turn the temperature down to 120 F or the “low” setting. If you can't adjust your water heater use faucets and valves that prevent scalding — for instance, when someone flushes the toilet while you're in the shower.
- ❖ **Use a bathmat:** Non-slip mats and strips applied to the floor of your bathtub or shower will reduce the risk of falls. A wet floor can be just as slippery as the tub, so use a bathmat or textured strips outside the shower, too.

- ❖ **Adjust your chair cushions:** Getting out of a soft-cushioned or low chair can prove challenging to individuals with reduced mobility. Place a board under soft cushions. Raise the height of a chair by placing a pillow or folded blanket on the seat.
- ❖ **Move bedroom lamps closer to the bed:** Lamps and lighting in the bedroom should be easily reached from the bed. Thus guests won't need to walk from the light switch to the bed in the dark. Use chairs with strong backs and sturdy armrests and tables with four legs (not tripod or pedestal tables).
- ❖ **Maintain porch and stair railings:** Porch and stair railings should be checked regularly, to make certain that they're securely anchored. If they're loose, have them repaired immediately. Cracks in cement walks or stairways should be patched before they spread and become even more hazardous

If your guests are staying for a long period of time or if they visit often, then you should consider more permanent changes to your home. For example, you could install grab bars in the shower and around the toilet to make the bathroom safer. Or, you could buy some assistive devices, such as reaching tools for objects up high or jar openers for people who have difficulty gripping. Helpful devices can usually be purchased from a pharmacy or hardware store.

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SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED IN A EMERGENCY

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

You should stock your home with supplies that may be needed during the emergency period. At a minimum, these supplies should include:

- ❖ Several clean containers for water, large enough for a 3-5 day supply of water (about five gallons for each person).
- ❖ A 3-5 day supply of non-perishable food.
- ❖ A first aid kit and manual.
- ❖ A battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra batteries.
- ❖ Sleeping bags or extra blankets.
- ❖ Water-purifying supplies, such as chlorine or iodine tablets or unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach.
- ❖ Prescription medicines and special medical needs.
- ❖ Baby food and/or prepared formula, diapers, and other baby supplies.
- ❖ Disposable cleaning cloths, such as "baby wipes" for the whole family to use in case bathing facilities are not available.
- ❖ Personal hygiene supplies, such as soap, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, etc.
- ❖ An emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/readiness.asp>

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THE “GO KIT” – BE READY TO LEAVE HOME

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

An emergency may require you to evacuate your home or work at a moments notice. Have a **“Go Kit”** ready to grab as you leave the premises. A “Go Kit” should include:

- ❖ Water: one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and sanitation
- ❖ Food: at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- ❖ Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- ❖ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ❖ First aid kit including a three-day supply of prescription medications
- ❖ Whistle to signal for help
- ❖ Dust mask or cotton t-shirt to help filter the air
- ❖ Moist towelettes for sanitation
- ❖ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ❖ Can opener
- ❖ Garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ❖ Sturdy shoes and extra clothing and blankets
- ❖ Three-day supply of pet food
- ❖ Cash

Think about your family's unique needs. You may wish to pack diapers, infant formula, bottles, comfort items, books, paper, pens, and a deck of cards or other forms of entertainment. When you assemble your kit, consider putting together a spare kit. For more information regarding the checklist and other useful information, go online to www.ready.gov and www.ohsep.louisiana.gov.

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PREVENTING CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Every year, more than 500 people die in the U. S. from accidental CO poisoning. CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled. When power outages occur during emergencies such as hurricanes or winter storms, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling, or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and to poison the people and animals inside.

Generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices should never be used inside a home, basement, garage, or camper - or even outside near an open window.

Every home should have at least one working carbon monoxide detector. The detector's batteries should be checked twice annually, at the same time smoke detector batteries are checked.

How to Recognize CO Poisoning

Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms.

Important CO Poisoning Prevention Tips

- ❖ Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- ❖ Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- ❖ Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented. Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- ❖ Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.

- ❖ Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- ❖ If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.
- ❖ If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional right away.

Educational materials

For flyers and door hangers, please visit: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/co-materials.asp>

Public Service Announcements, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/co/psa.htm>

CO Poisoning Prevention Guidelines, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm>

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HOME ESCAPE PLAN

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Determine the best escape routes from your home. Draw a floor plan of your home. Identify two escape routes from each room.

