

2014

**California Governor's Office of
Emergency Services -- Access and
Functional Needs Evacuation and
Transportation Guidance and Toolkit
Supplement**

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December 31, 2014

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE SUPPLEMENT

In the late summer and fall of 2014, The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services convened a diverse array of key stakeholders from California and throughout the nation in a work group format to investigate and provide guidance on important, contemporary issues affecting people with access and functional needs in the emergency planning and disaster response field. These issues have emerged from extensive lessons-learned from disasters over the last several years including Hurricane Sandy, the Gulf Coast Hurricanes (Katrina/Rita), and 9/11 among others. Yet, the experiences from these disasters have not been critically studied among the first responder and emergency planner community, nor compiled from the perspectives of people with access and functional needs into a usable format for current application into planning activities. This document catalogues key issues into a centralized and coordinated reference tool that may be used by responders, planners, building officials, and other decision makers.

The issues outlined and described in this supplement reflect the input from the many stakeholders who participated in the work group and is offered by California Office of Emergency Services as a supplement to the other key tools and guidance available on OES's website at <http://afntoolkit.nusura.com/resources.html>). As this is a constantly evolving field, future versions of this supplement are expected to be created when new information is uncovered. This document is offered by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services as a critical starting point to capture the most current information and to offer the best compiled summary of strategies and guidance to help the field of supporting the disability community and others with access and functional needs through application of supported approaches to improve response.

The audience for this intended to be varied and diverse, to include local, state, and federal government, transit providers, first responders and emergency planners.

HOW TO USE THIS SUPPLEMENT

Each section to follow addresses a particular issue within the access and functional needs spectrum and reflects the discussions and recommendations of the work group. The information is arranged under three categories: **Issue Statement, Current Information and Perspectives, and Strategies & Guidance**. A 'checklist' also follows each section as quick reminders. All jurisdictions are encouraged to use this information throughout the planning cycle where it may be most useful—convening stakeholders to investigate local approaches to the issues; developing local planning documents and protocols and preparing and evaluating drills and exercises.

REGISTRIES AND LISTS

ISSUE STATEMENT

Registries are defined as compiled information regarding persons with disabilities or others with access and functional needs that may take the form of a centralized list in a multi-story building, sometimes with details per floor; or, they may take the form of a more decentralized ‘list of lists’ where information is gathered from secondary sources, such as paratransit organizations or assisted-living centers.

These lists may be used by first responders, building personnel, and others to notify individuals during an emergency response as well as be used as a resource to locate people with access and functional needs during an incident in order to verify the evacuations have occurred.

CURRENT INFORMATION AND PERSPECTIVES

The topic of registries seems to split people with access and functional needs and the planning community almost equally between support for their use in various formats on one side, and disagreement of their efficacy and value on the other. In addition, some access and functional needs advocates significantly dislike registries as a general rule overall—from the viewpoint that these registries incorrectly ‘label’ or focus undue attention on people and draw unwanted attention to them as a confidentiality issue, when they should in fact be included with standard practice response planning regardless of disability issues.

The benefits and difficulties of when, how, or if to use registries (or a ‘list of lists’) fall in to a few primary perspectives across jurisdictions and disciplines. These viewpoints should be considered when using or developing a registry or ‘list’. Selected findings follow.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

GETTING REGULAR PARTICIPATION IN A REGISTRY IS A CHALLENGE.

In states that receive advance notice for many ‘regular’ emergencies—such as Florida for hurricanes—participation in registries is more consistent than in many other states, but even there the level of participation is spotty. It takes a concerted effort by sponsoring agencies to communicate effectively to people with access and functional needs to solicit registration, and many jurisdictions do not have the resources to

continue the required effort to build a registry that is useful to the planning and response community.

In some communities, notably in Los Angeles city and county, local ordinances exist that require emergency evacuation plans which include floor-specific (voluntary) lists of individuals whom would be in need of assistance. When it is not required and voluntary, regular and useful participation in a registry or list tends to be inconsistent at best.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAINTAINING CURRENT DATA ACCURATELY.

