



Emergency Management for Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources: A Massachusetts Resource



Table of Contents

[I. Emergency Planning for Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties](#)

[II. Cultural Institutions: A Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#)

[III. Emergency Managers: A Primer on Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties](#)

[IV. Resource Library](#)

[V. Our Partners](#)

[VI. Acknowledgments](#)

[VII. Contact Information](#)

I. Emergency Planning for Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties

According to the 2014 Heritage Health Information survey, about 64% of cultural heritage institutions do not have an emergency preparedness/response plan or trained staff to carry it out. Every year museums, libraries, archives, historical societies, municipal offices, and other important cultural and historic sites are affected by floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, fires, and other disasters large and small. Unfortunately, all too often these events result in the loss of priceless and irreplaceable cultural and historic collections, structures, and sites. To minimize these losses, it is crucial that these organizations take the necessary steps to ensure that they are well prepared, have a working relationship with their Emergency Management Director (EMD), and be included in their municipality's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). All Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties (NCH) should have a well-thought-out institutional emergency preparedness/response plan for the following reasons:

- Massachusetts residents are proud of our long and storied cultural heritage. As one of the earliest settled areas in the United States, our cultural heritage dates from the earliest Native Americans and the first European settlers. The lives of communities and individuals return to normalcy more quickly

when our natural, cultural, and historic resources are protected or restored from damage incurred by a disaster.

- Community resilience is enhanced when its character and economy are protected. The economy of the Commonwealth's communities is often directly tied to the vitality of their natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- NCH furnishes useful insights and resources when they are integrated into emergency and mitigation planning. In turn, NCH will already be in the loop when decisions are made about disaster preparation and recovery. This is crucial to ensure the long-term survival of our organizations, sites, and collections.
- Well-prepared cultural institutions set the example for other community businesses and organizations, helping bring the community more closely together when preparing for an emergency or disaster and enabling a more efficient response and recovery period.
- Working together cooperatively facilitates the development of an institutional emergency preparedness/response plan, as many of the components of such a plan are common to many organizations' plans, such as resources and services.
- Some state and federal NCH funding contracts require an emergency preparedness and action plan.
- Many communities have ordinances and rules that require the preservation of important cultural resources.

II. Cultural Institutions: A Primer on Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

Ready to begin?

- Contact [Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness in Massachusetts \(COSTEP MA\)](#) to learn about community meetings and other activities and resources that can assist you in developing a relationship with your EMD and other cultural entities in your community.
- Work with COSTEP MA to set up a community meeting. Learn how to bring together cultural stewards and emergency managers to ensure the well-being of the arts and culture sectors following a disaster.
- Find your local EMD and build a partnership. Make sure your EMD is aware of any special needs your building or collections may require during a disaster. Heritage Preservation's "Working with Emergency Responders," available as a booklet and poster, provides tips for cultural institutions on connecting with their local first responders. Discuss ways that your local Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties might contribute value before, during, and after a disaster. As an example, this might be accomplished by providing meeting rooms, Internet access, or equipment.
- Consult the [Resources Section](#) of the COSTEP MA website for specific information on working with recovery vendors before, during, and after an emergency.
- Get free training through the [Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners](#) in conjunction with the [Massachusetts Library System](#) on disaster preparedness and response and other preservation topics and through the [Northeast Document Conservation Center](#) on similar and other topics. Certain services may have applicable fees.

- Learn about FEMA's policy on [Private Nonprofit Museum Eligibility](#)
- Learn about FEMA's policy on [Private Nonprofit \(PNP\) Facility Eligibility](#)
- Learn about FEMA's policy on [Collection and Individual Object Eligibility, 9524.6](#)
- Build your skills with the [eLearning Tool for FEMA Grant Applicants – Pre-Disaster Mitigation](#)
- See FEMA's "[A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action](#)"
- Education and awareness builds confidence. Consider enrolling in one or more of these FEMA courses:
 - [IS 100 – Introduction to Incident Command System](#)
 - [IS 200 – ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents](#)
 - [IS 700 – National Incident Management System \(NIMS\), An Introduction](#)
 - [IS 800 – National Response Framework, An Introduction](#)
- Want even more information about the role you can play in emergency management? FEMA offers these additional courses:
 - [IS 230 – Fundamentals of Emergency Management](#)
 - [IS 288 – The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management](#)
 - [IS 559 – Local Damage Assessment](#)
 - [IS 660 – Introduction to Public-Private Partnerships](#)
 - [IS 662 – Improving Preparedness and Resilience through Public-Private Partnerships](#)
 - [IS 909 – Community Preparedness: Implementing Simple Activities for Everyone](#)
 - [IS 910 – Emergency Management Preparedness Fundamentals](#)

