

FEMA RI Disability Integration Newsletter

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Administrator's Message

Happy New Year and welcome to the second edition of the FEMA Region I Disability Integration Newsletter!

Over this past year, it has been an honor to work with you, strengthen our partnerships and increase opportunities to collaborate. I want to extend a thank you for your dedication in developing and implementing accessible and integrated emergency management programs and services. Your progress and efforts are recognized by individuals and communities across the Region.

In 2016, Region I is committed to continuing our journey working together toward full inclusion and equity in support of the ultimate goal of inclusive emergency management throughout the Region.

We are here to support you. Please let our Regional Disability Integration Specialist, Kate McCarthy-Barnett, know if you have questions or requests on accessibility requirements or guidance to ensure the needs of the whole community are met in emergency management programs and services.

Thank you for your dedication to inclusion and equity in all that you do.



FEMA

PAUL F. FORD
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

FEMA'S MISSION

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capacity to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

What is a Winter Storm?

Severe winter storms, commonly occurring as Nor'easters are probable and reoccurring risks that threaten all six New England states. These storms threaten the region with a variety of different meteorological effects including heavy ice and or snow accumulations, tropical storm force winds, extreme arctic air masses, and inland or coastal flooding and erosion. All six states are vulnerable to the effects of winter storms, which can disrupt infrastructure and power, generate significant and dangerous debris, and result in roof collapses, among other risks. A significant winter storm, blizzard or ice storm may affect multiple states in New England. A few reminders are provided below. For more information go to [Winter Storms & Extreme Cold](#).

BEFORE

- ◇ Have a disaster [emergency kit](#)
- ◇ Make a [communications plan](#). Your family may not be together so it is important to know how you will contact one another
- ◇ Discuss emergency notification plans with workplace and/or schools
- ◇ Download [FEMA's Be Smart. Know Your Alerts and Warnings](#) for a summary of notifications
- ◇ Install battery-powered or battery back-up carbon monoxide detectors
- ◇ Be alert to changing weather conditions using local alerts, radio, and other news sources for information and instructions
- ◇ Bring pets inside. Move other animals or livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen water
- ◇ Minimize travel. If travel is necessary, keep a [disaster supply kit](#) in your vehicle

DURING

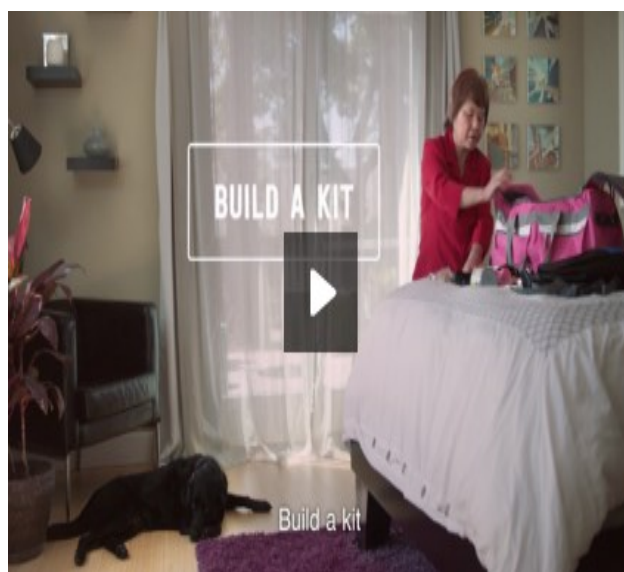
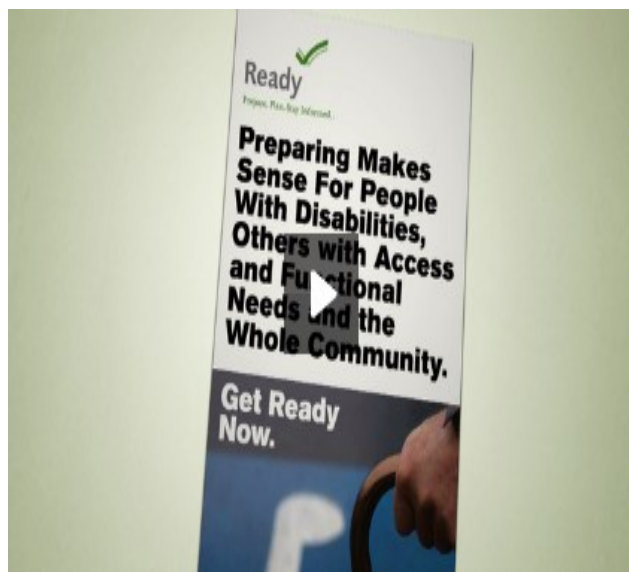
- ◇ Stay indoors as much as possible
- ◇ Walk carefully on snowy, icy sidewalks
- ◇ Avoid overexertion when shoveling
- ◇ Keep dry. Change wet clothes to avoid loss of body heat
- ◇ If power goes out, close off unused rooms to consolidate and retain heat
- ◇ Do not heat a home with a stove or outdoor cooking equipment (e.g., grill, camp stove)
- ◇ If driving is absolutely necessary, keep a [disaster supply kit](#) in your vehicle
- ◇ If you are outdoors, protect yourself from [frostbite](#) and [hypothermia](#) by wearing several layers of warm, loose fitting clothing
- ◇ If you do not have adequate supplies to stay warm in your home and you can get there safely, you may want to go to a shelter