Many jurisdictions have started registries, but have later found they were unreliable and ultimately were abandoned or rarely used. The most fundamental problem are the resources required and the lack of an ability to keep current the detailed information needed in a centralized registry (contact information, specific location, particular needs, etc.) in order to make it useful to building owners, first responders, and the access and functional needs community overall.

Additionally, with the fast paced change in communication technology, the preferred method of contact with people with access and functional needs—whether by smart phone, web based computer, social media, etc.—is difficult to keep current and useful at a centralized location without regular, ongoing oversight and upkeep.

INCORRECT OR INFLATED EXPECTATIONS OF A REGISTRY'S USE.

A concern raised primarily by the first response community is that people with access and functional needs may overly rely upon the fact that a registry exists and therefore may not take proactive steps on their own to move out of harm's way in times of disaster, and instead wait for help from responders. This issue will require additional study to verify or mitigate.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

BASIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS CAN BE GREATLY IMPROVED.

Whether it is through a large, centralized registry or through a 'list of lists' leveraging and partnering through local community based organizations—basic notification can be greatly enhanced simply by knowing with whom to communicate with during times of emergencies.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY BASED GROUPS CAN BE ENHANCED AND VALUE-ADDED.

Given the challenges with maintaining centralized, large lists for notification and other emergency response purposes, the benefits of using CBOs as partners for this purpose continues to receive attention as the preferred alternative.

IN A HIGH-RISE ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS OF PEOPLE WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS CAN RECEIVE IMPORTANT ATTENTION THROUGH LISTS.

Whether it is through a large, centralized registry for a large urban building or a floor-by-floor list for reference, these contained environments are conducive to using a specific list to make sure names, particular needs, and any equipment needed are maintained for people with access and functional needs. These conditions also help leverage personal relationships and preparations needed for self-sufficiency rather than relying upon first responders.

STRATEGIES & GUIDANCE

1. *If developing a centralized registry, provide support and maintenance.*

- *A responsible staff person (or staff) should be assigned to continually update the registry.*
- *Provide and plan for funding support to acquire an ‘off the shelf’ tracking program or other tool as well as staff time for maintenance.*
- *Without financial support and dedicated maintenance to keep contact names current, a registry may become quickly unusable.*

2. *Consider leveraging off of pre-existing lists.*

- *Given the challenges with managing a centralized registry, consider strategically the costs vs. benefits of that approach as compared to using relationships and leveraging off of pre-existing groups which hold lists of clients.*
- *Determine in your jurisdiction the organizations and groups which have direct responsibility for individual access and functional needs contact numbers. This may involve Paratransit, Community Emergency Response Teams, neighborhood groups, utilities, specific assisted living sites, other community based organizations.*
- *Identify a single point of contact for each of these groups and communicate with them regarding partnering for notification and education during emergencies and exercises.*

3. Whether a centralized registry is used or a 'list of lists', education and exercising should be a high priority.

- *Build into regular exercises and drills a goal to apply the communication process of notification and ongoing communication between the emergency response EOC level to and from holders of lists.*
- *Consistent with the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation program (HSEEP) compliant After Action/Improvement Plan process, evaluate the effectiveness of the notification and communication protocols for access and functional need evacuation and transportation.*

4. A centralized, maintained 'list' or registry can be useful in a multi-story building environment; when outside a building it is valuable to rely upon partnerships with existing Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for notification.

- *A circumstance where a centralized registry may be of assistance for notification and communication with the access and functional needs community is in a single multi-story building. This 'contained' environment may be called upon to be self-reliant during an emergency and should be fully able to locate, notify, and assist access and functional needs persons in the likely absence of first responder help.*
- *For ongoing communication with access and functional needs persons throughout a jurisdiction, per strategy #2 above, leveraging contacts through pre-existing relationships with service groups and related organizations is recommended.*
- *Develop protocols to promote participation in registries or 'lists' when compiled by the building's emergency planners.*

Reminders for Actions: Registries and Lists Checklist

If developing a centralized registry, consider:

- Assigning a responsible staff person (or staff) to update the registry.
- Provide funding mechanism (tracking program, staff time and maintenance).
- Develop protocols to promote participation in registries or 'lists' when compiled by the building's emergency representatives.

