

Do you know what resources exist to help you before, during, and after a disaster?

A wealth of resources is available online to help your institution prepare for and respond to emergencies. But with so many to choose from, how do you know which ones contain accurate information? Which ones reflect current and best practices? COSTEP MA can help identify the resources you need to address emergency planning, from risk assessment tools to disaster plan templates to response checklists.

If an emergency exceeds your organization's ability to respond quickly and efficiently, who can you turn to?

Think about connecting with other cultural heritage organizations in your community. But if you haven't established a relationship with other local organizations, exchanging business cards in the aftermath of a disaster is too late. Turn to COSTEP MA to provide guidance and assistance.



Katrina damage / FEMA



Flood damage / FEMA



Lexington Town Hall / Jennifer Fauxsmith

Take the first steps to create a resilient organization.

- Attend a COSTEP MA community meeting, where you can meet your local emergency management director (EMD) and connect with other local cultural heritage organizations.
- Work with your EMD to identify the risks and vulnerabilities facing your organization.
- Develop an institutional mitigation plan based on a risk assessment of your organization and collections.
- Develop an institutional emergency plan.
- Practice your plan.
- **Become a COSTEP MA partner.**

For more information, Visit the COSTEP MA website at www.mass.gov/mbic/costepma



MHS Vault / Jennifer Fauxsmith

COSTEP MA (Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness in Massachusetts) is an affiliation of cultural stewards from the public and nonprofit sectors and emergency managers from municipal, state, and federal governments. The purpose of COSTEP MA is to build and foster a statewide emergency planning process that serves the cultural and emergency management communities and addresses disaster prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. This process ensures an ongoing dialogue that promotes mutual understanding and coordination between these communities, both of which are committed to protecting our Commonwealth's cultural heritage.



Cultural Stewards and Emergency Managers Partners in Preparedness



Cover images: Acton Town Hall, Jefferson signature, Lexington Statue / Jennifer Fauxsmith; North Adams Eclipse Mill workers / Library of Congress; Hurricane Diana / NOAA

John Hancock signature image / Jennifer Fauxsmith

Disasters Happen in Massachusetts

**Hurricanes. Flooding.
Severe winter storms.
Even tornadoes.**

Following a disaster, what's worth saving? First and foremost, people and property. But then what? At a personal level, we are driven to save our cherished possessions – photographs, family heirlooms, our grandmother's wedding ring. At the community level, saving our cultural and historic resources is just as important. They document who we are and what we have done, and they provide inspiration for what we will become. In the aftermath of a disaster, cultural resources can help restore a sense of identity and normalcy, provide an economic anchor during the long journey of recovery, and sustain and heal distressed communities. But if we lose these resources, our communities will never fully recover.

Some sobering statistics*:

- If a business does not resume operations within 10 days of a disaster, chances are it will not survive.
- 75% of businesses without a business continuity plan for emergencies fail within three years.
- 43% of businesses that experience a disaster without an emergency plan in place never reopen.
- Of the 57% of businesses without an emergency plan that do reopen, only 29% remain in operation after two years.

Partnering with COSTEP MA can help prevent your organization from becoming one of these statistics.

**From an article by Ken Burriss of Witt | O'Brien's in the September 2013 IAEM Bulletin*

First responders and emergency managers focus daily on the phases of the emergency management cycle: prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Only within the past decade have stewards of cultural heritage begun to broaden their thinking about emergency preparedness. We all acknowledge that institution-level preparedness is essential. (Although whether it actually happens is another matter.) But now we know that that level of preparedness is insufficient for region-wide disasters. Cultural organizations can respond more rapidly and effectively to prevent damage to collections by fostering regional networks and establishing relationships with emergency managers at the local and state levels.

How will your organization fare during an emergency?

Do staff and volunteers know what to do? Are you prepared to protect your institution's unique documents, photos, recordings, artifacts, works of art, and other valuable assets? Are you confident that your institution can continue to operate following an emergency? COSTEP MA can help you prepare.

Cultural resources are individual objects, collections, and even activities with artistic, educational, historic, scientific, social, or economic importance to a community. They are housed in libraries, museums, archives, historic properties, historical societies, city and town halls, and public records repositories. They include works of art, books, documents, archaeological specimens, furniture, textiles, recordings, significant landscapes, and much more.



Photos: Jennifer Fauxsmith

Shaw Memorial / Jennifer Fauxsmith

