OFFICES OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

How well prepared are OEM to assure accessibility for people with disabilities?

PACIFIC ADA CENTER
WEBINAR
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National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research
Overview of Today’s Webinar

- **Background Information**
  - OEM role and responsibilities in disaster preparedness and response
  - Review why it is important to know if OEM are prepared to meet their responsibilities under ADA

- **2018 Survey of FEMA Region 9 OEM**

- **Applying these Findings**

Learning Objectives

1. To determine if local OEMs understand and carry out their responsibilities under the ADA

2. List the items used to measure OEM preparedness to meet these responsibilities

3. Discuss strategies for improvement
Underlying Questions

• What are the roles and responsibilities of OEM … with respect to ADA?

• Why is it important to know if OEMs are ready or not?

• What types of information can help us answer this question?

• How can information on OEM readiness be helpful?

Office of Emergency Management

• Agency at the local or state level responsible for planning, responding, recovering

• They vary in size from very small one person operations to over 200 professionals with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, including individuals assigned from other City agencies
Federal, State, and Local Coordination in Disasters

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Roles and Responsibilities of Local Emergency Managers

- **Manage resources** before, during, and after a major disaster or emergency
- **Conduct activities** related to key components of emergency management
- **Coordinate** with all partners in the emergency management process

Includes the Authorities of OEM

National Response Framework
Third Edition
June 2016
Responsibilities under Title II of the ADA

- Under Title II of the ADA, emergency programs, services, activities, and facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities.
- This requirement applies to programs, services, and activities provided directly by state and local governments as well as those provided through third parties, such as the American Red Cross, private nonprofit organizations, and religious entities.

More Responsibilities under Title II of the ADA

- Generally they may not use eligibility criteria that screen out people with disabilities.
- The ADA also requires making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to avoid discrimination against a person with a disability.
- Take steps necessary to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities.
In Emergency Management, people with disabilities are considered to have access and functional needs

- Here are the inclusion criteria for access and functional needs:
  - Physical, developmental or intellectual disabilities (including visual impairments, deaf or hard of hearing, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, cognitive disabilities)
  - Chronic conditions or injuries
  - Limited English proficiency
  - Older adults
  - Children
  - Low income, homeless and/or transportation disadvantaged
  - Pregnant women

FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC)

- Established in 2010

- Mission Statement
  In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and regulations, provide guidance, tools, methods and strategies to integrate and coordinate emergency management inclusive of individuals with access and functional needs.
FEMA Regional Disability Integration Specialists

• Work in the ten federal regions across the U.S.

• Responsible for ensuring that the access and functional needs and requirements of individuals with disabilities are being properly included and addressed in all aspects of emergency preparedness and disaster response, recovery, and mitigation.

FEMA 2018-2022 Strategic Plan

• STRATEGIC GOAL 1:
  Building a Culture of Preparedness

• STRATEGIC GOAL 2:
  Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters

• STRATEGIC GOAL 3:
  Reduce the Complexity of FEMA
Underlying Questions

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Morbidity, Mortality, and Cost
Population of People Living with a Disability is large... and growing

Percentage of People in the US with Disabilities, 2008-2016

Disability Impacts ALL of US

A Snapshot of Disability in the United States

22%
of adults in the United States have some type of disability

The percentage of people living with disabilities in each state is highest in the Southeast.

Percentage of adults with select functional disability types

13.0% MOBILITY Serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs
10.6% COGNITION Serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
6.5% INDEPENDENT LIVING Difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping
4.6% VISION Serious seeing difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses
3.6% SELF-CARE Difficulty dressing or bathing
Increasingly.... The US Population is Aging

![Age Distribution of Disability in the US Population, 2016](image)

Major and Converging Trends are Increasing Risk of Disasters

- Global climate change
- Growing urbanization
- Increased population density in coastal regions
- Readily spread novel pathogens
- Increasing interconnectedness of complex critical infrastructure
Countries with the Most Natural Disasters in 2017

# of natural disasters in 2017, by country

Note: Worldwide
Further information regarding this statistic can be found on page 8.
Source(s): CRED; ID 269652
Infectious Disease Outbreaks
Risk factors for the Increasing Incidence of Bio-events