Leveraging off of pre-existing lists:

- Consider strategically the costs vs. benefits of a centralized registry versus using relationships and leveraging off of pre-existing groups which hold lists of clients.
- Identify single point of contacts for organizations and groups which have direct responsibility for individual access and functional needs contact numbers including:
 - Paratransit
 - Community Emergency Response Teams
 - Neighborhood groups
 - Utilities
 - Specific assisted living sites
 - Other community based organizations

Education and exercising:

- Build into regular exercises and drills a goal to apply the communication process of notification and ongoing communication between the emergency response EOC level to and from holders of lists.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the notification and communication protocols for access and functional need evacuation and transportation.

EVACUATION CHAIRS

ISSUE STATEMENT

An evacuation chair is a device manufactured for the smooth descent of stairways in the event of an emergency. There are three main categories for evacuation chairs: manually carried devices, devices with stair descent tracks, and sled type devices. Evacuation chairs have changed in design, use, and cost over the last several years, and significant research has been done through FEMA, academic, and association

sponsorships. The types of evacuation chair to be considered, the cost, placement, training issues, exercising and drills, and expectations for their use are all contemporary topics to be addressed by emergency planners and the access and functional needs community.

CURRENT INFORMATION AND PERSPECTIVES

Significant efforts over the last few years have taken place by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Disability Advisory Presidential Committee, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) and FEMA—through academic research grants and other projects. All have worked on aspects of chairs including standards for use, efficacy from the AFN community standpoint, effects and use patterns on firefighters, and design considerations. The issues are numerous and much attention is being focused towards chairs. This attention is welcome and widely supported—however, this dialogue has surfaced key topics needing further work to continue the refinement and evolution of evacuation chairs as a standard response issue.

SELECTED FINDINGS

COST REMAINS A KEY TOPIC AND THEIR STANDARD AVAILABILITY SHOULD BE INCENTIVIZED.

Some evacuation chairs can cost as much as \$1,500 each, which raises the question of who should provide this funding and how many need to be purchased for a certain location. Many building owners provide chairs as a standard practice in their locations; others do not. Whether through required ordinance or other means, a ‘responsible party’ for providing chairs will have to be addressed.

SELF-EMPOWERMENT IS AN IMPORTANT FOCUS WHEN ADDRESSING CHAIR USE.

Through research as well as exercises, information continues to come forward that the more familiar a person is with a chair, the more comfortable they are with the technology and are more willing to engage with others in preparation for its use during emergencies.

Further, and possibly most important, is that in most disasters the first responders will not have the ability to reach people with access and functional needs in time to assist, thereby leaving the task to the individual themselves to work with other occupants when needing to evacuate. This need for individual reliance applies beyond mobility or

visual/auditory access and functional needs to also include children and adults with cognitive or communications disabilities.

THE BRAND OF PREFERRED CHAIR VARIES, BUT OVERALL CAPABILITIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED PRIOR TO SELECTION.

There are different types and brands of evacuation chairs that are currently available. However, the decision on type of chair to be purchased should be based on the population served and specific capabilities and expectations of use, many of which are outlined in the NFPA standards (<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/populations/people-with-disabilities>) as well as in related FEMA and RESNA sources available via internet search. Additionally, numerous vendors offering different chairs types may be located via web search as well. Some of the basic capabilities to be considered include:

- Free standing or stairwell fixed rail
- Weight bearing capacity
- Transfer process in/out
- Overall ease of use/simplicity

An ergonomics analysis for evacuation chairs, performed by Ohio State University and University of Illinois at Chicago, provides key findings that may be considered when purchasing evacuation chairs. The analysis suggests that track type devices may be superior to other evacuation chair types. The findings suggest that:

- Track type devices have the fastest evacuation speed and therefore help maintain evacuation flow rate.
- Track type devices are favored by users more than other types. The least favored type is the hand carried device.
- Track type devices are most efficient because they can be operated by a single person.
- Track type devices are the most expensive type of evacuation chairs.

