



The Western Massachusetts Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC) is a seventeen member, volunteer Council charged by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to administer and coordinate the State Homeland Security Grant for the four counties of Western Massachusetts: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden.

Funded activities are regional in scope and build and enhance capabilities that enable the region to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards including domestic and foreign terrorist acts.

HOMELAND SECURITY INFORMATION FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

www.wrhsac.org

 www.facebook.com/WRHSAC

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➤ Using Large Planned Events as Exercise & Drill Opportunities

The Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council's (WRHSAC) current Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan (MYTEP) has identified large planned events as ideal opportunities to conduct inter-disciplinary drills or exercises. These events, such as the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, Mercy Sunday in Stockbridge, the Big E in W. Springfield, and the numerous fairs, multi-cultural events, races, etc. in the region, already bring many municipal, regional, and sometimes state and federal departments together in the planning and operational process.

A drill or exercise can be incorporated into an event, providing multi-discipline, multi-jurisdictional training. Planned event exercises provide an opportunity for leadership development of junior officers/officials/staff, with senior officers/leadership providing mentorship and evaluation. Planned event drills and exercises can bring together municipal and regional resources to test interoperability. Specialty teams and personnel such as the Northwest MA Incident Management Team and region COM-L's and COM-T's can use the planned events as opportunities to complete unit-level training, sign-off on task books, and gain hours towards credentialing. These specially trained teams and personnel can also serve as mentors or evaluators. Mentorship can also be provided across jurisdictions—leadership from one agency providing mentorship to junior staff of other agencies.

WRHSAC, through its Training and Exercise subcommittee, has funding available to assist departments and municipalities in planning, conducting, and evaluating exercises held in conjunction with large planned events. Municipalities that incorporate exercises into planned events often find they enhance event coordination and operations, bring diverse participation into event coordination, and build relationships with other disciplines or departments.

Entities interested in seeking funds to conduct drills or exercises to be incorporated in large planned events should contact WRHSAC through Raine Brown, Homeland Security Program Manager at raine@frcog.org or 413.774.3167 x138. **Entities should allow at least six months, ideally nine months, lead-time before the planned event to apply.**

➤ Law Enforcement Training Equipment Caches



The Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, in partnership with Greenfield Police Department, Greenfield Community College Police Department, and Bernardston Police Department, have established caches of law enforcement training equipment which are available to Western Massachusetts Law Enforcement Departments.

These supplies are available to all Western Massachusetts Law Enforcement Departments. View the flyer with full description and contact information for each equipment host online at <https://wrhsac.org/resources/resource-guide/>.

➤ Cybersecurity Awareness Training for Municipal Officials

WRHSAC, in partnership with the other Massachusetts Regional Homeland Security Advisory Councils – Central, Southeast and Northeast – created a Cybersecurity Awareness Training Series for Municipal Officials. The series consists of six online learning modules built on the Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (DHS/CISA) Cyber Essentials Toolkit.



The online learning modules lead municipal officials through the basic steps of a holistic approach to create a cyber-secure environment. Each module focuses on a specific area, Yourself, Your Staff, Your Systems, Your Surroundings, Your Data, and Your Actions Under Stress, which together help you to build a culture of cyber readiness. The modules are self-paced and are each approximately 10 minutes in length and are available to [access anytime](#).

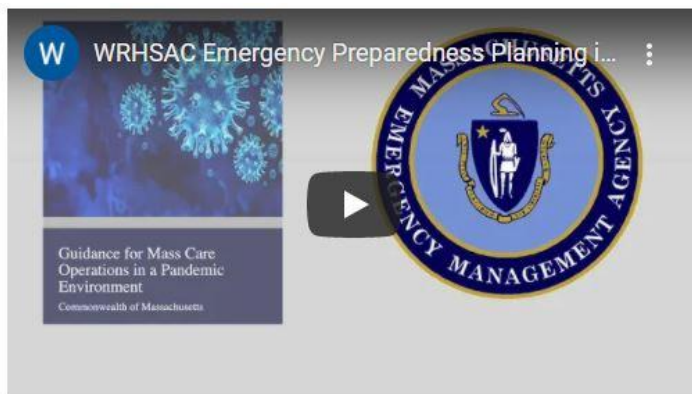
Two webinars accompanied the series launch during National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, October 2020. In the webinars, subject matter experts delved more deeply into the module topics and answered participants' questions. The webinars were recorded and are available on WRHSAC's [website](#).

