

Massachusetts Highway Association (MHA) Mutual Aid Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)





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1. Introductions – Mission Statement

This program is to provide emergency public works aid during unanticipated events which overcome the resources of a community or communities.

Purpose & Guidelines

The mission of the Massachusetts Highway Association (MHA) Mutual Aid Program is to enable rapid, coordinated emergency response by local Public Works departments across the Commonwealth when an incident exceeds the resources of an individual community. The program provides scalable support—from localized events to statewide emergencies—and leverages modern GIS-based technology to manage mutual aid efficiently.

History

Mutual Aid among Public Works departments began informally, with towns assisting neighbors during floods, tornadoes, and winter storms. Without a structured framework, early responses sometimes led to duplication of effort and delayed support. In Massachusetts there was no legal mechanism to allow a community to volunteer to assist in other communities in case of an emergency. In 2008 the Massachusetts Highway Association recognized the need for a organized mutual aid system which had the backing of the state legislature, similar to police and fire mutual aid agreements. MHA worked with MEMA, MassDOT, and state legislators to draft the necessary legislation and design a program for public works mutual aid.

State legislation for public works mutual aid was approved in 2014 and became part of MGL Chapter 40.

Legislation

- **MGL Chapter 40, Section 4J** – Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement for public safety emergencies.
- **MGL Chapter 40, Section 4K** – Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement for operational support.
- Participation requires formal “opt-in” by each municipality (see Section 2).

Scope of Program

- **Emergency Response Only:** This program activates when local resources are exhausted or when additional assistance is required.
- **Minimum Response Example:** Sending a single loader and operator to assist with debris removal in a neighboring community.
- **Maximum Response Example:** Mobilizing resources statewide to respond to a large-scale disaster such as a tornado or prolonged flooding event.
- The program is designed to be scalable, supporting both local operations and coordination with the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) through MEMA.
- To deliver targeted assistance during the first 24–72 hours of an event while ensuring accountability and responder safety.

2. How to Participate (“Opting In”)

Municipalities wishing to participate must:

- Complete the **Public Works Mutual Aid Opt-In Form**, available here: [Intrastate Mutual Aid Program](#) See in Appendix A
- Submit the signed form to MEMA.
- Designate a **primary and secondary point of contact**, typically the DPW Director and a senior manager to the Massachusetts Highway Association. This is most easily done by filling out the appropriate section of the MHA dues form.
- It’s recommended that designated staff have completed **ICS training (ICS 100 and 200)**.

Once enrolled, communities will be added to the **Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online platform** for request management and situational awareness.

3. MHA's Mutual Aid Regions



For the purpose of the Public Works Mutual Aid Program, the state has been divided into six (6) regional areas, each with it's own trained coordinators. This regional division, grouped by county is intended to provide local assistance for a small or singular event and pull resources from other parts of the state for a larger regional event.

The MHA's successful Mutual Aid Program is achieved through the crucial, volunteer Regional Coordinators referred to as CMACs. CMAC contact information is provided in appendix B and is listed on the mutual aid website.

Massachusetts is separated into six regions:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. North | (Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk Counties) |
| 2. Southeast | (Bristol, Norfolk, Plymouth Counties) |
| 3. Cape Cod | (Barnstable & Duke Counties) |
| 4. Central | (Worcester County) |
| 5. Tri-County | (Franklin, Hamden, Hampshire Counties) |
| 6. West | (Berkshire County) |

Please visit masshighway.org to find your regional coordinator, this information is also in appendix B.

Communities can also contact their regional Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) representative directly. Additional mutual aid assistance and guidance is available on the state website at www.mass.gov/doc/quick-reference-guide-mutual.