TRAINING ON CHAIR USE IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

Research has identified a significant increase in comfort and support by people with access and functional needs when they personally have been introduced to the evacuation chair and its use. Gaining familiarity with the equipment and use through

training and education, for those who will use the evacuation chairs and for those who will assist them is vital.

CLEAR AND CONSISTENT EVACUATION CHAIR PLANNING PROTOCOLS ARE NEEDED.

As an example of inconsistencies hampering coordinated application of evacuation chair use and training in jurisdictions, the following challenges and observations were offered by a large urban school district:

- Schools stored chairs in different locations
- Lack of consistent signage and identification for evacuation chairs in buildings.
- Different evacuation devices worked best depending on the disability of the user and other factors, which makes purchasing difficult.
- Currently, there are no specific standards or requirements regarding evacuation chairs. (NFPA standards are voluntary)

TRAINING AND ACCESS TO CHAIRS AS PART OF STANDARD EQUIPMENT IS INCONSISTENT AMONG FIRST RESPONDERS.

There does not seem to be a consistent approach or viewpoint nationally regarding: 1. the expectation and amount of training which first responders should receive regarding the types and use of chairs, and 2. whether fire services should have evacuation chairs on their vehicles. Some jurisdictions train regularly and carry evacuation chairs on their vehicles and others do not.

FIRST RESPONDER (AND OTHER USERS) SAFETY MUST BE CONSIDERED AT ALL TIMES.

The FEMA sponsored research focused on this issue and studied various types of chairs including: hand carry, track, and other configurations. The track chairs emerged as easiest to use by firefighters (and others), and they had the added benefit of being able to move down a stairwell in a timely fashion without causing a bottleneck during evacuations.

STRATEGIES & GUIDANCE

- 1. Consult with representatives of the access and functional needs community when procuring chairs and integrating them into response planning.***

- *Emergency planners, building owners/operators, school districts and transportation representatives are recommended to invite and convene a representative advisory group of access and functional needs individuals for regular consultation and guidance on chair (and other issues) input.*
- *Prior to investing in any single brand or type of chair for either a physical building, first responder vehicle, or transportation organization, it is highly recommended that potential users with disabilities be consulted regarding the expected purchase and plans for use, including placement, training, communication, signage, and exercising.*

2. Reference current, key standards and guidance prior to and during chair integration into response planning.

- *As part of the research and due-diligence process to consider best type and uses for chair options in a particular jurisdiction, the following resources should be referenced in addition to other sources:*
 - **RESNA** <http://www.resna.org/at-standards>
 - **FEMA** <https://www.fema.gov/office-disability-integration-coordination>
 - **NFPA** <http://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/free-access>
- *Identify and understand ordinances and other tools that can support evacuation chairs purchase and use.*
- *Consider having basic foldable chairs as other resources are considered.*

3. It's not just buying the chairs; ongoing training, education and supporting activities are critically important to build into a program.

- *Whether buildings, schools or transportation organizations, a 'full circle' program should be designed and implemented to ensure awareness and familiarity with the chairs and their use.*
- *Elements of a comprehensive program should include the following along with other organizational or site-specific components:*
 - *Signage for chairs' location*
 - *Training for both users with disabilities and those assisting*
 - *Build chairs and their use into standard evacuation guidelines*
- *Pre-positioning of chairs in buildings and on first responder equipment vehicles should be pursued, with appropriate training & education to follow.*

4. Chairs should be used during emergency drills and evacuation exercises.

- *Whether or not required by local ordinance, as a standard practice the use of chairs for the access and functional needs community should be included in evacuation exercises for a building, school, or other facility where the transportation of disabled individuals will be likely in an emergency.*

Reminders for Actions: Evacuation Chairs Checklist

Consult with representatives of the access and functional needs community when procuring chairs and integrating them into response planning.