Establish a safe place in your area for your family to meet at in an emergency. For example, designate a certain spot in the local park to gather at, and should you have to leave your area, designate a relative or a friend's home as the gathering place. Be sure to include arrangements for any pets in these plans since pets are not permitted in shelters and some hotels will not accept them.

Pick two places to meet:

- ❖ One place near your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
- ❖ One outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- ❖ Keep family records in a water and fire-proof container.
- ❖ Discuss what to do about power outages and personal injuries.
- ❖ Take a Basic Red Cross First Aid and CPR training course. For more information, [contact your local Red Cross office](#).
- ❖ Keep a disaster supplies kit in your home. Whether you are asked to evacuate your home or to seal yourself inside for a period of time, having some essential supplies on hand will make you and your family more comfortable. Aim to have a kit that will keep you and your family self-sufficient in your home for at least three days. If you have a flashlight, a battery-operated or crank radio, food, water and blankets, you already have a good start. Keep a smaller kit in your car. A blanket, extra clothing, a candle in a deep can and matches can save your life.

Fire Escape Plan

- ❖ Plan two escape routes out of each room.
- ❖ Teach family members to stay low to the ground when escaping from a fire.
- ❖ Teach family members never to open doors that are hot. In a fire, feel the bottom of the door with the palm of your hand. If it is hot, do not open the door. Find another way out.
- ❖ Install smoke detectors. Clean and test smoke detectors once a month. Change batteries at least once a year.

- ❖ Keep a whistle to awaken household members in case of fire.
- ❖ Check electrical outlets. Do not overload outlets.
- ❖ Purchase a fire extinguisher (5 lb., A-B-C type). Have a collapsible ladder on each upper floor of your house.
- ❖ Consider installing home sprinklers.

Practice and maintain your plan:

- ❖ Quiz your children every six months.
- ❖ Conduct fire and emergency evacuations.
- ❖ Replace stored water in your disaster supplies kit every six months.
- ❖ Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- ❖ Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

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PLANNING FOR YOUR PETS

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

The best way to protect your family from the effects of a disaster is to have a disaster plan. If you are a pet owner, that plan should include your pets.

Before A Disaster

Ask friends, relatives, or others outside your area whether they could shelter your animals. If you have more than one pet, they may be more comfortable together; but be prepared to house them separately.

Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.

Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency. Include 24-hour phone numbers.

Create a Disaster Supply Kit for Your Pet

In the event of an emergency you may have to leave your home quickly. Your pet relies upon you to take care of him or her. Assemble this kit now.

- ❖ Medications and medical records in a waterproof container
- ❖ Sturdy leashes and/or carriers
- ❖ A 3 day supply of food and potable water with bowls
- ❖ A picture of your pet(s) in case they get lost
- ❖ Information on feeding times, medical and/or behavioral issues
- ❖ Litter and litter box for cats
- ❖ Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable

Planning and preparation will enable you to evacuate with your pets quickly and safely. But bear in mind that animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed, transport cats in carriers and don't leave animals unattended anywhere, as they can run off.

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HOW TO SHELTER AT HOME AND EVACUATION

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Shelter-in-Place

If there is a release of hazardous materials or a terrorist attack involving chemical, biological, or radiological agents, you may be directed by local officials to stay inside (shelter-in-place). If directed to shelter-in-place:

- ❖ Go inside immediately
- ❖ Turn off ventilation, fans, and close the fireplace damper
- ❖ Close and lock doors and windows
- ❖ Seal door thresholds with wet towels
- ❖ Seal all openings with tape and plastic sheeting
- ❖ Monitor TV or radio
- ❖ Don't smoke or have an open flame
- ❖ Stay off the phone

Instructions to shelter-in-place are usually only for a few hours, not days or weeks. There is little danger that you will run out of oxygen. Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe to go outside.

Evacuation

Circumstances will dictate what routes can be used for safe evacuation and where to go for shelter. If officials instruct you to evacuate, do so immediately! Local officials will direct you to the safest evacuation routes and shelters.