III. Emergency Managers: A Primer on Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties

Cultural institutions may need specialized help during a disaster (such as proper handling of a collection's delicate or hazardous materials), but cultural institutions can also serve their communities before, during, or after disasters. Here are a few ideas about how cultural institutions can help:

- Libraries can offer free public-access computers for displaced residents and staff experienced in helping the public;
- Libraries and other institutions have meeting rooms, parking, Internet access, and other helpful resources for the general public;
- Public libraries can also serve as “Ports in a Storm,” where the population can cool down or warm up (depending on the season), recharge electronic devices, bring children for family programs, etc.;
- Libraries can, and have, served as Disaster Recovery Centers in Massachusetts;
- Museums, archives, and historical societies can provide training on the proper way to stabilize damaged family heirlooms;
- Natural resource agencies can offer their open land for use as a staging area for a supply depot.

The Bottom Line:

Communities must have Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) and Hazard Mitigation Plans in place to ensure eligibility for state or federal disaster assistance funding, which includes compliance with applicable Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties federal regulations/codes and state statutes/rules.

FEMA encourages the integration and consideration of NCH across all plans and activities, but Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties are specifically addressed in Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex:

“Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources organizes and coordinates Federal support for the protection of the Nation’s agricultural and natural and cultural resources during national emergencies.

ESF #11 works during actual and potential incidents to provide nutrition assistance; respond to animal and agricultural health issues; provide technical expertise, coordination and support of animal and agricultural emergency management; ensure the safety and defense of the Nation’s supply of meat, poultry, and processed egg products; and ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources and historic properties.”

Take a look at the ESF #11 Annex (or equivalent) in your community’s CEMP. Does it adequately address your local Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties? Does the document identify everyone who should be included in the CEMP?

Groups and individuals who should be included are known as “stakeholders.” This may include visitors, administrators, board members, funding sources, and contacts in your local/regional/national associations, among others.

Need More Information?

- [Federal Emergency Support Function #11 \(ESF #11\)](#)
- [Commonwealth of Massachusetts ESF #11](#)
- [National Historic Preservation Act of 1966](#)
- [National Planning Frameworks](#)
 - [National Prevention Framework](#) [National Protection Framework](#)
 - [National Mitigation Framework](#)
 - [National Response Framework](#)
 - [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#)

Training Resources:

- [IS 253 – Overview of FEMA’s Environmental and Historic Preservation Review](#)
- [IS 811 – Emergency Support Functions: ESF #11 Agriculture and Natural Resources Annex](#)
- [PowerPoint on ESF #11](#) (2009). See slides 1,13, 27-29 specifically for NCH.

IV. Resource Library

Links to sample documents and FEMA library guidance documents, Heritage Preservation guides, and what other states are doing.

- [Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness in Massachusetts: Your Emergency Management Partner for Cultural Resources](#)
- [Maine - Cultural Emergency Resource Coalition \(CERC\)](#)
- [Connecticut State Library Conservation ConneCTion](#) program and [COSTEP CT](#)
- [The New York State Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials](#)
- [Protecting the Past – RI Delaware Disaster Assistance Team \(DDAT\)](#)
- [Disaster Planning for Florida’s Historic Resources](#)
- [NEDCC: Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness \(COSTEP\)](#)
- [North Carolina Cultural Resources Emergency Response Team \(CREST\)](#) and the [North Carolina Preservation Consortium \(NCPC\)](#)
- [Council of State Archivists \(CoSA\) Emergency Preparedness Initiative](#)
- [CoSA Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records \(IPER\)](#)
- See [Expecting the Unexpected: What to Consider in Planning for Workplace Emergencies](#)
- [WESTPAS Pocket Response Plan for Collections](#)
- FEMA:
 - [Integrating Historic Property & Cultural Resource Considerations into Hazard Mitigation Planning](#)
 - [Environmental & Historic Preservation Guidance for FEMA Grant Applicants](#)
- Heritage Preservation / Sample Documents:
 - [Heritage Health Index \(2005\)](#)
 - [Heritage Emergency National Task Force](#)
 - [State Heritage Emergency Partnership Alliance for Response](#)
 - [Risk Evaluation and Planning Program](#)
 - [Guide to Navigating FEMA and SBA Disaster Aid for Cultural Institutions](#)

V. Our Partners

[Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)

[Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth](#)

[Massachusetts Archives](#)

[Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners](#)

[Massachusetts Library System](#)

[Historic New England](#)

[New England Museum Association](#)

[New England Archivists](#)

[Northeast Document Conservation Center](#)

[Council of State Archivists](#)

[Heritage Preservation](#)

VI. Acknowledgments

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