



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



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### **‘Make a Plan’ During Emergency Preparedness Month**

*Plan With Your Household: What to Do, How to Find Each Other, and How to Communicate*

FRAMINGHAM, MA – The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) urges families to ‘Make a Plan’ during Emergency Preparedness Month. “It is important to develop a Family Emergency Plan that outlines what you will do, how you will find each other, and how you will communicate in an emergency or disaster,” **said MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz.** “Taking the time before the next disaster to develop and practice your Family Emergency Plan will help keep you and your family safe, protect your property, and build your community’s resilience.”

A Family Emergency plan should include:

#### **Meeting Locations**

- Select two family meeting locations — choose one location close to home and another farther away in case you need to evacuate or can’t return to the area.

#### **An Emergency Contact Plan**

- Ask an out-of-state friend or relative to serve as your family’s emergency contact. After a disaster, it is sometimes easier to call long distance to unaffected areas.
- Provide every family member with the name, address, and phone number of the emergency contact and make sure each family member has a cellphone or a prepaid phone card.
- Inform your emergency contact of any family member’s special needs or medical issues.
- List emergency contacts in cellphones as “ICE” (in case of emergency), which will make it easier for first responders, health workers or emergency management personnel to contact the right person in an emergency.
- Plan how you will use communicate if cellular phones and landline phones are inoperable:

- Teach all family members how to communicate via text messaging; text messages often will be delivered even when cellular systems are overloaded and phone calls will not go through.
- Learn how to communicate via social media platforms; social media can be used to let friends and family members know your location and status.
- Use the interactive American Red Cross [Safe and Well](#) website to register yourself as “safe and well” or search for friends and family members after a disaster.

## **Evacuation Plans**

- Your Family Emergency Plan should include an [evacuation plan](#), and you should practice how you will evacuate your home in an emergency.
- Establish possible evacuation routes that you may use to leave your community during an emergency. Talk to your [local emergency management director](#) to learn about your community’s evacuation routes.
- Identify available modes of transportation.
  - Make arrangements with family, neighbors, friends, or your local government if you don’t have personal transportation.
  - If you need transportation assistance, contact local emergency management or public safety officials to make them aware of your needs.

## **Shelter in Place Plans**

Because it may be safer to remain within your home during an emergency, your Family Emergency Plan should include instructions for sheltering in place.

- Designate a safe room within your home. This room should have:
  - As few windows or doors as possible
  - Access to television, radio, and telephones
- Ensure you have necessary supplies and can access your [emergency kit](#).
- If you receive medical treatment or home healthcare services, work with your medical provider to determine how to maintain care and service if you are unable to leave your home for a period of time.
- Review tips to [safely shelter in place](#).

## **Considerations for Family Members with Access and Functional Needs, and Pets**

Plan for everyone in your household, including individuals with [access and functional needs](#), seniors, children, and [pets](#).

MEMA is the state agency charged with ensuring the state is prepared to withstand, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and disasters, including natural hazards, accidents, deliberate attacks, and technological and infrastructure failures. MEMA's staff of professional planners, communications specialists and operations and support personnel is committed to an all hazards approach to emergency management. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state and local government agencies, and with the private sector - individuals, families, non-profits and businesses - MEMA ensures the Commonwealth's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating threats and hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and strengthening our capacity to rebuild

and recover. For additional information about MEMA and Emergency Preparedness, go to [www.mass.gov/mema](http://www.mass.gov/mema).

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