➤ Preparedness Planning in a Pandemic Workshop Toolkit

The Western Region Homeland Security Councils' "Preparedness in a Pandemic" planning considerations workshop kit is adapted from operational guidance developed by both the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. The guidance has been edited to include those questions and considerations most likely to be of concern to western Massachusetts municipalities and responders.

Designed to aid planners and emergency managers to assess all-hazard plans in light of the additional stressors and limits at play due to COVID-19, the Preparedness in Pandemic kit contains a planning considerations checklist that addresses the preparedness, response, and recovery phases of an additional emergency during the pandemic, a PowerPoint slide deck, and a Facilitator's Guide.

All the toolkit resources can be found for download on WRHSAC's [website](#).



Click the image above to view the YouTube video explaining the toolkit.

➤ Resilient First App

HART – High Adversity Resilience Training for First Responders is a new feature in the ResilientFirst app by Driven made available to western Mass first responders by WRHSAC.

Emergency responders deal daily with situations most people hope to never witness. HART recognizes that building resilience is about more than the actions of an individual responder and looks at operational, organizational and relational aspects central to building resilience, not only for the individual but also for the individual's relationships and organization.



To get started with the ResilientFirst App scan the QR code or go to: <http://helloworldriven.com/signup/c2020> . This gives you free access to the app for 90 days. Your personal information is strictly confidential and will not be shared. You can use the app via smartphone or desktop. Access HART through the app's Explore menu.



➤ WRHSAC's First Responder Mental Health Resiliency - Phase I

WRHSAC is proud to announce the first phase of its [First Responder Mental Health Resiliency](#) project. This first phase is a training focused on supporting first responder leadership to create positive mental health work environments.

The training is **Building Healthy Workplaces: How to promote mental health in first responder organizations**. The training includes two parts: an online, self-paced introduction followed by a more comprehensive interactive, virtual, four-session series.



The Introduction to Building Healthy Workplaces provides the basis to support informed dialogue and participation during the more in-depth virtual series. The Introduction is available via WRHSAC's new online learning management system at www.learning.wrhsac.org/courses. The training is free and accessible after a simple registration process. Follow the links on the page.

The second part of the training, Building Healthy Workplaces, offers deeper discussion and planning to support first responder leadership towards promoting positive mental wellbeing within their organizations. Delivered as a four-session series, the training will be conducted over four consecutive weeks via Zoom 'live' online on the following dates in 2021: January 22, 29, February 5, 12 (all sessions 10 a.m. to noon). The training is free.

Participation in Building Healthy Workplaces is prioritized for first responder leadership in Western Massachusetts. [Submitted applications](#) will be reviewed to ensure participants are in a leadership role. Attendance at all four sessions is recommended. This is an interactive training and access to audio and visual capabilities are required.

The introduction training is a prerequisite for participating in the Building Healthy Workplaces four-session series.

PROJECT HISTORY

WRHSAC recognizes that the greatest assets in any first responder organization are first responders themselves. First responders encounter stressful situations on a daily basis. Their experiences of potentially traumatic incidents are greater than those seen in most other occupations. This reality places tremendous stress on the nervous system and overall health of team members.

In early 2019, WRHSAC embarked on a First Responder Mental Health Resiliency project. Conversations with regional stakeholders and research on available best practices led WRHSAC to determine that a program to assist leadership in developing and fostering positive mental health work environments would be key to building individual and team mental health resiliency.

