



The Beaver Ready Report

MIT Emergency Management's Spring 2025 Newsletter



A note from our Director

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the first MIT Emergency Management (MIT EM) newsletter! We hope to publish this newsletter three times per year in January, June, and September to give you updates about MIT EM's accomplishments from the past semester, what we are looking forward to in the upcoming semester, hazards on our radar, and perhaps some fun disaster tips as well. It has gotten tough to get us all together for regular meetings, so we hope this newsletter will help you stay up to date on MIT EM's efforts and activities.

Last semester, we stayed busy managing protests and demonstrations, continuing to deploy new Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in every campus building, and expanding our team. We welcomed Todd Holmes, who manages the International Travel Safety and Security program, into MIT EM in October and hired Rick Nohl, our new Emergency Management Coordinator, in December. In addition, Meaghan Whalen, our Continuity Analyst, celebrated one year of service this month! Programs under the MIT EM umbrella now include Emergency Management, Background Checks, International Travel Safety & Security, and MIT EMS, and we are so grateful to have nine wonderful people (myself, Michelle Carestia, David Barber, Meaghan Whalen, Rick Nohl, Todd Holmes, Andrea Finnin, Starr Cobryn, and Alonzo Lopez, whom we share with the Atlas Center) to help coordinate and manage all of the initiatives those programs entail.

Welcome to the team!



↑ Todd

Rick ↘



This semester, we are looking forward to:

- Planning for and managing Commencement
- Continuing to manage protests and help DLCIs prepare for disruptions
- Monitoring and preparing for potential hazards like Avian Flu, winter weather, and flooding
- Supporting the MIT community with disruptions associated with federal administration changes
- Improving travel risk processes
- The Background Checks team attending the Professional Background Screener's Association (PBSA) conference in Washington, DC
- MIT EMS welcoming new officers to their leadership positions



Please let us know any ideas you have for improving preparedness and response to disasters and crises at MIT! Thank you for your continued support of our efforts.

Sincerely,
Suzanne

Suzanne M. Blake, CEM
Director, MIT Emergency Management

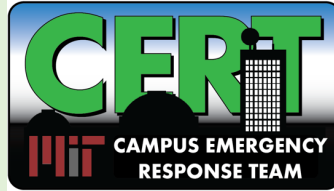


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Featured Program: CERT



Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) began in Los Angeles in the 1980s and have since grown into a national network of over 3,000 teams with more than 500,000 trained volunteers. In 1993, FEMA adopted CERT into its training programs, establishing it as a nationally supported, locally coordinated emergency preparedness and response initiative.

CERT volunteers complete 20 hours of training to learn essential emergency response skills, focusing on doing the "greatest good for the greatest number" while ensuring personal and community safety.

The Origins of CERT

In 1985, Los Angeles fire officials visited Japan to study earthquake preparedness. During their trip, an earthquake struck, and they observed Japan's highly organized community teams specializing in fire suppression, search and rescue, first aid, and evacuation. These local teams significantly reduced the disaster's impact.

Later that year, officials visited Mexico after a devastating earthquake killed 10,000 and injured 30,000. Mexico lacked formal community response training, but spontaneous volunteer efforts saved over 800 lives, though 100 volunteers died due to insufficient training.

These contrasting experiences showed that while communities naturally want to help in disasters, proper training can dramatically improve outcomes and safety. CERT volunteers act as "force multipliers," handling support tasks so professional responders can focus on critical operations.

MIT CERT: Over A Decade of Service

MIT CERT, revitalized in December 2012, includes students, staff, alumni, and soon faculty. Over the past decade, the team has supported MIT's Emergency Operations Center during events like Commencement, early COVID-19 testing, and tactical response training exercises.

MIT CERT's mission is to maximize aid while safeguarding personal and community safety.

Get Involved

To learn more about CERT or join MIT CERT, contact Andrea Finnin at andrea@mit.edu.



Planning for everything!

Updates on our Emergency Preparedness and Continuity Plans programs.

Our Emergency Preparedness and Continuity Plans programs received a refresh last year! We are working our way through all DLCIs across campus, ensuring that all DLCIs have both plans completed, and that staff have been offered a preparedness training session. We are currently focusing on all departments that fall within the EVPT. Our Continuity Analyst works alongside DLCIs to gather specific information and prepare the documents for review and approval by the department, lab, center or institute. This new streamlined process requires minimal effort from the DLCI and will ensure seamless operations during an emergency.

Contact Meaghan Whalen to schedule a meeting to discuss updating or developing your preparedness plans at mewhalen@mit.edu or 617-301-2727.



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On Our Radar

MIT Emergency Management monitors developing and ongoing emergencies and disruptions both locally and globally. Here's what we are focusing on this spring:

Bird Flu Outbreak in Massachusetts

In recent months, Massachusetts has witnessed cases of avian influenza, commonly known as bird flu, raising concerns among wildlife experts and public health officials. The Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) strain has primarily affected domestic poultry and wild bird populations, prompting increased monitoring and response efforts across the state.

Bird flu is an infectious disease caused by avian influenza viruses. Although these viruses typically affect birds, they can occasionally infect humans and other animals. The concern with HPAI strains lies in their rapid spread and high mortality rates among infected birds, leading to significant impacts on poultry production.

During that past month around the Commonwealth, confirmed cases of bird flu affecting wild birds have been confirmed in Plymouth, Halifax, Brockton, and on the campus of UMass Amherst.

As the risk to the general public remains low, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is taking proactive steps to educate the community about the virus and encourage reporting of sick and dead wild birds at mass.gov/forms/report-observations-of-dead-wild-birds and sick or dead poultry birds at mass.gov/forms/poultry-disease-reporting-form.

New England Earthquake

On January 27, 2025 at 10:22am, a very rare 3.8-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of southern Maine. According to the United States Geological Survey, the earthquake sent trembles across the New England region including in the City of Boston and was felt on MIT's campus. The earthquake's epicenter occurred approximately 10 miles east of Portsmouth, N.H. and there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage throughout the region. In the last 10 years there has only been one earthquake stronger than magnitude 4.5 that has struck New England, which occurred on October 16, 2012, and registered as a 4.7 magnitude earthquake. Did you feel the earthquake on January 27th? You can report your experience here:

<https://earthquake.usgs.gov/data/dyfi/index.php>

The earthquake's epicenter was about 10 miles east of Portsmouth, N.H., the survey said. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

Social media users reported feeling their homes shake in Boston, about 60 miles south of the epicenter, and Freeport, Me., about 70 miles north.

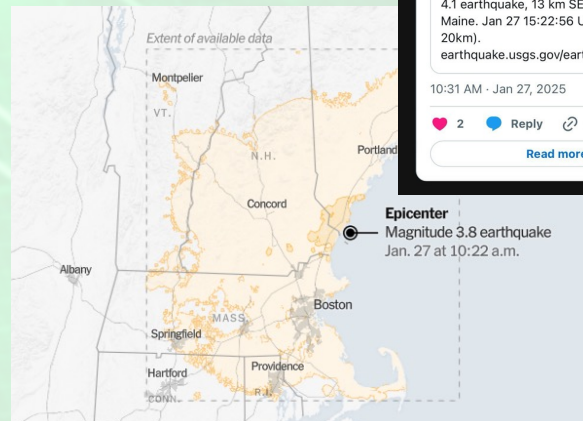
Our post about the earthquake was featured by the New York Times!

'Do I need to take down my bird feeder?' and other questions about bird flu in Mass.

By Emily Spatz Globe Correspondent, Updated January 27, 2025, 11:40 a.m.