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4. Requesting Assistance

Assistance Request Process

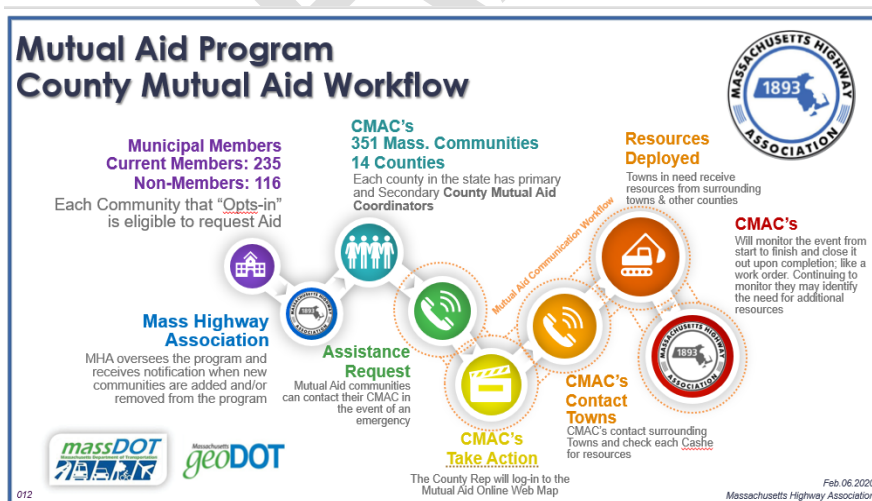
1. **Contact your County Mutual Aid Coordinator (CMAC)** by phone or text to report the incident and the type of assistance needed.
2. The CMAC logs into the **Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online Platform**:
[Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online Website](#)
3. The CMAC completes the Assistance Requested Form, assigns an incident ID, and documents all relevant details.
4. The CMAC will contact other program participants and assign one or more volunteers and coordinate the response with the requestor.
5. The incident is tracked in real time through status changes:
 - Assistance Requested
 - Assistance Pending
 - Assistance In Progress
 - Assistance Completed
 - Closed

WebEOC Coordination:

In larger-scale events, MEMA may also track deployments using WebEOC in parallel with the Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online system.

Communities may also contact MEMA for assistance, directly through their regional MEMA coordinator.

MEMA will contact the CMAC and forward information all related information.



Assistance Types

- A. Private Contractors: Some emergency events are best handled using private contractors. If a community are unable to secure the services of a private contractor, they can contact the appropriate CMAC, who will utilize the resources of this program to supply contact information for private contractors who may be able to assist.
- B. Regional or Statewide Contracts for Services: There are established contracts for many public works functions which can be used by any community. Information and links to these contracts are contained on the MHA Mutual Aid webpage.
- C. Homeland Security Cache Equipment Sites: Equipment cache's contain a wide variety of equipment used for public works emergencies and are located across the state. This equipment is available to communities for very reasonable rates.

The Massachusetts Regional Cache Sites Include:

NERAC (Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council)

SRAC (Southeastern Regional

CRHAC (Central Region Homeland Security Advisory Council)

WRHAC (Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council)

Links to these Cache sites and contact information are listed on the MHA Mutual Aid Webpage and contained in Appendix ?????

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/homeland-security-regional-advisory-councils>

D. Public Mutual Aid Assistance:

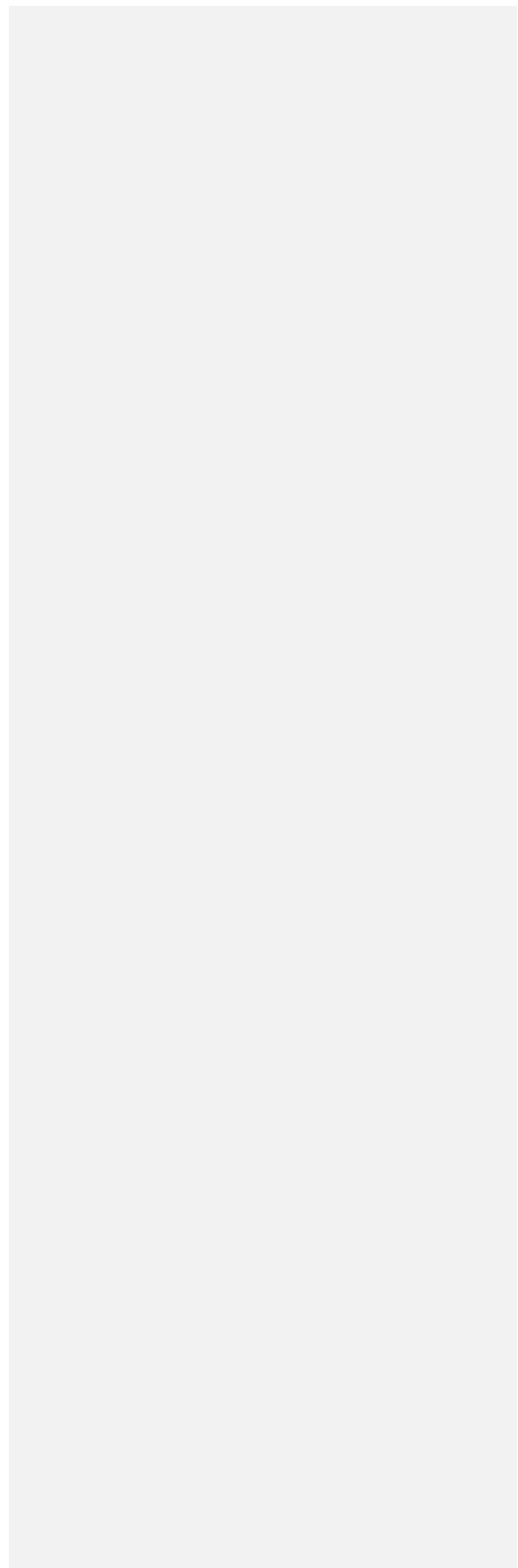
The primary function of this program is to connect a community requesting service with another community or communities who are willing to provide volunteer assistance.

