



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Office of Gerrie Schipske, R.N.P., J.D.
Councilwoman, Fifth District
Memorandum

R-5

Revised

Date: May 8, 2012

To: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

From: Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District *GS*
Councilmember Rae Gabelich, Eighth District *RG*

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM: Including Needs of the Disabled in Emergency Plans**

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Department of Justice has prepared a document for local governments (<http://www.ada.gov/emergencyprepguide.htm>) **An ADA Guide for Local Governments Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities**, and states in pertinent part:

One of the most important roles of local government is to protect their citizenry from harm, including helping people prepare for and respond to emergencies. Making local government emergency preparedness and response programs accessible to people with disabilities is a critical part of this responsibility. Making these programs accessible is also required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Last month, the City of Los Angeles settled litigation for \$2.1million dollars because it failed to include the needs of the disabled in emergency operations plans prepared for planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and national security emergencies in both war and peacetime.

Representatives of the disabled community raised the issue that the City of Los Angeles needed to have a plan to notify and evacuate the disabled or provide them with transportation and shelter in a disaster and that the city's failure violates the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Unlike many other Southern California cities, Long Beach does not post its emergency operations plan for the community to review. Additionally, the City's website does not include any information for emergency preparedness for the disabled (http://www.longbeach.gov/health/safety_prep/er_prep.asp). (While the City of Los Angeles has been sued over not including the disabled in its emergency operations plans, the City has an excellent website (www.readyla.com) that provides information, resources and videos to it residents on becoming prepared for an emergency.) Long Beach's information on emergency preparedness is located on two separate city department websites instead of an easy to find page. The information needs updating, expansion and inclusion of information in other languages, including for those who are sight or hearing impaired. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides

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numerous links to resources for local government concerning the issue of including the disabled in emergency plans
(<http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/outreach/specialpopulationsanddisasters.html#a14>).

It would be helpful if the City Manager engaged members of the local disability community to review the City's emergency operations plans and the information on the city's website related to this issue to make certain these residents are represented in the city's emergency preparedness efforts.

RECOMMENDATION:

By motion of the City Council, request the City Manager to review the City's emergency operations plans prepared for planned response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological incidents, and national security emergencies in both war and peacetime, and to engage members of the disabled community to make certain the needs of the disabled are included in these plans and that the City website is updated to provide all residents access to critical information necessary for emergency preparedness.

FISCAL IMPACT: There will be staff time needed to complete this effort. Any costs incurred will be offset from the savings realized from litigation not being filed.