- Human population growth
- Land-use that facilitates zoonotic transmission
- Increased urbanization
- Increased globalization
- Climate change
- Increased vector-borne diseases
- Substandard public health and health care systems
- Declining vaccination rates
- Overuse of antibiotics
Costs Related to Disasters are Rising Too…

Disasters Caused $306 Billion in Losses in 2017
Total economic losses from natural and man-made disasters (billion U.S. dollars)

U.S. 2018 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters

This map denotes the approximate location for each of the 14 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that impacted the United States during 2018.
Internally displaced persons from natural disasters, 2017

Internally displaced persons are defined as people or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, as a result of natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed an international border.

Source: World Bank

Global annual deaths from natural disasters, by decade

Absolute number of global deaths from natural disasters, per year. This is given as the annual average per decade (by decade 1900s to 2000s; and then six years from 2010-2015).

Source: EM-DAT (2017); DFID/CRED International Disaster Database, Université catholique de Louvain – Brussels – Belgium. The data visualization is available at OurWorldinData.org. There you find research and more visualizations on this topic. Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the authors Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser.
Are People with Disabilities Prepared for Disasters?

• 2011 Gershon/Kraus Study
• Convenience sample of 252 disabled people receiving personal assistance
• 7-item preparedness planning checklist

2011 Study- Preparedness Plan Results

• 47% had emergency plan
  • 2/3 of them had included PA in plan creation
  • But 4% involved only some, 10% with none

“My PA will be busy tending to the needs of their own family members”
“The PA is just not that dependable”
“I might not be with my PA when an emergency occurs.”
2011 Study- Emergency Preparedness Checklist Results

7-item scale, mean score was 2.3 (range, 0-7)

- 47% had emergency plan
- 35% had an evacuation plan
- 35% had emergency contact list
- 32% had emergency supplies available at home
- 29% could communicate with PA in emergency
- 28% had go-bag ready
- 26% had back-up PA plans

2011 Study- Conclusions

Higher EP Scores:
- Having a plan and engaging PA in the plan
- Past disaster experience was significantly associated with higher emergency preparedness

Lower EP Scores:
- Lack of sharing the plan with all of PAs
- Lack of planning for back-up when no PA
- Distrust in PAs reliability seems to be a barrier to sharing the plan
- Lack of emergency contacts list or back-up sources of necessary supplies and medications
2014 Study on Disaster Preparedness of Elderly Home Care Recipients in San Francisco, N=50

Mean score of 4.74 on a 13-item preparedness checklist

- 56% had extra meds on hand
- 44% had back-up power for powered equipment they use
- 38% had made back-up plans for their caregiver(s)
- 26% had plans for transportation to shelters
- 19% had someone in building that could help them evacuate if elevator not working
- 70% had extra supplies on hand for their pets

Barriers To Personal Preparedness

- **Lack of self-efficacy** (Lack of resources, No family or friends nearby)
  "I can’t do those preparedness things; the government should help me."

- **Risk awareness** was high, but relevance of risk to them was low:
  “I’ve lived a full life, actually, I’m ready to go…”

- **Sense of community was low**
  “They don’t really care. I’ve been sick right in here, and no one came and knocked on the door…that’s just the way it is.”

- **Lack of Trust in Authorities**
  “There’s going to be a big mess-up between the police and firemen”
  “You can’t depend on the police, fire, the army, or national guard. You can’t depend on the city or county.”
2014 FEMA Report
“Preparedness in America”

• 21% of the US sample (N=2,000) WERE NOT planning to do any disaster preparation.

• 46% - Preparedness was not at all on “their radar.”

• Cost and not knowing how to prepare were barriers.

• However, people who thought they were at risk, thought they could do something to prepare, thought preparing would help them, and felt confident in their ability to prepare WERE MORE LIKELY to be prepared.

2014 FEMA Study - Results

• Only small differences were noted for participants with and without a disability.
To Recap-Why is it important to know if OEMs are ready or not?

• Population at risk is large and growing
• Disasters are increasing in frequency and severity
• Individual-level preparedness is low

And…..