- Convene a representative advisory group for regular consultation and guidance on Chair and other issues.
 - Emergency planners
 - Building owners/operators
 - School districts
 - Transportation representatives
- Consult potential users with disabilities prior to purchasing of chairs.
- Consider using foldable chairs as other resources are being considered.

Reference current, key standards and guidance prior to and during chair integration into response planning including:

- RESNA
- FEMA
- NFPA
- Other ordinances

Ongoing training, education and supporting activities.

- Design and implement a ‘full circle’ program including:
 - Signage for chairs’ location
 - Training for both users with disabilities and those assisting
 - Build chairs and their use into standard evacuation guidelines
 - Consider pre-positioning of chairs in buildings and on first responder equipment vehicles

Build in chair use during drill and evacuation exercises.

TRANSPORTATION TO OFF-SITE LOCATIONS ONCE EVACUATED FROM BUILDINGS

ISSUE STATEMENT

Transportation to an off-site location once people have been evacuated from a multi-story building has emerged as a critical step in the process of assisting people with access and functional needs during emergencies. Until recently, off-site transportation has not been specifically recognized and ‘linked’ as a critical stage of a two-stage process: moving people with access and functional needs out of a building—and then moving them out of the area via specific transportation methods.

CURRENT INFORMATION AND PERSPECTIVES

Paratransit organizations and other transportation systems that have specific expertise in moving people with access and functional needs have become much more integrated in emergency response planning in a relatively short period of time. Several reasons for this integration include the lessons learned in recent high-profile disasters such as Hurricane Sandy and the Gulf Coast hurricanes, and legal activity addressing the need for more consistent integration of access and functional needs issues into emergency planning overall. Until recently, these community-based organizations existed more in their own ‘lane’ but have been increasingly asked (and expected) to integrate more fluidly into emergency planning activities overall to address people with access and functional needs.

This increased focus on the ‘hand off’ between first responders who assist bringing people with access and functional needs out of a building and then addressing the needs to transport them off-site has also expanded beyond traditional paratransit groups to also include bus systems, rail, vans, and private taxi systems—in short, any form of transportation that may be able to assist in times of a major event. This transportation capability for people with access and functional needs is joining other regular requirements and planning for school systems, local and regional metropolitan transportation systems, and the private sector.

This added attention to this critical step in the cycle of emergency response is becoming more mainstream, but it has yet to reach a critical mass of awareness in the emergency planning field. This leaves several inconsistencies and guidance needing attention, outlined below.

SELECTED FINDINGS

PARATRANSIT GROUPS SHOULD UPDATE THEIR OWN SYSTEMS TO BE READY FOR THIS INCREASED NEED.

Several paratransit organizations have found their internal systems to be stressed and needing re-evaluation as a result of an increased (and welcome) attention from the traditional emergency planning and first response community. Some have found their own emergency plans are lacking; communication systems with clients and other vehicles are in need of updating, and they only now are understanding their potential large role in addressing evacuation of people with access and functional needs in a large event.

LOCAL/ REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS NEED TO PROACTIVELY REACH OUT TO LOCAL PARATRANSIT AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION PARTNERS TO INCLUDE THEM IN PLANNING.

The experience of working every day with people with access and functional needs cannot be understated as an asset to any emergency planning process. The networks these groups have allow direct communication using their client lists, as well as partnering with these groups for their experience working with the particular requirements of the access and functional needs community is invaluable. Currently the track record of including these transportation providers in regular planning activities is inconsistent at best. Correspondingly, transportation organizations need to also reach out directly to the emergency response community to make contact and become involved in planning activities.

PARATRANSIT, OTHER TRANSPORTATION SPECIALTY GROUPS, AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION NEED TO BE INCLUDED IN EXERCISES AND DRILLS.