If directed to evacuate, take the following items:

- ❖ Medical supplies: prescription medications and dentures
- ❖ Family emergency kit: flashlight, batteries, radio, first aid kit, food, bottled water
- ❖ Clothing and bedding: a change of clothes and a sleeping bag or blankets and pillow for each household member
- ❖ Money, checkbook, and/or credit cards
- ❖ Car keys (ensure your car is at least half-full of gas at all times)

- ❖ Important papers: wills, deeds, marriage and birth certificates, insurance, deeds/leases, social security card, driver's license/ID card, stocks, bonds
- ❖ Local officials will provide information on television and radio as to what action you need to take. Follow their instructions regarding shelter-in-place and evacuation and other emergency actions before, during, and after an emergency.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/shelterinplace.html>

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POWER OUTAGES

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Power cuts can occur due to rolling blackouts, extreme weather conditions, or can accompany other disasters such as earthquakes. If there is no power in your neighborhood:

- ❖ Turn off and unplug appliances and computers. Leave one light on to indicate when power has been restored.
- ❖ Avoid using candles, as they are fire hazards.
- ❖ Do not use a gas stove for heating or operate generators indoors (including the garage.) Both could cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ❖ If a traffic signal is not working, treat it as a stop sign.

For more information, please visit: http://www.72hours.org/no_power.html

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WINTER DRIVING—BE PREPARED

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Before the cold days of winter arrive, there are few things to do to make sure you are safe in your car this winter.

- ❖ **Get your car tuned up if it needs it. Make sure your battery and charging system are up to snuff.**
- ❖ **Make sure your windshield wipers are in good shape.**
- ❖ **Keep your gas tank close to full.**
- ❖ **Make sure your windshield washer reservoir is full.**
- ❖ **Carry a bag of sand in your car.** This can be used to weigh down the axle or can be used to put under the tires to gain traction.
- ❖ **Know your car--**You should know what your car can and cannot do in the snow. If you really have to drive in the snow—have snow tires. (If you absolutely can't afford four snow tires, two new snow tires will be better than whatever you have on your car now. Mount them on the wheels that are driven by the engine. For all-wheel-drive cars, you really should use four snows.)
- ❖ **Make sure you have some basic supplies in your car in case you do get stuck.** We recommend: Snowbrush and an ice scraper, shovel, bag of sand (to help with traction), extra windshield washer fluid, a blanket, and winter clothes you don't wear anymore, especially an old pair of boots.
- ❖ **Have a cell phone.**
- ❖ **Make sure you have good visibility out of all windows.** Clear off the entire car, not just a little peephole in the windshield. You need just as much, if not more, visibility in poor conditions because you have to keep your eyes peeled for pedestrians, and every other knucklehead on the road.
- ❖ **Drive slowly.**

For more information, please visit <http://www.cartalk.com/content/features/WinterDriving>.

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STAYING SAFE DURING EXTREME HEAT

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Elderly people (that is, people aged 65 years and older) are more prone to heat stress than younger people for several reasons. Elderly people do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature and they are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that upsets normal body responses to heat.

They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

- ❖ **Heat Stroke:** Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.
- ❖ **Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke** (Warning signs vary but may include the following:)
 - An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
 - Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
 - Rapid, strong pulse
 - Throbbing headache
 - Dizziness
 - Nausea
- ❖ **Heat Exhaustion:** Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.
- ❖ **Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion** (Warning signs vary but may include the following:
 - Heavy sweating
 - Paleness
 - Muscle Cramps

- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Skin: may be cool and moist
- Pulse rate: fast and weak
- Breathing: fast and shallow

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

You can follow these prevention tips to protect yourself from heat-related stress:

- ❖ Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages. (If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him how much you should drink when the weather is hot. Also, avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps.)
- ❖ Rest.
- ❖ Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- ❖ If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment. (If you don't have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping mall or public library to cool off.)
- ❖ Wear lightweight clothing.
- ❖ If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
- ❖ Do not engage in strenuous activities.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/elderlyheat.asp>

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HELPING SOMEONE WITH HEAT STRESS

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

If you see any signs of severe heat stress, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the affected person. Do the following:

- ❖ Get the person to a shady area.
- ❖ Cool the person rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the person in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the person with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the person in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.
- ❖ Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101°–102°F
- ❖ If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- ❖ Do not give the person alcohol to drink.
- ❖ Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/elderlyheat.asp>

“This article is part of a series designed by the Councils’ on Aging Emergency Taskforce to help you plan ahead for emergencies.”

