

Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities

While all Americans remain vulnerable to disasters, children and adults with disabilities may be more vulnerable than the general population. By the very nature of their challenges, people with disabilities may be less likely to adopt effective risk mitigation strategies in advance, evacuate or respond to emergency instructions, access a public shelter, shelter in place at home, communicate with emergency responders and make do without personal care, social services and other supports. Since 2005 the University of Massachusetts Medical School's E.K. Shriver Center has worked to address the emergency preparedness needs of children and adults with disabilities, fostering development of individual, family and organizational preparedness knowledge, skills and resilience.

Resources for People with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs

- ✚ **Make A Family Emergency Plan** (emergency plan templates)
 - MA Disability Policy Consortium, Personal Emergency Preparedness Plan <http://www.dpcma.org/Publications/tabid/423/Default.aspx>
 - ReadyAmerica online emergency plan tool <http://www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/index.html>
 - North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, DHHS Family Disaster Plan <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/gcdc/pdf/disasterplan.pdf>
 - Ohio Legal Rights Service, Emergency Management Be Prepared Kit <http://olrs.ohio.gov>
- ✚ **Develop A Personal Checklist Of Preparedness Action Steps**
 - Emergency Response Preparedness Self-Assessment Instrument
Go to <http://rtc.umn.edu/erp/assessment/menu.asp> to use in demo mode (choose “individual” operational level for emergency plans for individuals with disabilities)
- ✚ **Find Your Closest Massachusetts Public Emergency Shelter** (Note that not all cities/towns are listed; all shelters listed may not be accessible)
<http://www.dpcma.org/Issues/tabid/705/articleType/ArticleView/articleID/46/MEMA-Shelter-List.aspx>
- ✚ **Share Disability Information With Local Responders**
 - Tips for Responders (share information about specific disabilities with local responders)
<http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/hsem/documents/tips3rdedition.pdf>
 - Massachusetts Disability Indicator form (share an *individual's* disability information and likely emergency needs with local responders)
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsterminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Crime+Prevention+%26+Personal+Safety&L2=Report+an+Emergency&L3=Enhanced++911&L4=About+E9-1-1&sid=Eeops&b=terminalcontent&f=setb_disability_indicator&csid=Eeops

Share Information When You Fly

- TSA Disability Notification Card
<http://quest.mda.org/sites/default/files/Notification%20Cards%20II.pdf> (as of 4/1/11 accessible version does not yet appear to be on the website)

Learn About Massachusetts Emergency Preparedness/Disability Public Policy Issues

- Recommendations from the Massachusetts Task Force on Emergency Preparedness and People Requiring Additional Assistance (September 2008)
<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=agencylanding&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Employment%2C+Equal+Access%2C+Disability&L2=Oversight+Agencies&L3=Massachusetts+Office+on+Disability&sid=Eoaf>

Find More Information

- National Organization on Disability (emergency planning information by disability; information for responders)
http://www.nod.org/research_publications/emergency_preparedness_materials/
- Resources in alternative formats
 - **ASL:** The Accessible Emergency Information website
<http://sites.google.com/site/preparedness4deaf/preparedness-videos> The website has videos on developing an emergency plan and dealing with specific events. There is audio, text and ASL interpretation of the videos.
 - **Braille:** The Accessible Emergency Information website
<http://sites.google.com/site/preparedness4deaf/braille-format-2> The website has emergency preparedness materials in Braille (.ABT and .BRL formats).
 - **Emergency Communication Aids:** Diane Nelson Bryen, Ph.D., Institute on Disabilities, Temple University, Emergency Communication4All
<http://disabilities.temple.edu/aacvocabulary/e4all.shtml> (downloadable vocabulary lists and communication boards)

For more information about the E.K. Shriver Center's Emergency Preparedness Initiative contact Sue Wolf-Fordham, J.D., at 781-642-0275 or susan.wolf-fordham@umassmed.edu