The value of building in access and functional needs issues directly when carrying out all levels of exercises and drills will build the relationships and clarify activation integration ahead of any event. Several transportation organizations cited the exceptional value to both first responders and themselves when being tasked to address real-world situations.

THERE ARE MANY DETAILS TO CONSIDER WHEN ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS COMMUNITY THAT CAN BE EASILY MANAGED IF ADDRESSED IN ADVANCE.

As examples of the value-added experience that transportation organizations can bring to emergency planning, the following items were offered:

- Ensure there is a *Point of Contact* named for each paratransit organization or other transportation partner in local emergency plans;
- Understand that evacuees will have personal equipment, such as scooters, wheelchairs, and possibly other personal items (which will need accommodation);
- When planning, consider the vehicle's capacity, which can limit uses;
- Consider planning staging areas in advance for accessible vehicles.
- Service animals will need to be expected and will require accommodation.

PRE-EVENT ASSET MAPPING, CAPABILITIES, AGREEMENTS, AND STAGING IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID CONFUSION AND ALLOW FOR STREAMLINED RESPONSE INTEGRATION.

As with any other response asset, transportation capacity for people with access and functional needs requires work and planning in advance. Some jurisdictions use informal partnerships to plan for transportation assistance, while others have taken the step of proactively drafting memorandums of agreement, contracts, or other written plans with paratransit or other groups to account for needed resources in this area.

Further, proactive planning best-practices include inventory of transportation assets in a jurisdiction, in order to allow for activation during events. The decision process and 'trigger points' when day to day operations cease and emergency utilization of transportation assets begins is a critical factor to consider when assessing resources and needs to be built into agreements in advance.

STRATEGIES & GUIDANCE.

1. Jurisdictional emergency planners and first responders should reach out and make contact with nearby paratransit, municipal, and other transportation providers. Communication needs to be a two way partnership between emergency planners and transportation providers.

- *Emergency planners should proactively reach out to and make contact with community based organizations and municipal transportation providers who have services and capacity for the access and functional needs community.*
- *Private services, such as taxis and rental vans/busses, should also be considered when compiling potential resources. In these cases specific agreements or contracts may be necessary to access services.*

2. Build off-site transportation assets into emergency plans and protocols.

- *Once identified, the transportation providers should be consulted as partners and ultimately built into standard emergency plans and response protocols for communication/notification.*
- *If agreements are needed to access these resources during emergencies—such as MOUs or contracts—these documents should be crafted and finalized.*
- *In supplemental or other documentation, the capabilities and specific resources available from each provider should be ascertained through specific dialogue, research, survey, or other means.*
- *Identify a specific Point of Contact individual with emergency contact information and portray clearly in plans/protocols.*
- *Transportation providers should be involved and consulted to formally build transportation resources into emergency plans in efforts to make them viable.*

3. *Paratransit and other regional access and functional needs transportation providers should understand their increased role and importance—and update internal capabilities and insert themselves into emergency planning activities.*

- *Beyond internal preparations for an increased role in emergency planning and response, transportation providers should be proactive and actively insert themselves into planning activities. Providers should reach out to the emergency planning and response community and provide points of contact, assets and capability information, and be available for plan development activities.*
- *Transportation providers are increasingly being asked to take a more visible and formal role in preparing for emergencies and disasters. Many do not have the systems in place, or staffing identified, to participate actively and effectively.*

4. *Include paratransit and other transportation providers into regular exercises and drills.*

- *Regular participation by access and functional needs transportation providers allows for capabilities to be understood and tested, relationships to be familiarized, and points of contact information and notification procedures to be updated.*

5. In emergency policy development, consider how capacity should be enhanced during an emergency situation to accommodate the needs for people with service animals.

- *Frequently missed in planning are the needs of the service animals themselves in addition to the person with a disability. Water, waste, and food needs for animals will need addressing.*

Reminders for Actions: Transportation to Off-Site Locations Once Evacuated from Buildings—Checklist

Communication between emergency planners and transportation providers.

