

ALL READY REFERENCE RESEARCH GUIDE

Resources for Public Libraries to fit every stage of the Emergency Management Cycle

Mitigation

This is the stage to identify and prevent or limit the risks your community faces.

- 1 The first step is to talk to your town or city [Emergency Management Director \(EMD\)](#).** They can explain the community risk assessment and emergency management plan and how it applies to your library. They also can conduct a site visit and plan review so they can understand your library's unique needs (such as high-value items). You can also explain your library's--and librarians'--special skills and capabilities, such as building space, technology resources and expertise, and information management.
- 2 Next, connect with [COSTEP MA--the Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness organization for cultural institutions in Massachusetts](#).** Cultural institutions, like libraries, archives, and museums, have special concerns during crises. COSTEP can help you understand how these concerns apply to you so you can prepare for them.
- 3 Consider what enhanced services your library can provide during a disaster based on available resources, such as staffing, building capacity, and technology capabilities.** Public libraries historically play important roles within their community beyond providing everyday services. Libraries often open their doors or bring services to shelters in the midst of crises. Librarians ensure people have access

to not only books but also to the internet, to e-government resources in order to file claims, to entertainment, and to a safe haven. Check out the National Library of Medicine's [Disaster Information Management Research Center](#) (NLM DIMRC) bibliography called [Librarians and Libraries Respond to Disasters: Bibliography on Library Roles in Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#) to learn more.

- 4 **Then identify risks to your building and collection, such as flooding.** Mitigate risks as possible with actions such as building improvement.

Preparation

Now you know what threats your community and your library might face--and you have a good idea how your library can help itself and others. **It's time to plan or revise your existing emergency plan.**

- 1 **A great place to start is with the [Council of State Archivists Pocket Response Plan PReP Template](#).** This tested and user-friendly template contains all the essential elements for initial response to a disaster.
- 2 The COSTEP MA site has very useful [forms and documents](#). COSTEP also has a very helpful guidance for developing relationships with [recovery vendors](#).
- 3 Discuss the risks to your building and collection with your EMD. This will help you determine what support might be available during a crisis.
- 4 Also, become familiar with your insurance policy. Do you work directly with the insurance company or through your city or town? How are claims handled? Incorporate this information into your plans and training.
- 5 Ask your EMD to review your revised plan.

- 6 **Next, conduct training to familiarize library staff with your plan.** Consider involving your EMD in training.
- 7 NN/LM NER provides many [training and education opportunities and services](#), including webinars, workshops, and materials. Subscribe to their weekly updates to learn more.
- 8 COSTEP MA conducts training, which you can learn about [here](#) or by subscribing to their listserv. The Massachusetts Libraries Board of Library Commissioners [training programs and technical assistance](#) are great options for individual libraries and larger groups like networks and systems. MLS also has regular [webinars and training](#) on topics including emergency preparedness.
- 9 **Enhance your preparedness even further** by subscribing to DIMRC's listserv and exploring the Disaster Information Specialist Program.

Response

When a disaster occurs in your community, you may recognize it for yourself or you could be notified by your EMD, Fire Department Chief, or Police Department Chief.

- 1 **The first step is to activate your emergency plan.**
- 2 **Next, stay in contact with your EMD** to stay informed and provide them information. Also, you can check the [MEMA website](#) and call [211](#) for the latest updates.
- 3 Contact [MBLC Disaster/Emergency Assistance](#) if you need support.
- 4 If there is damage to your building or collection, contact your insurance policy point of contact.
- 5 Determine to what extent your library can provide services to the community.
- 6 The following tools can **enhance your library's response and support to patrons:**

[ERS](#)--guidelines for emergency assessment and salvage
[LibraryFloods](#)--procedures for recovering collections

If your library is able to, **provide enhanced services to your community**. Several great tools are available for this purpose, including:

[MedlinePlus](#)--a user friendly health information website

[Show Me](#)--a tool to enhance communication during crises with people with communication challenges

[Help Kids Cope](#)-- a tool to help children understand and cope with disasters

[Apps from the American Red Cross](#), including First Aid, Pet First Aid, and apps about specific hazards

[National Weather Service](#)--for severe weather alerts and updates

[Outbreaks Near Me](#)--a tool to search and browse outbreak reports

[ReUnite](#)--a resource to assist with family reunification and finding a missing person during and after a disaster

Recovery

- 1 As soon as you are able, **start your recovery plan**. This usually is possible once the disaster has ended or lessened. Your EMD can inform you about the disaster status.
- 2 **If your library or collection suffered damage**, COSTEP has information about [recovery assistance](#). The [NEDCC](#) can also provide disaster recovery assistance and resources.
- 3 **Your community may still require enhanced services as it recovers**. Your plans, training, the apps and tools above, and your support will help your community rebuild.