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

If you are under a hurricane watch or warning but are not yet under an evacuation order, here are some basic steps to take to prepare for the storm:

- ❖ Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters.
- ❖ Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before the hurricane strikes. Be prepared to turn off electrical power when there is standing water, fallen power lines, or before you evacuate. Turn off gas and water supplies before you evacuate. Secure structurally unstable building materials.
- ❖ Buy a fire extinguisher and make sure your family knows where to find it and how to use it.
- ❖ Locate and secure your important papers, such as insurance policies, wills, licenses, stocks, etc.
- ❖ Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
- ❖ Inform local authorities if you have will need assistance to prepare your home to withstand the winds or shelter safely during the storm.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/readiness.asp>

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PREPARING TO EVACUATE YOUR HOME DURING A HURRICANE

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Expect the need to evacuate and prepare for it. The National Weather Service will issue a hurricane watch when there is a threat to coastal areas of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours. When a hurricane watch is issued, you should:

- ❖ Fill your automobile's gas tank. If no vehicle is available, make arrangements with friends or family for transportation.
- ❖ Fill your clean water containers.
- ❖ Review your emergency plans and supplies, checking to see if any items are missing.
- ❖ Tune in the radio or television for weather updates.
- ❖ Listen for disaster sirens and warning signals.
- ❖ Prepare an emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.
- ❖ Secure any items outside which may damage property in a storm, such as bicycles, grills, propane tanks, etc.
- ❖ Cover windows and doors with plywood or boards or place large strips of masking tape or adhesive tape on the windows to reduce the risk of breakage and flying glass.
- ❖ Put livestock and family pets in a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters cannot accept animals.
- ❖ Place vehicles under cover, if at all possible.
- ❖ Fill sinks and bathtubs with water as an extra supply for washing.
- ❖ Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/readiness.asp>

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EVACUATION ORDER—LEAVE WHEN ASKED

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now”

Because of the destructive power of a hurricane, you should never ignore an evacuation order. Authorities will be most likely to direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the storm. Be aware that most shelters and some hotels do not accept pets. If a hurricane warning is issued for your area or you are directed by authorities to evacuate the area:

- ❖ Take your “Go Kit” of essential items with you.
- ❖ If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity, and water.
- ❖ Disconnect appliances to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.
- ❖ Make sure your automobile's emergency kit is also ready.
- ❖ Follow the designated evacuation routes—others may be blocked—and expect heavy traffic.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/readiness.asp>

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GETTING YOUR CAR READY FOR WINTER

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

Check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:

- ❖ **Antifreeze levels** - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- ❖ **Battery and ignition system** - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
- ❖ **Brakes** - check for wear and fluid levels.
- ❖ **Exhaust system** - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. *Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.*
- ❖ **Fuel and air filters** - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas.
- ❖ **Heater and defroster** - ensure they work properly.
- ❖ **Lights and flashing hazard lights** - check for serviceability.
- ❖ **Oil** - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- ❖ **Thermostat** - ensure it works properly.
- ❖ **Windshield wiper equipment** - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.
- ❖ **Install good winter tires.** Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions.
- ❖ **Maintain at least a half tank of gas** during the winter season.
- ❖ **Place a winter emergency kit in each car** that includes:
 - a shovel
 - windshield scraper and small broom
 - flashlight
 - battery powered radio
 - extra batteries
 - water

- snack food
- matches
- extra hats, socks and mittens
- first aid kit with pocket knife
- necessary medications
- blanket(s)
- tow chain or rope
- road salt and sand
- booster cables
- emergency flares
- fluorescent distress flag

For more information, please visit: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/winter/wi_before.shtm

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DRESS FOR THE COLD WEATHER

“Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.”

- ❖ **Wear several layers** of loose fitting, light-weight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing. The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- ❖ **Wear mittens** which are warmer than gloves.
- ❖ **Wear a hat.**
- ❖ **Cover your mouth** with a scarf to protect your lungs.

For more information, please visit: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/winter/wi_before.shtm

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