- Emergency planners should proactively reach out to and make contact with:
 - Private services (taxis and rental vans/busses)
 - Community-based organizations
 - Municipal transportation providers
 - Develop specific agreements, MOUs, or contracts as needed

Build off-site transportation assets into emergency plans and protocols.

- Transportation providers should be formally built into standard emergency plans and response protocols for communication/notification.
- Ascertain the capabilities and specific resources available from each provider.
- Identify a specific Point of Contact individual with emergency contact information.
- Consult transportation providers in building transportation resources into emergency plans.
- Transportation providers should be proactive and actively insert themselves into planning activities.
- Include paratransit and other transportation providers into regular exercises and drills.
- Consider how capacity should be enhanced during an emergency situation to accommodate the needs for people with service animals.

ISSUE STATEMENT

Communication challenges involving access and functional needs issues during emergencies largely fall into three categories: 1. Mass notification to people with access and functional needs; 2. Communication during an event among first responders, off-site transportation providers, and building personnel; and, 3. 'Hardware' or interoperable systems and technology used during events.

CURRENT INFORMATION AND PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives on mass notification have centered on the ability to reach the most people with access and functional needs at one time and in an efficient fashion. This topic is directly related to the issue addressed earlier in this guidance regarding the efficacy of a Registry, or a 'List of Lists'. Paratransit and other transportation agencies use various forms of notification systems—some as simple as call down or partially automated use of excel lists, others are much more advanced notification systems. Some notification systems mentioned during this project that are being used include *Everbridge* and *Blackboard*. Some states have used other 'reverse 911' type programs to reach clients. (A web search of one-way and interactive communication/notification systems will provide additional vendors offering tools and resources.)

Improving communication problems during an event often comes back to two elements: 1. Having current names, organizations and protocols to address access and functional issues built into emergency plans in advance (rather than assemble and problem solve at the time of a disaster), and 2. Have regular exercises and drills that involve access and functional needs issues, so that the protocols themselves are trained upon and important relationships are built. The current status of these two elements being addressed in emergency planning is improving, but still in its infancy, and needs to become a more standardized element of all response activities.

Hardware systems and interoperability issues fall into a more standard response discussion on equipment, with one notable difference. Much of the communication needs during an event when evacuation of people with access and functional needs are underway involve communicating with personnel in a building, or communicating with off-site transportation providers. These personnel will not have (at least initially) the specific radios or other communication systems used by first responders. Standard cell phones are likely to be the preferred mode of communication in most or all of these situations—at least at the onset of a response.

1. Whether a centralized registry, or utilizing a ‘list of lists’ through partner organizations, determine if a jurisdiction requires a specific system to provide coordinated notifications.

- *Once a determination has been made regarding the use of either: a) a centralized registry, or b) using existing contacts in partner agencies to notify their clientele, a decision will be needed as to whether a simple contact method is used (e.g., excel list), or a more formal ‘reverse 911’ or other off the shelf product is procured to provide notification services.*
- *If a formal system is desired, such products as Everbridge, Blackboard, and others may be used as a starting point to determine the preferred system for a jurisdiction. It is advisable to consult with other jurisdictions who have implemented the systems under consideration for references and experiences.*
- *Staff time and resources will be needed to manage any system or approach considered; this requirement should be addressed to assist the long-term viability of a particular notification and communication system.*

2. Build notification and communication methods into plans and protocols.

- *Any system chosen—whether a formal notification program or simple call-down excel list—should be included into any communication protocol in emergency plans.*
- *Points of contact, regularly updated contact information, and any special instructions should be included in planning documents.*
- *Technology is evolving quickly and there are multiple technologies that can be considered for communication during emergency events to ensure that persons who have auditory disabilities are being reached.*

3. Include notification and communication systems into regular exercises and drills.

- *Notification protocols and ongoing communication systems should be included for access and functional needs exercises and drills, to allow for regular testing and refreshing of contacts, technology, and relationships.*
- *Of special note for the access and functional needs community is the intersection of protocols with technology—building owners and transportation providers will only have, at least initially, cell phone, computer or land line access. Any limitations of these technologies in a*

major event should be considered when planning for evacuation and transportation.