WRHSAC's approach is modeled on British Columbia, Canada's WorkSafeBC [First Responders' Mental Health Committee](#). WRHSAC engaged two mental health clinicians familiar with the unique concerns of first responders to engage with the WorkSafeBC project and to adapt it to the needs of Western Massachusetts first responder agencies. As experienced mental health clinicians, our facilitators Calla Harrington LCSW, MSW, MPH and Lillian Lennox LMHC, MA, C-iRest, E-RYT 500 bring important mental health definitions, concepts and offer a multidisciplinary approach drawing from many perspectives.

Members of the BC First Responder Mental Health Committee have made our team aware of their upcoming (January through March 2021) webinar series **BC First Responders' Mental Health Speaker Series: Leadership for the Mental Health of your Workplace** and have extended an invitation to our region's first responder leaders to attend. The series will focus on actively developing the knowledge and skills of first responders in leadership positions, so they can take a proactive approach to promoting positive mental health in their organizations. Those interested in attending one or all of the speaker series can register [here](#).

The Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC) was established in 2004 by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. WRHSAC is charged with administering the State Homeland Security Grant for western Massachusetts. Fifteen officials representing the first responder disciplines as identified by the Department of Homeland Security comprise the membership of WRHSAC. The disciplines and their representatives are:

Law Enforcement

- ◇ Chief Stephen Kozloski, Monson: skozloski@monson-ma.gov
- ◇ Chief Michael Wynn, Pittsfield: mwynn@pittsfieldch.com
- ◇ Chief John Paciorek, Deerfield: jpaciorek@police.deerfield.ma.us

Fire Services

- ◇ Chief John Dearborn, Longmeadow: jdearborn@longmeadow.org
- ◇ Chief Charles Burger, Great Barrington: cburger@townofgb.org
- ◇ Chief Jon Davine, Northampton: jdavine@northamptonma.gov

Municipal Government

- ◇ Carolyn Shores Ness, Deerfield: acornhillfarm@hotmail.com

Public Health

- ◇ Jeanne Galloway: jgalloway@townofwestspringfield.org

Emergency Medical Services

- ◇ Stephen Gaughan: gaughans@amherstma.gov

Public Safety Communications

- ◇ Nina Barszcz, Westfield: nina.barszcz@cityofwestfield.org

Correctional Services

- ◇ Sheriff Thomas Bowler, Berkshire County
- ◇ Lt. Col Thomas Grady, Proxy, Berkshire County
thomas.grady@sdb.state.ma.us

Regional Transit Authority

- ◇ Jamin Carroll, PVTA: carroll@pvtransit.com

Hospitals

- ◇ Monica Wynne, Baystate Health: Monica.Wynne@baystatehealth.org

Emergency Management

- ◇ Robert Hassett, Springfield: rhassett@springfieldcityhall.com

Department Of Public Works

- ◇ Chris Bouchard, South Hadley: cbouchard@southhadleyma.gov

K-12 Education

- ◇ Marty O'Shea, Longmeadow: moshea@longmeadow.k12.ma.us

Higher Education

- ◇ Robert Laford, UMass Amherst: rflaford@ehs.umass.edu



Key Statewide Contacts

Mass. Emergency Management Agency (MEMA):
<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/>
Phone: 508-820-2000

Mass. Department of Public Health (DPH):
www.mass.gov/dph/
Phone: (617) 983-6800

Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP):
www.mass.gov/dep/
Emergency Notification 888-304-1133

Massachusetts State Police (MSP):
<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/msp/>
Regional Dispatch (Northampton) (413) 587-5700
Regional Dispatch (Shelburne Falls) (413) 625-8200
Regional Dispatch (Cheshire) (413) 743-4700
Regional Dispatch (Lee) (413) 243-0600

Mass 2-1-1:
<http://www.mass211help.org/>

Serving the Western Massachusetts
counties of Berkshire, Franklin,
Hampshire and Hampden

Fiduciary Agent:
Franklin Regional Council of Governments
12 Olive Street, Suite 2
Greenfield, Ma 01301-3351

Homeland Security Program Manager:
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