Participating communities may request: - Personnel (operators, foremen, supervisors) - Equipment (dump trucks, loaders, pumps) - Materials (barriers, fuel, other supplies)- , Logistical and operational support,

Requests can be made for: - Severe weather and storm response - Flooding - Debris management - Infrastructure failures, other unanticipated emergencies.

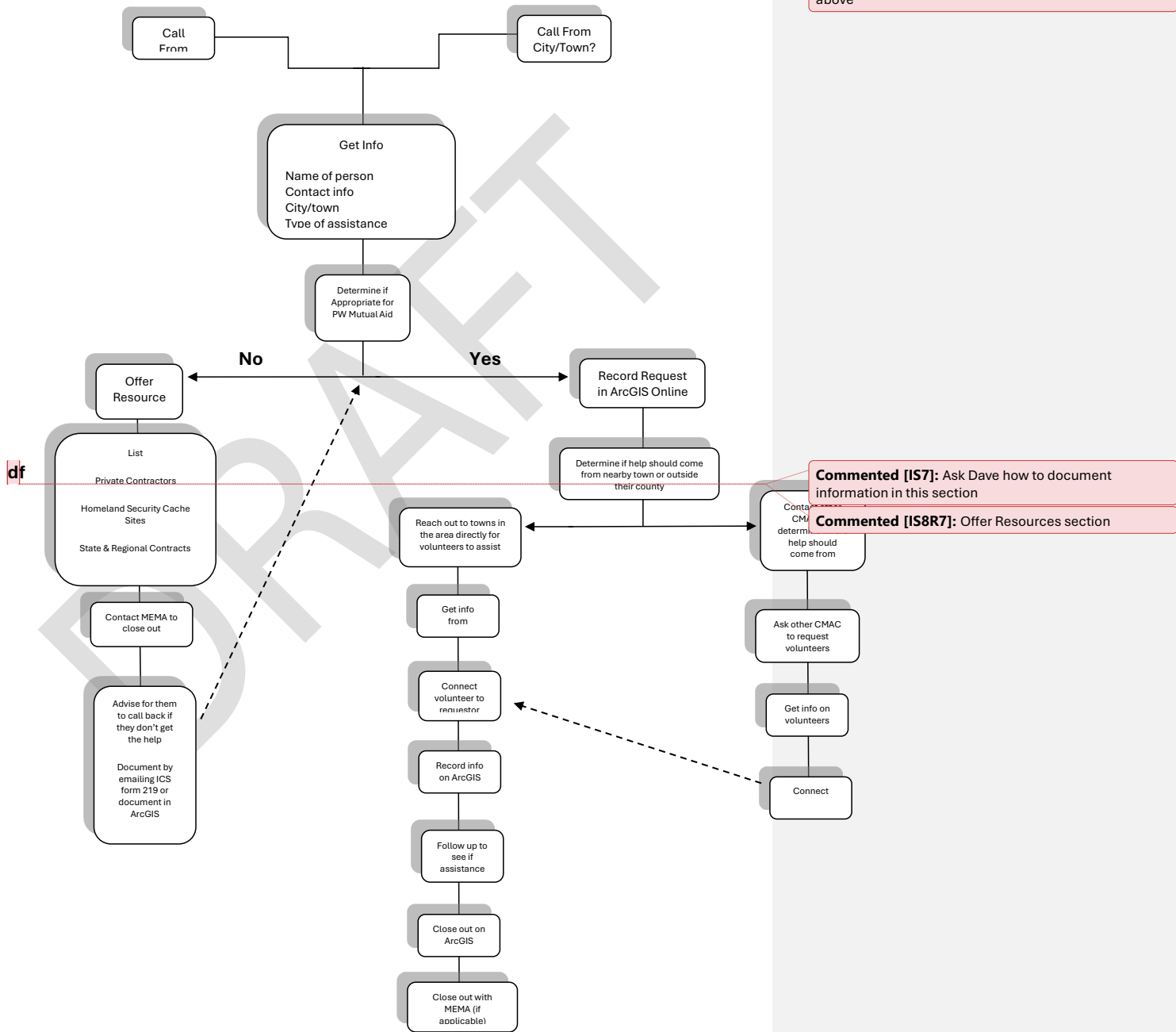
Work will be public works related functions and volunteers will be expected to work a full work day which could extend past the normal eight hour work period. Volunteers should bring or arrange food, drink, and necessary equipment to be self sufficient for up to twelve hours.

