



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY



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**MEMA STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘BEING INFORMED’ AS PART OF
MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

FRAMINGHAM, MA – Throughout Emergency Preparedness Month, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is promoting the importance of individual, family and community preparedness. An important component of preparedness is ‘Being Informed’. “It is critical for residents to learn about the threats and hazards that may impact them, their families, and their community, know how to receive emergency alerts and information during disasters, and be familiar with their community’s plans, states MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz. This is an important step in preparing your family and building resilience.”

It is important to learn of about the hazards that could impact your community. Massachusetts is susceptible to many natural hazards including floods, hurricanes and tropical storms, winter weather and blizzards, tornadoes, coastal storms, thunderstorms, earthquakes, lightning, severe weather, and many others. In addition, man-made disasters can also occur, including hazardous materials incidents, nuclear power plant incidents, power outages, transportation accidents, water supply problems, terrorism and others. Being aware and understanding the different types of incidents that can occur is a critical part of being prepared for emergencies.

It is also important to learn how to receive emergency alerts and information from public officials before and during emergencies. Some hazards such as hurricanes, tropical storms and blizzards have advance notice, while others such as tornados have little or no notice. It is critical to be aware of, and understand the difference between, severe weather watches and warnings. Information about watches and warnings being posted can be obtained from media sources, the National Weather Service, All Hazards National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radios, [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#) (WEA) on your cellphone, or by downloading the free [Massachusetts Alerts](#) smartphone app. Receiving timely public safety information allows you take necessary protective actions to keep you and your family safe.

During emergencies information may be available from a number of sources. It is important to proactively identify, and when necessary, subscribe to several information sources. This will ensure you will receive timely information, especially since some information sources may be disrupted or disabled during an emergency. For example, power outages may cause disruptions to television, radio and internet broadcasts. Some of the primary ways to get information during an emergency include:

- Local notification systems such as “Reverse 9-1-1” or “Code Red”. These type of systems usually require opt-in/registration in advance, so check with your local public safety officials about which system they use and how to register.
- Commercial media (TV and radio).
- MEMA’s [Massachusetts Alerts](#) smartphone app.
- MEMA’s [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) accounts or the social media accounts of a public safety agency in your community.
- MEMA’s website: www.mass.gov/mema or your local community government website.
- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) via radio and television.
- [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#).
- All Hazards National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.
- U.S. Coast Guard Marine Broadcast.
- Outdoor Electronic Billboards.
- Outdoor Sirens.
- Local notifications from public safety vehicles public address announcements or door to door notifications.
- A message on Teletypewriters (TTY).
- [Call 2-1-1 for Non-Emergency Assistance](#). 2-1-1 is the Commonwealth's primary telephone call center during times of emergency and is able to provide information on emergency resources such as shelter locations.

You should also be informed about your community’s emergency plans, including your community’s evacuation routes and shelter locations. If you live or work in a coastal community, you should learn whether you are in a designated hurricane evacuation zone. To learn whether your home, business, or school is in a hurricane evacuation zone go to: "[Know Your Zone](#)" to view an interactive map on MEMA’s website.

Massachusetts residents are encouraged to visit www.mema.gov/ready to obtain more information about how to prepare themselves and their families for emergencies and disasters.

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.

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Massachusetts Alerts: to receive emergency information on your smartphone, including severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service and emergency information from MEMA, download the *Massachusetts Alerts* free app. To learn more about *Massachusetts Alerts*, and for information on how to download the free app onto your smartphone, visit: www.mass.gov/mema/mobileapp.