Snow shoveling can be hazardous. More than 10,000 people visit emergency rooms each year due to injury and overexertion from snow shoveling, including strains, cuts, and fractures from slipping and falling. Nearly 100 people die every year from heart attacks brought on by shoveling snow. Use caution, take breaks, push the snow instead of lifting it when possible, and lift lighter loads.



Winter Storm Preparedness Resources

The likelihood that an individual will recover from an emergency, such as winter storms and extreme cold, often depends on the planning and preparation done today. While each person's needs are unique, people with disabilities and other individuals with access and functional needs can take steps to prepare. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you can be better prepared.



Winter Storm Preparedness Resources

- ◇ [Get Ready Now](#)
- ◇ [Prepare for an Emergencies Now, Information for People with Disabilities](#)
- ◇ [Make a Plan and Create A Support Network](#)
- ◇ [Check Emergency Supply Kit](#)
- ◇ [Make a Medical Plan: Including Medications and Medical Supplies](#)
- ◇ [Make a Plan for Power Outage Plan](#)
- ◇ [Plan for Possible Evacuation](#)
- ◇ [Service Animal Plan](#)



Prepare Your Organization for a Winter Storm

America's PrepareAthon! is a grassroots campaign for action to increase community preparedness and resilience for disasters. The campaign offers free resources to enable organizations to prepare for specific hazards through informative presentations, group discussions, activities and tabletop exercises. Planning and preparing can make a big difference in being safe and keeping your doors open after a disaster. The ability to maintain or quickly re-establish business operations or organization processes requires a focus on preparedness and advanced planning. Join others around the country and obtain a copy of the [Prepare Your Organization for a Winter Storm Playbook](#) with resources to support your preparedness efforts and implement an **America's PrepareAthon Day of Action!**

America's PrepareAthon! has four primary goals. The campaign aims to increase the number of people who:

- 1) Understand which disasters can happen in their community;
- 2) Know what to do to be safe and mitigate damage;
- 3) Take action to increase their preparedness; and
- 4) Participate in community resilience planning.



AMERICA'S
PrepareAthon!
BE SMART. TAKE PART. PREPARE.

UNDERSTANDING WIND CHILL



As the wind increases, your body is cooled at a faster rate causing the skin temperature to drop. This is why it sometimes feels colder than the actual temperature. Wind chill is the temperature it “feels like” when you are outside. The National Weather Service provides a Wind Chill Chart to show the difference between air temperature and the perceived temperature and the amount of time until frostbite occurs. For more information, visit:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/winter/windchill.shtml>

Region I State Highlights

Disability organizations, agencies and State and local partners continue to implement many outstanding initiatives.

Congratulations on a successful year!

- ◇ **Rhode Island:** The RI Department of Health and RI Emergency Management Agency maintain a *Special Needs Emergency Registry* for RI residents with disabilities, chronic conditions or special healthcare needs. The Registry has 14,850 enrollees and the information is shared with local and state emergency responders.
- ◇ **Maine:** Disability Rights Maine and Maine Emergency Management Agency developed a *Disaster Response Interpreter Training* for certified sign language interpreters on emergency response and recovery and interpreting at press conferences and shelters.
- ◇ **Massachusetts:** The Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management developed an *Access and Functional Needs Resource Guide* with information aimed at public health preparedness for people with disabilities.
- ◇ **Connecticut:** The UCONN Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities has developed a curriculum "*Prep is Personal, Find the Fridge*" to assist municipalities in planning for emergency preparedness needs of people with developmental disabilities.
- ◇ **New Hampshire:** The National Council on Disability (NCD) convened its quarterly meeting in Concord. Public meetings were conducted with discussions on Mental Health Services in Higher Education, Managed Care, Emerging Technology, Self-Driving Cars and Help America Vote Act. President Barack Obama appointed Clyde Terry of Granite State Independent Living as the Chair of the NCD.
- ◇ **Vermont:** Disability Rights Vermont was recognized as a "*FEMA Promising Practice: Inclusive Emergency Management in Vermont*" and provided a webinar as part of the ADA National Network on their role following Tropical Storm Irene including shelter accessibility surveys, training to Red Cross and CERT volunteers on the ADA, disability etiquette and assisting individuals with disabilities during times of disaster.



