

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: STAYING INFORMED & ACCESSING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

The 2-1-1 Barometer utilizes 2-1-1 data and other information to explore issues affecting Connecticut residents. 2-1-1 tracks the type of help that callers are seeking in order to create a database that serves as a barometer of the needs present in the state.

COORDINATING RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Connecticut residents have faced a number of emergencies and disasters in recent years, from weather-related events to industrial accidents. While municipal governments are primarily responsible for the safety of residents, these crises have often required a statewide coordinated response to protect residents and property. Municipalities work closely with the state and federal governments and with nonprofit entities such as United Way 2-1-1 and the Red Cross in their emergency response and recovery efforts. This report reviews the framework for the State's coordinated response and recovery program and provides tips on how to prepare for and stay informed during and after emergencies and on how to access needed resources. The report also provides the resources available through United Way 2-1-1 and through state and federal agencies.



CONNECTICUT'S STATE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

In order to prepare for emergencies and disasters, the state Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) maintains Connecticut's State Response Framework (SRF). The SRF defines how the state works with local and federal governments and with the media and nonprofits during disasters and emergencies. Below are excerpts from the SRF that outline roles and responsibilities during an emergency:

- The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) will direct and coordinate all available resources to protect the life and property of the citizens of Connecticut in the event of a disaster or crisis. DEMHS has primary responsibility for development and implementation of the state's emergency management program.
- The Governor's State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) provides the main coordination center during emergencies and is located in the William A. O'Neill National Guard Armory in Hartford.
- City and town governments are responsible for all people and property within their boundaries and jurisdictions to the limits of their resources. Emergency operations will be carried out principally by local forces, then, if requested, by state forces, and, as available and needed, by military and/or federal forces.
- Connecticut's municipalities and two tribal nations are divided into five emergency preparedness planning regions. These five DEMHS Regional Offices, located in Bridgeport, Middletown, Hartford, Colchester and Waterbury, serve as resource coordinators and liaisons between towns and the SEOC.
- Each of the State's 169 municipalities has an emergency management director appointed by the local chief executive. Most cities and towns have a facility designated as a local Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which serves as the local control center. During emergencies, local officials maintain communications with the DEMHS Regional Office serving their region.

— excerpted from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, State Response Framework, August 2011

The SRF also stipulates that United Way 2-1-1 will work closely with municipalities and the state and other nonprofits to disseminate and collect information during emergencies and to assist residents to gain access to basic resources.

KEY CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION IN EMERGENCIES

9-1-1 is the number to call for medical, fire or police emergencies. Connecticut's municipalities are responsible for ensuring that their residents have 9-1-1 service. Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) are the facilities that receive 9-1-1 calls. PSAPs are housed in police departments, fire departments or emergency communications centers. There are 105 PSAPs in Connecticut. Visit www.ct.gov/despp.



UNITED WAY 2-1-1 is Connecticut's 24/7/365 statewide, toll-free information and referral service. During an emergency or disaster, United Way 2-1-1 is the statewide telephone point of access for residents to get information and to learn how and where to access resources to help them meet their basic needs. Visit www.211ct.org.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

Preparedness is key when it comes to getting through an emergency. Provided below are links that will help you be ready for various types of emergencies.

2-1-1 eLIBRARY: Click on the links below for 2-1-1 eLibrary papers on preparedness for many types of emergencies and disasters:

- Anthrax/Bioterrorism
- Citizen Preparedness
- Earthquake General Safety Information
- Extreme Heat Precautions and Safety Tips
- H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)
- Homeland Security Alert System
- How to Prepare and Safely Weather a Flood
- How to Prepare and Safely Weather a Hurricane/Tornado
- How To Prepare and Safely Weather A Thunderstorm
- Humanitarian Aid
- Nuclear Preparedness In Connecticut
- Winter Storms and Blizzards

STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES: Visit the following sites for more disaster preparedness information and resources:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) www.nhc.noaa.gov.
- Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security – www.ct.gov/demhs.
- Connecticut Department of Public Health – www.ct.gov/dph/prepare.
- CT Alert ENS – Sign up to receive notification of emergencies www.ct.gov/ctalert.
- FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) – www.ready.gov.



2-1-1 Child Care is part of a collaborative effort aimed at ensuring that the needs and safety of children in child care settings are met in the event of an emergency, natural disaster or terrorist threat.

2-1-1 Child Care is working with Connecticut-based Save the Children and the Departments of Social Services, Public Health and Emergency Management and Homeland Security to establish the Connecticut Initiative for Emergency Preparedness and Child Care. This initiative has developed a comprehensive plan to protect and support children in child care before, during and after emergencies.

2-1-1 Child Care is providing leadership and support in a number of areas during the development and implementation of the plan, including:

- Partnering with Save the Children to provide training to child care providers across the state to ensure that child care providers are trained on disaster preparedness and on the development of an on-site emergency plan.
- Creating maps of all Child Care Centers, and Family Day Care Homes in the state to help emergency management personnel to identify facilities that are in harm's way or near a disaster site.
- Serving as the communication entry point for parents and child care providers during an emergency to support family reunification.

