

Petersham Emergency Management

Mission: Emergency Management and public responders protect the Town of Petersham by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to improve the capability of the Town to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

Goals:

1. Maintain an all-hazards emergency response plan
2. Strive to attain a state of preparedness and readiness to be able to respond to any disaster
3. Prepare its citizens to be self-prepared and allow the Town to be resilient in the face of a disaster
4. Review disaster situations and make changes and improvements to the best of the abilities of the Town

Management:

The Town by state law has an appointed Emergency Management Director (EMD) and an Assistant Emergency Manager. There is also an Emergency Management Committee that consists of representation from the fire department, police department, highway department, select board, Petersham Center School, and the building inspector.

The individuals on the committee and other key management and responders are all required to have Incident Command Training as determined by the Commonwealth and the Department of Homeland Security.

Disasters are coordinated utilizing the Incident Command System (ICS) that is a set of guidelines that all federal, local, state, and tribal communities must adhere to in preparing for, responding to, or recovering from a disaster. The first responders in Petersham: police, fire, public health, highway, regional dispatchers, the EMD, and select town managers have completed various levels of ICS.

The EMD has the authority to initiate a local Disaster Declaration for the Town, whenever the Governor declares a disaster for the Commonwealth, the President initiates a Disaster Declaration, or when there is a disaster in Town that exceeds the Town's normal response and mutual aid capabilities. The EMD then notifies the Governor's office of the local declaration.

The Town prepares and responds to an emergency using the 4 Phases of Emergency Management: Mitigation, Planning/Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

Mitigation efforts are attempts to prevent hazards from developing into disasters altogether or to reduce the effects of disasters. Mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. This is achieved through risk analysis, which results in information that provides a foundation for

mitigation activities that reduce risk, and flood insurance that protects financial investment

Preparedness is how we change behavior to limit the impact of disaster events on people. Preparedness is a continuous cycle of planning, managing, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, creating, evaluating, monitoring and improving activities to ensure effective coordination and the enhancement of capabilities of concerned organizations to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, create resources and mitigate the effects of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Response involves the mobilization of the necessary emergency services and first responders in the disaster area. This is likely to include a first wave of core emergency services, such as firefighters, police and ambulance crews. There may be multiple response waves that bring in additional resources such as highway crews, electric crews, state responders, federal responders, animal care responders, media, engineers, environmental protection agencies and many others as needed for the specific disaster.

Recovery is effort to restore the affected area to a level or normalcy or as close as possible to its previous state. Recovery efforts are concerned with issues and decisions that must be made after immediate needs are addressed. Recovery efforts are primarily concerned with actions that involve rebuilding destroyed property, re-employment, and the repair of other essential infrastructure. Recovery can begin at some level during a disaster while response actions are still being carried out. It depends upon the type and scope of the disaster.

Town Requirements:

The Town EMD is required to maintain and update on an annual basis the following:

- A Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.
- National Incident Management Plan with the Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Incident Command training as determined by the Department of Homeland Security. Training is mandated for any town that receives federal emergency preparedness and response funding.
- Participation in annual training exercises within and among other towns that includes a variety of responders.
- An annual risk assessment submitted to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Reporting preliminary and final damage assessments and submitting all required state and federal documents when a disaster is declared.