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**MEMA ENCOURAGES FAMILIES TO 'MAKE A PLAN' AS PART OF MASSACHUSETTS
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

FRAMINGHAM, MA – As part of *Massachusetts Emergency Preparedness Month*, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) urges families to 'Make a Plan'.

"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" states MEMA Director Kurt Schwartz. "Taking the time to develop and practice your Family Emergency Plan before the next disaster can keep you and your family safe, protect your property, and build your community's resilience."

A Family Emergency plan should:

Include an Emergency Contact

- 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 emergency personnel to contact the right person.
- Use alternate communications methods:
 - Show all family members how to text message, as it may be easier to send a text than make a call during an emergency.
 - Learn how to use social media. Social media can be an effective tool to let friends and family know your location and status.
 - Keep the [American Red Cross Safe and Well](#) service in mind. Use it to register yourself as "safe and well" or search for loved ones after a disaster.

Establish Meeting Locations

- Select two family meeting locations: choose one location close to home and another farther away, in case you need to evacuate or cannot return to the area.

Provide Evacuation Information

- Identify and practice how you will exit your home.
- Establish possible evacuation routes to ensure you are able to get to designated meeting locations. Talk to your [local emergency management agency](#) to learn about evacuation routes.
- Identify available modes of transportation.
- Make arrangements with family, neighbors, friends, or local government if you don't have personal transportation.
- If you need assistance, contact local public safety officials to make them aware of your needs.

Include Instructions for Sheltering In Place

- Designate safe room(s) within your home. These rooms 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 treatments or home healthcare services, work with your medical provider to identify options if you are unable to leave your home for a period of time.
- Review tips to [safely shelter in place](#).

Special Considerations

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

Don't forget to practice your plan with your household!

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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