



Evacuation Planning Guidance

Individual & Multiple Community Evacuations

February 2021

INTRODUCTION

The coordination and execution of a large-scale individual or multiple community evacuation is a multiagency effort involving numerous moving pieces and stakeholders. In an effort to assist local communities better prepare for large-scale evacuations, the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC) has developed a list of guiding prompts meant to generate discussion of various issues regarding a hypothetical, simulated large-scale evacuation. This guide can be used by individual communities or multiple communities to increase their capacity to prepare for and conduct a large-scale evacuation, provide mass care sheltering, and facilitate multiagency coordination among the disciplines involved in an evacuation.

The prompts in this guide are not meant to constitute a definitive list of considerations to be addressed. For complete evacuation and sheltering guidance and plans municipalities should review the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Statewide Evacuation Plan linked on page 11.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Introduction	1
Table of Contents	2
Module 1 – Evacuation assessment and Public Notification.....	3
Key Issues	3
Questions.....	3
Module 2 – Executing an Evacuation	6
Key Issues	6
Questions.....	6
Module 3 – Re-Entry and Recovery	9
Key Issues	9
Questions.....	9
Massachusetts Evacuation and Sheltering Resources	11

MODULE 1 – EVACUATION ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Key Issues

- Effects and implications of a large-scale unplanned event or incident requiring evacuation;
- Coordination of response resources across multiple communities;
- Public safety response to a potentially hostile attack;
- Need to ensure situational awareness in coordination with community partners;
- Deluge of calls from the public;
- Determining the number of citizens in the affected area that have been exposed or threatened;
- Determining how many residents can shelter-in-place and how many must evacuate;
- Considerations for disseminating a notice;
- Resources and capabilities to evacuate citizens, some of whom may require specialized medical equipment, functional needs assistance, etc.;
- Resources and capabilities to evacuate and reunite pets;
- Resources and capabilities to shelter citizens and coordinate family reunification;
- Potential for traffic congestion caused by an evacuation.

Questions

Participate in a discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 1. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

Note: The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

Questions – Initial Response and Situation Assessment:

1. What is your municipality's Emergency Operations Center activation protocol?
 - a. Where will the EOC be established, when, and by which municipality/department?
2. How will information be shared between affected communities? Who will be responsible for coordinating information sharing between communities and outside agencies?
 - a. How will this be communicated to internal staff and outside agencies?
3. What resources/assets are needed to address the incident site? What resources/assets are available for response elsewhere in the community?
4. What resources/assets will be needed and how will this need be communicated to other responding agencies?
5. What plans, procedures, and other resources are currently available to be used in responding to this situation?

Questions – Decision to Shelter-in-Place and/or Evacuate:

6. What is the process for determining whether to shelter-in-place or evacuate? Who makes that decision?
7. What are the potential obstacles for evacuating?
8. What agencies need to be involved in the decision-making process when determining whether to evacuate the population?
 - a. Which agencies would be assigned as lead(s) of the incident command structure?
 - b. What are the roles of each agency regarding evacuation?
9. How will you determine the number of individuals who can safely shelter-in-place? How will you determine which individuals and how many must be sheltered elsewhere?
10. Where are the evacuation routes in the affected communities? Who will be responsible for identifying the routes and ensuring they are clear and accessible?
11. How will sheltering needs and availability be communicated across multiple communities in the case of a large-scale, regional movement of people and pets?

Questions – Public Information and Warning:

12. Will you notify the general public that the incident has occurred? If so, how?
13. How will you notify the general public about a shelter-in-place and/or evacuation notice?
14. Are there individuals within the affected area who may not be aware of evacuation notice? Who is responsible for notifying them, and how?
15. What information will be included in the notice?
 - a. Will the information included be coordinated with other communities facing the same event? If so, how?
16. How will motorists traveling through the area and residents returning home at the end of the workday be informed and redirected?
17. How will you handle the influx of 911 calls to emergency dispatchers? What capacity of calls are you equipped to currently handle?
18. Will any media outlets be used to disseminate the evacuation notice? If so, which ones?
19. Who will be responsible for liaising with the media?
 - a. In a large-scale event, will each community handle media outreach separately?
20. Will commuters need to be detoured away from the highway? Who will be responsible for determining this and establishing detours?

21. Who will coordinate with the public transportation authority regarding notices and detours?

MODULE 2 – EXECUTING AN EVACUATION

Key Issues

- Large scale evacuation;
- Length of time required to complete the evacuation;
- Logistics plan for the evacuation (routes, fuel, drivers, accountability and tracking);
- Potential for traffic congestion as well as social disorder (possible looting) during evacuation;
- Role of public information officers in communicating with surrounding municipalities;
- Increasing 9-1-1 calls;
- Procedures for determining the order of boarding for evacuation vehicles;
- Law enforcement and security procedures to manage chaos and panic;
- If terrorism is suspected, the risk of responsible parties from the initial incident boarding evacuation vehicles;
- Implications of extended sheltering for some evacuees and resources accessible to facilitate and accommodate residents;
- Mitigating risks to residents who refuse to evacuate.

