

III. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA is a component of the Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's mission is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA frequently works in partnership with other organizations that are part of the nation's emergency management system. For more information, visit <http://www.fema.gov/>.

A. Individuals with Special Needs: Preparing and Planning

FEMA posts a webpage entitled “Individuals with Special Needs: Preparing and Planning.” It provides additional steps for people with disabilities and special needs that may need to be taken during a time of emergency. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/specialplans.shtml>

B. Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs

FEMA, in association with the American Red Cross, has produced a publication entitled *Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs*. It provides information and suggestions for including individuals with disabilities in emergency planning. This document can be accessed at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/pfd_all.pdf

C. Are You Ready?

This site offers a downloadable version of *Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness*, FEMA’s most comprehensive source on individual, family, and community preparedness – including information specific to people with disabilities.

It can be viewed at: <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

D. FEMA's Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS)

On July 12, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) announced the completion of Phase II of the Digital Emergency Alert System (DEAS). The DEAS would allow the transmission of emergency alerts directly to citizens and responders without the need for a special receiver. These alerts would be sent to users of computers, mobile phones, pagers, and other devices. Transmission of data over the digital broadcast signal is nearly instantaneous and can be distributed simultaneously to thousands of sites.

"Digital capabilities will improve the reliability, flexibility, and security of the emergency alert system," said David Paulison, Director of FEMA. "This more efficient system will better serve first responders and government officials, as well as provide the American public timely information so they can safeguard themselves and loved ones in times of emergencies."

FEMA had put \$1 million into the project as of June 2006. In July 2006, it kicked in an additional \$4.5 million to give all licensees the equipment needed to relay the federal alerts. The federal agency will also provide \$1 million a year to maintain the system.

For More Information About DEAS, Please Click Here

http://www.fema.gov/pdf/media/2006/deas_fact_sheet.pdf

The development of the DEAS comes less than one month after President Bush issued an executive order to Homeland Security, the Defense Department, the Commerce Department and the FCC to update public warning systems - including the Emergency Alert System.

The 30 paragraph White House order calls for "an integrated alert and warning system that reaches as many Americans as possible through as many forms of communication as possible -- television, radios, PDAs, cellphones, et cetera," The order also assigns

Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff, with the task of declaring and implementing a U.S. policy to ensure that, in cases of war, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters, the President can communicate with the American people.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, Congress has set aside \$25 million over three years for pilot studies of public notification efforts. The program would be managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Bush also directed federal agencies to help as requested. The order applies to the Pentagon, the Commerce Department and the FCC, which must adopt rules requiring that communications systems be able to transmit alerts.

[To Read The Full Text Of This Executive Order, Please Click Here.](#)

E. The Emergency Preparedness and Response for Individuals With Disabilities Act of 2006

On February 7, 2006, Congressmen Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Curt Weldon (R-PA) introduced a piece of legislation entitled the Emergency Preparedness and Response for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2006 [H.B. 4704] which addresses the variety of issues faced by people with disabilities before, during and after a national disaster.

The bill calls for a Disability Coordinator within the Department of Homeland Security, to ensure the accessibility of information about evacuation and disaster relief via telephone hotlines and websites. The bill also amends the Stafford Disaster Relief Act, and requires the Government Accountability Office to conduct a national study of emergency shelters to determine how many of them are accessible under Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

For More Information about H.B. 4704, Please Click Here:

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:h.r.4704:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:h.r.4704)

F. Contact FEMA

To contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

FEMA

500 C Street S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20472

1-800-621-FEMA

TDD: 1-800-462-7585 for Federal Relay Service.