People with Disabilities are Disproportionately Affected by Disaster Events

• Latest US data suggest a 30-50% increased risk of disaster-related fatality among people with disabilities.
  • 1/3 of Hurricane Maria fatalities are believed to have resulted from "interrupted care"

• Other vulnerable populations in addition to those with disabilities also disadvantaged:
  • Children, pregnant women, seniors, those with limited English proficiency, transportation disadvantaged, and institutionalized individuals.
Underlying Questions

• What are the **roles and responsibilities** of OEM ... with respect to ADA?
• Why is it **important** to know if OEMs are ready or not?
• **What types of information can help us answer this question?**
• How can information on OEM readiness be **helpful**?
Study Methods

• Study conducted in winter, 2018
• Input from key stakeholders
• Confidential web-based survey of local Offices of Emergency Management (OEM) in FEMA Region 9, (California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands).
• Respondents (N=75) – Multi-modal recruitment
• Questions on inclusiveness at key disaster phases: mitigation, planning, response, and recovery.

Study Methods

• Survey was pilot tested
• Final survey had 40 items and took about 15-20mins to complete
• Statistical analyses were primarily descriptive, graphical, and factor analysis of the scale
2018 - Study Results

- Most respondents served a population of 100-500K
- Small staff - typically just themselves, or 2-5 staff
- About half reported at least one major disaster event in their jurisdiction in the last 5 years.

2018 - Study Results

- 35% have access to estimates of the number of people with disabilities in their jurisdiction
- Further, only 1/3 of those with estimates had used them in their planning
- 55% maintained up-to-date lists of local disability agencies and caregiver groups
2018 - Study Results

- Three-quarters prepare plans that address people with disabilities
- 52% had an ADA Coordinator in their jurisdiction
- About 50% involve the ADA coordinator in plan preparation
- Roughly 54% involve disability organizations
- 52% have detailed Operating Procedures in the plan

2018 - Study Results

- Training
  - 69% train all staff/volunteers on the Plan
  - 41% train all staff/volunteers on identifying the needs of people with disabilities
  - 49% train all staff/volunteers on meeting the needs of people with disabilities
  - 39% train all staff/volunteers on the requirements under ADA
- Roles
  - 78% stated that OEM managers are clear about their role and responsibilities for providing equal access to services for people with disabilities
  - Only 36% said that they have qualified staff and other resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities under the ADA
2018 - Study Results

Communications
• Types of emergency notifications for people with disabilities
  • 82% Closed captioning
  • 82% Social media
  • 80% Reverse 911
  • 68% Verbal description of evacuation zones, road closures
  • 68% American Sign Language interpreters at press conferences

2018 - Study Results

Tested emergency warnings with people who had disabilities
• Tested with people with…..
  • 28% vision disabilities
  • 33% hearing disabilities
  • 25% mobility disabilities
  • 13% cognitive disabilities
  • 9% mental health disabilities
2018 - Study Results

• MOUs for providing necessary services
  • 89% shelter facility operations
  • 53% accessible transportation
  • 53% registration desk staff had customer service training for people with disabilities
  • 52% sign language interpreters at shelter

2018 - Study Results

Training of local first responders
To their knowledge…

Local first responders typically receive training on….
• 52% the disaster needs of people with disabilities
• 40% requirements under ADA
2018 - Study Results

Accessible features of Mass Care Shelters, Disaster Assistance Shelters, and other emergency shelters
- 86% Ramps
- 76% No barriers to wheelchairs
- 70% Used ADA Checklist of Existing Facilities for restroom accessibility
- 67% Emergency generator
- 58% Quiet rooms available
- 50% Immediate access to food and refrigerated meds
- 42% Oxygen availability
- 35% Alternative formats of communication

2018 - Study Results

Service Animals
- 84% Policy modifications to allow
- 71% Relief areas
2018 - Study Results

Personal Assistants
- 67% Policies to allow PA to visit and do tasks

Medical Shelter Diversion
- 25% Tend to shelter people with disabilities in medical shelters – even if they DO NOT have a medical condition that requires it

2018 - Study Results

Monitoring of staff and volunteers to ensure they provide safe, appropriate assistance with ADLS and wheelchair transfers, if needed?