In addition 2-1-1 Child Care staffs regional planning councils to coordinate efforts between local and state emergency planning agencies, early child care providers and community stakeholders. www.211childcare.org

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS — COVERING ALL CRITICAL SECTORS

The State Response Framework for disaster preparation, response and recovery also includes a structure to ensure that all critical functions of society are addressed during emergencies or disasters. Disaster planning includes Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). These ESFs ensure that sectors such as public health, communication and transportation are fully involved in disaster planning and recovery operations. There are 15 ESF areas which include:

ESF1.	Transportation – safety and restoration of infrastructure
ESF2.	Communication – repair of telecommunications infrastructure
ESF3.	Public Works and Engineering – infrastructure restoration
ESF4.	Firefighting – coordination of firefighting activities
ESF5.	Emergency Management – coordination of response efforts
ESF6.	Mass Care, Housing, Health and Human Services – disaster housing and human services
ESF7.	Logistics Management and Resource Support – providing resources to sustain relief management
ESF8.	Public Health and Medical Services – coordinating medical and mental health services
ESF9.	Search and Rescue – life-saving assistance, search and rescue operations
ESF10.	Oil and Hazardous Materials Response – environmental clean-up related to chemical, biological, radiological materials
ESF11.	Agriculture and Natural Resources – food safety and security
ESF12.	Energy – restoration of utilities
ESF13.	Public Safety and Security – security planning, traffic and crowd control
ESF14.	Long-Term Community Recovery – social and economic community impact assessment
ESF15.	External Affairs – emergency public information, media and community relations, Congressional and international affairs

Each ESF is led by a coordinator who identifies and enlists the support of public and private resources and maintains communication with other ESFs.



2-1-1 RESPONDS DURING TROPICAL STORM IRENE AND THE OCTOBER NOR'EASTER

In the late summer and fall of 2011, Connecticut was hit by two powerful storms. Tropical Storm Irene damaged many coastal properties and caused numerous power outages around the state. Just under two months later, the heavy wet snow of an October Nor'easter left a record number of Connecticut residents without power, in some cases, for more than a week. Before, during and after those storms, United Way 2-1-1 partnered with state and municipal leaders in order to provide residents with the most up-to-date information. Despite losing power at the 2-1-1 facility in Rocky Hill, the contact center remained open and handled calls 24 hours a day. Call volume escalated to three times the normal daily volume and visits to 211ct.org increased seven fold during this time.

During these storms, United Way 2-1-1 was activated as part of Connecticut's emergency response and staffed the Emergency Operations Center where response activity is coordinated. In collaboration with the state and municipal governments and the Red Cross, 2-1-1 gathered and posted information on available resources including emergency shelters, gas stations, pharmacies and grocery stores. 2-1-1 was also tapped by the state to collect damage reports from residents after the October snowstorm. Over 50,000 reports were collected.

STATE, FEDERAL AND NONPROFIT RESOURCES

American Red Cross Connecticut Region – provides families with immediate disaster-related needs for shelter, food, clothing, replacement of medical prescriptions and other household requirements and with emotional support to help people begin their recovery after a disaster. Visit www.ctredcross.org.

Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security – responsible for providing a coordinated, integrated program for statewide emergency management and homeland security. Visit www.ct.gov/demhs.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – provides assistance during and after major disasters and information on disaster preparedness. Visit www.fema.gov.

FINDING SHELTER AND OTHER BASIC NEEDS

In the aftermath of an emergency, the 2-1-1 database is continually updated to include helpful information for residents affected by the emergency. Information can be obtained over the phone, or can be found online at www.211ct.org. Depending on the emergency, 2-1-1 may list the following resources:

- **Shelters** – The American Red Cross and many municipalities will open overnight or daytime shelters that may offer showers, cell phone charging stations and food.
- **Gas stations** – In the event of long term power outages that affect a widespread area, 2-1-1 may list the gas stations that are in operation.
- **Pharmacies and Grocery Stores** – 2-1-1 may post a listing of open stores in an affected area.
- **Insurance Claims** – 2-1-1 will list the numbers of the state Department of Insurance and Insurance Companies that have established emergency claim operations.

2-1-1 NATIONWIDE RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

In Connecticut and across the nation, 2-1-1 acts as a communication hub helping the public to access community resources and support services during emergencies and every day of the year. In times of disaster, 2-1-1 relieves pressure on 9-1-1 and emergency response teams by providing an easy to remember number for citizens to call for non-emergency needs, freeing up emergency responders to deal with true emergencies. 2-1-1 provides citizens with critical basic needs assistance, such as: shelter, food, damage reporting, information dissemination and rumor control. Nationwide, 2-1-1 has played a major role during hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, fires and other natural and manmade disasters.



WWW.211CT.ORG

To find local emergency resources, visit www.211ct.org, enter your zip code and one of the terms below.

- Armories
- City Offices of Emergency Services
- Disaster Related Goods Donations Management
- Disaster Related Monetary Fund Management
- Disaster Relief/Recovery Organizations
- Disaster Service Centers/Hotlines
- Disaster Services for Animals
- Disaster Survivor Inquiries
- Disaster/Emergency Services Volunteer Opportunities
- Emergency Communications
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Training
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Offices
- General Disaster Information
- General Disaster Preparedness Information
- Government Emergency Operations Centers
- Mass Care Shelters
- Mass Emergency Notification Systems
- National Flood Insurance Program
- Post Disaster Child Care
- Post Disaster Cleanup
- Post Disaster Food Services
- Post Disaster Housing Assistance
- Post Disaster Mental Health Services
- Pre-Disaster Donations Collection/Storage
- Special Needs Registries
- State Offices of Emergency Services

The mission of the United Way of Connecticut is to help meet the needs of Connecticut and its residents by providing information, education and connection to services. United Way of Connecticut provides services with support from the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways.

To access other issues of the 2-1-1 Barometer online go to: www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp