

# **Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities Marks Its One Year Anniversary with Major Announcements and Delivery of Its First Report to the President**

Release Date: 07/21/05 00:00:00

For Immediate Release  
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July 21, 2005

Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson today marked the first anniversary of President Bush's Executive Order on Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness by releasing a Report to the President and announcing the completion of several major initiatives that will better integrate people with disabilities into the national preparedness effort.

The Executive Order signed in July 2004 built on the President's New Freedom Initiative to fully integrate people with disabilities into all aspects of society. It created an Interagency Coordinating Council to ensure that progress is made to overcome the complex challenges people with disabilities face in times of emergency.

Today Deputy Secretary Jackson and the Department's Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Daniel Sutherland, convened a meeting of the Interagency Council to release the Council's report to the President. The report documents the significant progress federal agencies have made to better prepare the disability community and raise awareness of these issues among emergency management officials. The report also includes eight recommendations that represent coordination-based solutions that the Council believes will better integrate people with disabilities into the nation's disaster and emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts. The report can be located at [www.dhs.gov/disabilitypreparedness](http://www.dhs.gov/disabilitypreparedness).

In addition, the Council made several major announcements in this area, including:

- Launch of the "Disability and Emergency Preparedness Resource Center," a Web-based portal for information covering topics on emergency preparedness and response for individuals with disabilities. This Resource Center will provide people with disabilities easy access to critical emergency preparedness and planning resources. Additionally, it will aid emergency managers and planners seeking information pertaining to their planning and response efforts related to people with disabilities. This Resource Center was developed by a working group chaired by the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and can be located at [www.dhs.gov/disabilitypreparedness](http://www.dhs.gov/disabilitypreparedness).
- Release of the "Workplace Emergency Preparedness Guidelines," a tool for Federal emergency planners, managers and employees that captures effective practices and lessons learned by departments and agencies. These Guidelines were developed by a working group chaired by the Department of Labor and can be located at [www.dol.gov/odep/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/).
- Launch of a new Web site containing information to help ensure safe and secure transportation for persons with disabilities in the event of disaster or emergency. This web site was developed by a working group chaired by the Department of Transportation and can be located at [www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/emergencyprep.asp](http://www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/emergencyprep.asp).

At the Council meeting, Deputy Secretary Jackson stated, "Last July, President Bush recognized that integrating the special needs and talents of people with disabilities into the emergency preparedness effort must be a national priority. This Council has obviously made tremendous progress in translating this commitment into reality," he stated. "The Department of Homeland Security is committed to this work. We will continue to work with this Council to significantly increase the level of preparedness among the disability community, and increase the level of awareness of these issues among emergency management officials and first responders."

The Council's meeting can be viewed via webcast at [www.at508.com](http://www.at508.com).