- 60% - Yes, they are trained and monitored to assure they provide such assistance
2018 - Study Results

Coordination with local employers
• 24% Coordinate with local employers

Coordination with high-rise building managers
• 29% Coordinate with high-rise building managers

45% actively involve people with disabilities in drills/exercise

Accommodations made to engage people with disabilities in drills
• 28% Accessible transportation
• 21% Sign language interpreters
2018 - Study Results

Recovery

• 70% Assist people with disabilities in obtaining information
• 79% Provide appropriate equipment (computers, phone chargers, etc..) to gain access to this info

After-Action Reports and Mitigation Planning

• 93% of OEM said these are typically prepared, 90% said changes are made
• 48% Involve people with disabilities in their preparation
• 39% Involve people with disabilities in post-disaster mitigation planning

Measure of OEM Preparedness

11 items from the survey were highly correlated
Average score was 4.9, max=11 (50% grade)

1. Involve disability organizations or people with disabilities in Plan preparation
2. Involve local ADA Coordinators in Plan preparation
3. Plan has detailed Operating Procedures for ADA
4. Considers needs of people with disabilities in evacuation planning
5. Pre-identified accessible transportation
6. Pre-identified accessible shelters
Measure of OEM Preparedness
11 items from the survey were highly correlated

7. Shelter staff/volunteers trained and monitored
8. Consider needs of people with disabilities who may have to shelter-in place at work
9. Accessibility is considered for engaging people with disabilities in drills
10. Ensure proper equipment available to ensure access to benefit info
11. Work with ADA coordinator on Emergency Preparedness for people with disabilities

 Significant Correlations with Preparedness

High score correlates
• Collaboration with disability coordinators and other partners
• Managers have clear roles and responsibilities
• Qualified Staff
• Engagement of people with disabilities
What Do Local OEM Need for ADA Improvement?

- 61% More training on ADA requirements
- 61% Better community outreach to people with disabilities
- 59% More drills involving people with disabilities
- 59% Better communications systems for people with disabilities
- 57% More planning with local partners and volunteer orgs
- 56% More back-up power
- 53% More accessible transportation

How They Want to Receive Training

**Training:**
79% Two-week Emergency Mgt Institute
43% Webinars
43% On-line courses

**Trainers:**
67% First responders
65% Non-govt agencies (e.g., Red Cross, Disability orgs)
64% Health Dept
56% Utilities
54% Hospitals/healthcare Orgs.
Conclusions

• Suboptimal preparedness of OEM was noted
• Engagement of Disability Coordinators and people with disabilities was beneficial
• Clearly there is interest in improvements—especially around more info on ADA

Underlying Questions

• What are the roles and responsibilities of OEM … with respect to ADA?
• Why is it important to know if OEMs are ready or not?
• What types of information can help us answer this question?
• How can information on OEM readiness be helpful?
Future Directions

• Disability expertise is needed at ALL levels of disaster preparedness and response

• National focus is needed- if response is pushed back onto states- there may be uneven or disparate response for people living with disabilities

• What do these findings suggest to the webinar participants??

Thank you!!

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Resources

Pacific ADA Center

- www.adapacific.org/emergency

Checklists and toolkits (Personal)
- Bedside Emergency Supplies Checklist
- Car Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
- Carry On You Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
- Emergency Contact List
- Emergency Food and Water
- Emergency Power Planning
- Emergency Supplies Kits
- Keep Your Important Documents Safe from a Disaster
Resources

Pacific ADA Center

- [www.adapacific.org/emergency](http://www.adapacific.org/emergency)
  - Checklists and toolkits (Personal)
    - Evacuation Transportation Planning Tips
    - Grab and Go Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
    - Grab and Go Emergency Supplies Kit with Daily Use Items Checklist
    - Home Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
  - Checklists and toolkits (Agencies)
    - Maintaining Site Accessibility Checklist
    - Press Conference Checklist

Bibliography

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- “Emergency Preparedness in a Sample of Persons with Disabilities” by Gershon et al.