Reminders for Actions: Communications Checklist

- Determine if a jurisdiction requires a specific system to provide coordinated notifications.**
 - Determine the need for a centralized registry or an existing contacts list located with partner agencies to notify their clientele.
 - Select a preferred system for a jurisdiction.
 - Consider needed staff time and resources.
- Build notification and communication methods into plans and protocols.**
 - Included into communication protocol in emergency plans.
 - Identify points of contact.
 - Consider communication technologies that can reach to a full range of people with auditory disabilities.
- Include notification and communication systems into regular exercises and drills.**

PARTICIPANTS

	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>REPRESENTATIVE</u>
WORK GROUP PARTICIPANTS		
1	National Fire Protection Association	Allan Fraser
2	Paratransit, Inc.	Amy Parkin
3	Department of Developmental Services	Antoinette Johnson
4	City and County of San Francisco Mayor's Office on Disability	Carla Johnson
5	City of Los Angeles Fire Department	Christopher Cooper
6	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services - Training Division	Dacia Young
7	City of Chicago Fire Department	Doreen Rottman
8	FEMA - Office of Disability Integration and Coordination	Everett Sedgwick
9	Los Angeles County Fire Department and Alliance	Frank Forman
10	National Railroad Passenger Corporation/Amtrak	Gary Talbot
11	City of Chicago Fire Department	Glenn Hedman
12	California Department of Transportation- Division of Mass Transportation	Ian Knutilla
13	Los Angeles Unified School District- Office of the Superintendent	Jill M. Barnes
14	Florida Division of State Fire Marshal - Bureau of Fire Prevention	Karl Thompson
15	City and County of San Francisco Fire Department	Lisa Moy
16	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services- Fire and Rescue Division	Lorenzo Gigliotti
17	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services- Law Enforcement Division	Mark Pazin
18	Building Owners and Managers Association (Invited, did not participate)	Matthew Hargrove

	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>REPRESENTATIVE</u>
19	Los Angeles City Fire Department	Michael Webb
20	Los Angeles Paratransit	Mike Greenwood
21	Los Angeles City Fire Department	Patrick Hayden
22	Los Angeles County Fire Department	Patrick Watson
23	New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services	Paul Martin
24	Chicago Bureau of Fire Prevention	Richard Ford II
25	City and County of San Francisco Fire Department	Rick McGee
26	Children’s Hospital Los Angeles/University of Southern California	Rita V. Burke
27	City and County of San Francisco Department of Emergency Management	Rob Stangell
28	City of Tallahassee Division of Emergency Management	Robby Powers
29	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	Scott R. Norwood
30	Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office Office of Emergency Management	Sinan Khan
31	Office of the California State Fire Marshall	Steve Guarino
32	Ohio State University, Institute of Ergonomics	Steve Lavender
PROJECT TEAM		
33	California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services-Office of Access and Functional Needs	Richard Devylder
34	California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services-Office of Access and Functional needs	Dwight Bateman
35	California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services-Office of Access and Functional Needs	Kim Lathrop
FACILITATION TEAM		
36	Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS	Adam Sutkus
37	Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS	Kelle Rimmel, consultant
38	Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS	Orit Kalman

PROJECT SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The following project supplemental documents and supporting work products may be referenced by going to the Cal OES website at <http://www.calema.ca.gov/chiefstaff/pages/access-and-functional-needs.aspx> or by contacting staff directly at 916.845.8510:

- Pre-workgroup questionnaire
- Pre-workgroup assessment findings
- Research document reviews
- Compilation of reference documents and sources received from participants during the project
- Other Access and Functional Needs emergency support documentation and planning tools