Marcie Roth, Executive Director of the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination attended the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan. The US signed on to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which notes "***Empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key.***" Disability subject matter experts from FEMA HQ and Regions will play an active role in the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Questions on Accessibility?

To help state and local governments understand how the ADA applies to their particular programs, services and activities, the DOJ has published a technical assistance document, [ADA Update: A Primer for State and Local Governments](#). The illustrated guide addresses Title II's nondiscrimination requirements such as program accessibility, service animals, communicating with people with disabilities, mobility devices, policies and procedures. The document also addresses how the *2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design* apply to existing buildings and facilities, new construction and alterations.



—Zachary Rennert, FEMA RI Disability Integration Intern Checking Accessibility Measurements

- ◇ **What are Priorities for Accessible Facilities?**
- ◇ **What are Public Accommodations?**
- ◇ **What is Program Accessibility?**
- ◇ **What is Readily Achievable Barrier Removal?**

The [ADA Network](#) provides answers to these and many other accessibility requirement questions.



For creative accessible architectural designs, Maine Alpha One Independent Living Center and the Maine Chapter of American Institute of Architects collaborated on the [SustainABLE for ME Design Awards](#). Projects were recognized for demonstrating accessibility and inclusion for all users through characteristics that included accessibility, aesthetics, function, and socially sustainability.

Congratulations to Ocean Ave Elementary School (Pictured on left), 363House, CASA Intermediate Care Facility, Cross Insurance Arena and the Pine Tree Society's Camper Cabins for your commitment to inclusive designs!

Spotlight on Leadership

Region I, is comprised of outstanding disability advocates and leaders. In this edition, we would like to recognize **Ed Paquin, Executive Director of Disability Rights Vermont.**



Ed Paquin is the recipient of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Region 1 Advocacy Award for his dedication to promoting the rights of people with disabilities and advancing the independent living movement in New England. Ed is a well-known leader having served in the Vermont House of Representatives, as a board member of the Vermont Center for Independent Living and president of Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights. As recipient of the award, he said, "It has given me an opportunity to step back and think about how lucky I am to be able to work with some of the best people and organizations around to make the world a better place." FEMA has a Memo of Agreement with NCIL and strong partnership coordinating public engagement efforts on preparedness, response, and recovery. Congratulations Ed on this well-deserved honor!



Region I, also consists of emergency management professionals who are committed to developing and implementing inclusive emergency management programs and services. In this edition, we would like to recognize the **Connecticut Office of Emergency Management** in the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Under the leadership of Director William J. Hackett, the CT Office of Emergency Management has implemented an innovative approach to incorporating disability integration throughout the State and Regional Offices. The Agency has active disability organization participation in ESF working groups and Regional Access and Functional Needs Committees. The CT 2015 Annual Emergency Management Summit highlighted *Planning for the Whole Community* as a keynote topic. In addition, the Agency addresses the needs of people with disabilities and other individuals with access and functional needs in reviews of state-wide planning documents and provides preparedness information in sign language on their website. These are just a few examples of how the CT Office of Emergency Management exemplifies proactive planning with a vision of equal access and engaging the whole community. Congratulations on your commitment to inclusive and integrated emergency management!



How Can FEMA Region I Disability Integration Support You?

- ◇ Assist with the development and implementation of integrated and accessible planning, programs, policies and services
- ◇ Provide technical assistance for physical, communication and programmatic accessibility and provide options for meeting obligations
- ◇ Collaborate on training to enhance agency understanding of requirements, roles and responsibilities to achieving equitable and accessible preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation initiatives
- ◇ Provide inclusive emergency management guidance to ensure accessible planning for Emergency Alerts and Notification, Evacuation and Transportation, Shelters, Housing and Communications
- ◇ Collaborate on strategies for integrating function-based needs into planning, training and exercising and support disability and emergency management workgroups and committees
- ◇ Other requests for disability information, resources and assistance

For questions or requests for inclusive emergency management guidance, tools and strategies or alternate formats please contact:

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Regional Disability Integration Specialist

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Please send any suggestions or items of interest to share in our next newsletter.