DRAFT



5. Flow Chart for Providing Assistance

When A Call for Assistance is Received



Key Principles

- **Follow the plan:** No freelancing or self-deploying resources.
- **Deployed crews must be:**
 - Properly trained and qualified.
 - Self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.
 - Equipped with appropriate PPE.
 - Supplied with fuel and other consumables.

Commented [IS9]: Update

Suggested ICS Training: CMACs and designated representatives must complete: - ICS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System - ICS-200: Basic Incident Command System - ICS-300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents - ICS-400: Advanced ICS

Assistance Map Access: - The **Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online Map** displays live status updates and is accessible at:

[Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online Website](#)

6. County Mutual Aid Coordinator (CMAC) Standard Procedures

Role Description

CMACs are responsible for: - Helping our neighbors in public works by proactively offering assistance to impacted communities. - Maintaining situational awareness across their county. - Acting as the liaison between municipalities and MHA leadership. - Communicating regularly via phone, text, and the online platform. - Ensuring all incidents are fully documented in the system.

Running a Singular Event

- Confirm request details and urgency – *All Details fill out ICS 213 RR form*
- Post the request on the platform – *All Requests for Aid Must Be Posted*
- Coordinate offers of assistance – *CMAC Decides Who's Best to Help*
- If requested or the situation is unclear and more details are needed, consider sending a resource to the site to investigate and report – *this should be a trained individual with some local knowledge who must report back to the CMAC*
- Update ArcGIS by changing color with who is helping who
- Track the incident status until closure – *Event Must Be Closed on the App and MEMA Notified When Assistance is Stopped*
- Remind all involved parties to follow all safety rules and procedures while providing assistance.

Running a Multi-Location Incident

- Delegate responsibilities to neighboring CMACs as needed – *establish one CMAC in overall charge.*
- Stand up the regional or state EOC if warranted.
- Consider deploying an on-site coordinator for direct support – *this should be a trained individual with some local knowledge who must report back to the CMAC in charge*

7. Operation of Mutual Aid Software

The Mutual Aid platform is **cloud-based** and accessible securely from any web-connected device.

Login:

[Mutual Aid ArcGIS Online Website](#)

Commented [IS10]: Dave Darosa step by step

Logging In

- **General Viewing:** Any participating community may view incident status.
- **Coordinator Access:** CMACs and designated points of contact can record, update, and close incidents.
- **Administration:** MHA and MEMA administrators maintain user accounts and system configurations.

Recording a Request

1. Select the town requesting assistance.
2. Complete the Assistance Requested Form (modeled after ICS-219-7).
3. Assign an incident number.
4. Upload any supporting documents or photos.

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Viewing an Incident

- Use the **Incident Analysis** widget to:
 - Filter by status.
 - View surrounding towns' capacity.
 - Track resource deployment.

Closing Out an Incident

- Confirm that assistance has been completed.
- Change the incident status to **Closed**.
- Generate and archive a summary report for records.

8. Updates

Quarterly Responsibilities

- Participate in quarterly CMAC coordination calls – *record meeting minutes*.
- Update community contact lists – *listen in ArcGIS application*.
- Review incident records and readiness plans.

Annual Updates

- CMAC refresher training (annually or bi-annually).

Annual Updates

- MHA will update this SOP and the Mutual Aid Operations Plan annually.

Quarterly Updates

- CMAC and Coordinator contact lists will be reviewed and confirmed.
- Website resources will be updated.
- Outreach conducted through:
 - MEMA quarterly newsletters.
 - MHA biannual newsletters.
 - MHA Constant Contact communications.

Advertising & Education

- Program details and manuals will be distributed annually.
- Presentations and webinars will be offered to promote participation.
- Updates will be requested for all CMAC contact records.

9. Appendices

A. Opt-In Form

B. CMAC Contact Info

C. Resource Request Form (ICS 213 RR)

D. CACHE Links and Contact Information

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Faust, Ben (Unverified): Is this related? <https://nerac.us/cache-sites/> | MHA Mutual Aid | Microsoft Teams

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/homeland-security-regional-advisory-councils>

"All NERAC municipalities and other entities who have signed the Cache User Subscription Form are eligible to borrow equipment from these sites to respond to emergencies or other temporary situations."

NERAC, SRAC, CRHSAC and WRHSAC

<https://www.crhsac.org/>

<https://www.srac.us/>

<https://wrhsac.org/>

<https://nerac.us/>

[http](http://)

<https://nerac.us/cache-sites/>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/homeland-security-regional-advisory-councils>