TRANSPORTATION AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

From the events of September 11, 2001 to the devastation wrought by recent hurricanes in Florida and all along the Gulf Coast, the manner in which plans, procedures, and responses to emergency events are implemented, clearly, can save lives and rebuild communities. The need to safely and efficiently transport people, particularly those for whom community and public transportation is their primary means of mobility, before, during, and after emergency situations, is a crucial consideration.

This Transportation and Emergency Preparedness Checklist was developed by a gathering of public and community transportation professionals who convened in April 2006 at the behest of the National Consortium on the Coordination of Human Service Transportation. It is intended to provide practical guidance to transportation providers and their partner organizations in planning for the transport of persons requiring mobility assistance in the event of an emergency. The Checklist was designed to be used as a tool during the planning process—prior to an emergency situation—to ensure safe and appropriate transportation for transportation-dependent populations, including older adults, persons living in group situations, persons with disabilities (including persons with physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, psychiatric, learning, and cognitive disabilities), and individuals without access to personal transportation.

Planning and Coordination Before Emergency Situations

Establish and maintain working relationships with partner organizations including a variety of community-based organizations—including advocacy organizations, agencies that serve the transportation-dependent populations, employment and training providers, health and human service agencies, faith and community-based organizations, departments of Workforce Development and One-Stop Career Center, and emergency response organizations and personnel. Maintain up-to-date contact list and network of communication.

Organize and conduct regular, periodic drills that include the procedures for evacuating transportation-dependent populations.

Clarify rules, regulations, and chains of responsibility at the local, state, and federal levels.

Identify Those Needing Transportation Assistance

√ Collaborate with partner organizations in identifying individuals who may require transportation assistance in the event of an emergency.

√ In accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, explore the development of voluntary registries for individuals requiring transportation assistance. For those individuals agreeing to be on voluntary registries, seek to have a signed authorization. Further information on signed

authorizations is available through

https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/no-signed-authorization/index.html

√ Identify and determine the appropriate transportation response for persons unable to reach a pick up/drop off location or staging area on their own, what entity will handle such needs, and what types of vehicles/equipment will be required.

√ Determine strategies for tracking individuals who are evacuated. Information should include the passenger's name, point of origin, departure time, final destination, and arrival time. Ensure that enough transportation capacity exists with transportation providers, partner agencies, and suppliers to effectively meet the demand in an emergency.

Public Involvement and Community Outreach

√ Conduct outreach and education that ensures public awareness of the transportation plan, particularly as it relates to those populations requiring transportation assistance in the event of an emergency.

√ Include members of the public and private sector (including local businesses) in the planning and outreach process, ensuring participation of potentially transportation-dependent populations including older adults, persons with disabilities (including physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, psychiatric, learning, and cognitive disabilities), people living in group situations, and those without access to personal transportation.

√ Using a variety of media and accessible formats such as Braille, large-type, audio, and appropriate languages, broadly publicize information related to staging areas and pickup/drop-off locations. Determine a point-of-contact person who will address questions from the public.

√ Provide information in a variety of formats to accommodate non-English speakers and persons with visual or auditory disabilities or difficulties reading printed text due to visual impairments, color blindness, illiteracy, learning disabilities, or mobility limitations that may interfere with holding or turning the pages of printed materials.

Equipment and Personnel Support

√ Establish a reliable communications system utilizing available technologies. Ensure the availability of an alternative system in the event that normal dispatching networks and telephones are not functional and when electrical power may be out.

√ Maintain a transportation resources list by type and availability, including vehicle accessibility and capacity information. Develop procedures for the acquisition of additional accessible transportation equipment, securement devices, supplies, and resources.

√ Secure agreements with fuel suppliers and other local agencies (such as police and fire departments) that require a reliable fuel source. Distribute and maintain list of these fueling sites.

√ Compile and distribute evacuation route information to be used during emergency operations, including alternative evacuation route information should the primary route be inaccessible due to damage or danger.