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 2. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

Note: The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

Questions – Transportation:

1. What assets are available to facilitate the evacuation of residents who cannot self-evacuate?
 - a. What about non-ambulatory citizens?
 - b. Their pets?
 - c. Are the assets available to your community regional or local? Is there a plan in place for the possibility that regional resources could be exhausted by other communities?
2. How will you identify and communicate with residents that require special assistance? Is there a database of this population? Will you create a hotline? Conduct well-being checks on homes?
3. Who will be responsible for communicating between communities the availability of and/or need for such assets?

4. Which pick-up locations will be used to evacuate non-ambulatory residents or those that would require special assistance?
5. What is the process/order for boarding evacuation vehicles? What security procedures are in place to manage the boarding of evacuation vehicles?
6. Will those evacuating be allowed to bring personal belongings onto the evacuation vehicles? Pets?
7. How will you manage unaccompanied minors?
8. Where will the evacuated persons be brought to?
 - a. Will the evacuees be brought directly to sheltering facilities, or is there a staging area?
 - b. If so, who will coordinate the staging area?
 - c. According to the State's Evacuation Plan, local communities are responsible for designating and managing Evacuee Assembly Points and Transportation Hubs during a large-scale event—have those locations been identified?
9. What information, if any, will be collected as people board evacuation vehicles and/or as they arrive at the secondary location? Who will be responsible for sharing this information and with whom?
10. How will this evacuation be coordinated with organizations that will manage shelters?
11. How will evacuation vehicle drivers communicate with each other, the agency coordinating the evacuation, or other appropriate stakeholders?
12. Who will be responsible for ensuring evacuation routes are clear and accessible?
 - a. Do emergency evacuation routes already exist? How familiar is the general public with these routes? Are they clearly defined and easy to follow?
13. How are non-residential locations involved in this (places like local hospitals and senior living facilities)?

Questions – Sheltering:

1. What existing facilities are available for sheltering and what are their capacity and other restrictions?
 - a. Will additional sheltering resources be needed to safely and securely house the evacuees?
 - b. If so, where will these shelters be established?
2. What equipment is available to accommodate evacuees and how will it be made available to shelter locations?
 - a. How will things like food, water, bedding, medical services, etc. be provided over the short and long-term?

3. How will you shelter unaccompanied minors, and how will you coordinate reunification?
4. Where will pets be sheltered? Who is responsible for household pet sheltering coordination?
5. For large-scale events, how will the activation of Regional Reception Centers and Regional Shelters set up by the State be communicated to residents?

MODULE 3 – RE-ENTRY AND RECOVERY

Key Issues

- Sheltering residents for 12+ hours;
- Coordination of orderly return of residents to homes and health care facilities;
- Environmental and public health concerns due to possible chemical exposure and contamination;
- Public information and assistance, addressing media issues and mitigating psychological impact;
- Investigation into attack (if terrorism-related incident);
- Planning long-term mitigation projects to improve resilience.

Questions

Based on the information provided, participate in the discussion concerning the issues raised in Module 3. Identify any critical issues, decisions, requirements, or questions that should be addressed at this time.

Note: The following questions are provided as suggested subjects that you may wish to address as the discussion progresses. These questions are not meant to constitute a definitive list of concerns to be addressed, nor is there a requirement to address every question.

Questions – Resident Re-entry:

1. What precautions will be taken to ensure an orderly return to residences in the affected area?
2. How will information about re-entry be communicated to the public? To collaborating organizations?
3. How will vulnerable populations be informed and/or monitored for continuing effects of the event or incident if the evacuation was health-based (chemical attack/gas explosion/etc.)?
4. How will information about delayed health effects be shared with residents?
5. What do you want to tell the public?

Questions – Recovery:

6. How will exposed/contaminated equipment be identified and addressed?
7. Who will coordinate internal and inter-organization debriefs and reporting?
8. Who will be responsible for testing water and food sources for contamination?

MASSACHUSETTS EVACUATION AND SHELTERING RESOURCES

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Statewide Evacuation Plan:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/statewide-evacuation-coordination-plan/download>
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Critical Transportation Need (CTN) Evacuation Operations Annex: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/critical-transportation-need-evacuation-operations-plan/download>
- Massachusetts Statewide Mass Care and Shelter Coordination Plan:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-statewide-mass-care-and-shelter-coordination-plan/download>
- Massachusetts Statewide Mass Care and Shelter Coordination Plan: Local Shelter Toolkit:<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-statewide-mass-care-and-shelter-coordination-plan-local-shelter-toolkit/download>
- Guidance for Mass Care Operations in a Pandemic Environment:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-for-mass-care-operations-in-a-pandemic-environment/download>