√ Provide staff training regarding the emergency plan, including a review of procedures for transporting persons with a variety of assistance needs, as well as the transport of service animals.

√ Identify staff with foreign language and sign language skills; provide staff training to ensure basic communication skills in sign language and relevant foreign languages.

√ Maintain a master list of drivers by status and availability.

√ Prior to activation, provide staff the opportunity to ensure the safety and security of their loved ones and personal property.

When an Emergency is Imminent

√ Local officials notify partner agencies and organizations of threat.

√ Following agreed-upon plans, coordination begins among emergency departments, public safety agencies, hospitals, transportation providers, etc.

√ Designated transportation staging areas and pick up/drop off locations are activated.

√ Staff, key partner agencies, and other vital personnel as designated in the emergency plan are placed on stand-by.

√ All drivers and operations personnel are notified of potential deployment of emergency plan, and are instructed to follow their pre-determined emergency preparation roles.

√ Following established protocols, persons with assistance needs who require direct personal contact are notified of the impending evacuation and where they will be transported.

√ All passengers are transported to their destinations on the planned evacuation routes or alternative routes as necessary.

During Emergency Situations

√ Evacuation notifications are communicated to partner organizations, and following established protocols, to pre-determined transportation-dependent groups such as older adults, persons living in group situations, persons with disabilities (including persons with physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, psychiatric, learning, and cognitive disabilities), and individuals without access to personal transportation.

√ In accordance with the local plan, participating agencies and organizations are involved—with necessary personnel—to affect evacuation, sheltering, response, and initial recovery.

√ Emergency transportation officials report to Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

√ Transportation service is activated upon request of EOC officials, or as stipulated in the plan.

√ All transportation activities and operations are coordinated from the EOC.

√ Transportation operations are directed over normal dispatching networks (if available), telephones (landlines), and cell phones, or previously tested and agreed-upon alternative communications systems as necessary.

√ Personnel and equipment are deployed to pre-assigned locations or staging areas, including designated supervisors, mechanics, and drivers.

√ Vehicles are fueled prior to evacuation, refueled as necessary during the evacuation process, fueled after the final trip to the sheltering location, and then taken to the pre-determined location where they will be housed safely until the response effort begins.

√ When a vehicle reaches full capacity, the driver departs to the designated evacuation location.

√ Door-to-door service is provided as designated in the emergency plan, based upon medical necessity or

the specific transportation needs of the passenger.

√ A roster is prepared and maintained by the operator, containing at a minimum the following information:
- Name of driver
- Driver's telephone number
- Time departed staging area
- Time arrived at sheltering location
- Vehicle number
- Sheltering location
- Trip mileage

This roster is vital as it provides a record of service that can be used after the emergency for billing purposes.

√ As has been highlighted in the emergency response training, the operator reports to transportation supervisors at the agreed-upon location to receive further instructions. Operators shall continue transporting until released by the EOC.

√ In the event the EOC must be evacuated, transportation officials will provide vehicles to transport EOC personnel and essential equipment to pre-designated alternative EOC locations.

Reentry and Recovery Preparations

√ Initiate recovery operations as designated in the emergency plan.

√ Following the plan, operator and vehicle remain at the sheltering location to return evacuees to their home communities. Generally, passengers will return with the same operator and via the same vehicle used during the evacuation.   Alternative plans for return should be in place, in the event that the evacuation lasts for days or weeks, or possibly longer.

√ Operators and passengers have picture identification to get back to their home area.

√ All operators will remain on duty in accordance with the emergency plan.

√ Transportation officials, in coordination with the EOC, will assign other tasks relating to the transportation component of reentry and recovery as the situation dictates.

√ Vehicles will return to established drop-off points near passengers' residences or directly to the residence,

based upon necessity.

Assessment

√ Evaluate emergency response effort, identifying successes and gaps in service.

√ Make appropriate changes to the emergency plan and communicate such changes to partner organizations and the public.