Day-old duck hatchlings crawled inside an incubator at Crescent Duck Farm in Aquobogue, N.Y. Bird flu has killed dozens of wild birds in Massachusetts and caused the culling of 100,000 ducks on a farm in New York. JULIE JACOBSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS



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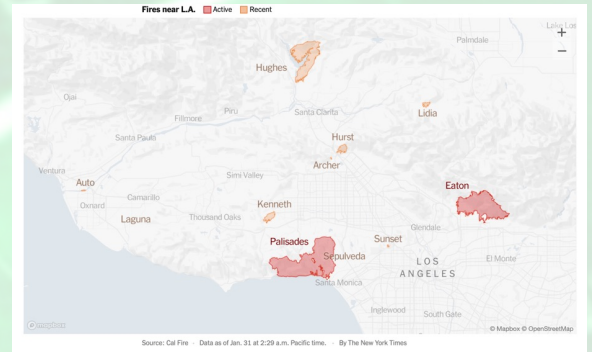
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Los Angeles Wildfires

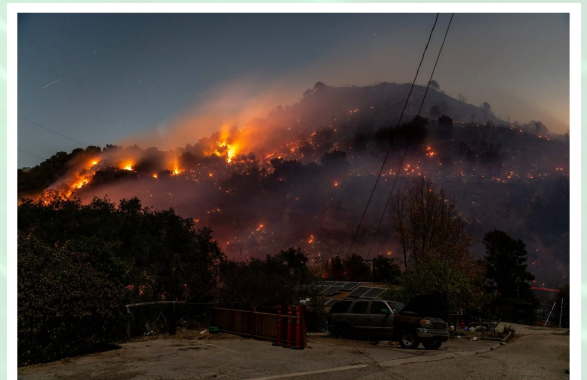
Right after the new year, a series of severe wildfires impacted the Los Angeles County, CA area, the largest of which are the Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire. Both fires broke out on January 7th, 2025 and prompted significant evacuations and firefighting efforts in the area. The fires, fueled by dry conditions and extremely strong and sometimes hurricane-force winds, spread rapidly, threatening homes and prompting emergency responses from local authorities and mutual aid from around the world. Fire crews worked tirelessly to contain the blazes, utilizing ground and aerial resources.

The Palisades Fire burned over 23,448 acres. An estimated 6,837 structures have been destroyed and over 1,000 more have been damaged. Authorities report there have been 11 civilian fatalities directly related to the Palisades fire. The Eaton Fire burned approximately 14,000 acres and destroyed an estimated 9,400 structures and caused 17 deaths. Through the duration of the incidents, a Unified Command Center was established, which allowed numerous agencies from around Los Angeles and beyond to coordinate the large response possible to mitigate impacts from the fires.

These fires, along with others nearby, caused substantial damage to major urban areas, destroying entire towns, and a large-scale response and recovery effort utilizing numerous agencies and organizations. MIT Emergency Management is monitoring this situation closely for lessons learned as emergency managers and other responders work through this unprecedented disaster.



Burned homes in the rain on Jan. 26 after the Eaton fire in Altadena, Calif. There were problems with the public alert system in the area of the fire, which was even deadlier than the one in the Palisades. Erin Schaff/The New York Times



A view of a hillside in Topanga, Calif., during the Palisades fire last month. It, along with the Eaton fire, destroyed entire neighborhoods in the Los Angeles area. Kyle Grillot for The New York Times

Source: *The New York Times*, 'Los Angeles Fire Contained,' published February 1, 2025.

Source: *The New York Times*, 'As L.A. Wildfires Rage, Palisades and Eaton Residents Ramp Up Preparations,' published February 2, 2025.

AstroDisaster Forecast

The Original Early Warning System

Astrological insights by Michelle Carestia
MIT EM's Official Astrologer

Aquarius - This is the year you've been waiting for! Pluto is in your sign, and it is a BIG deal. A lifetime of existential dread is finally paying off, and you'll be able to say "I TOLD YOU SO" to everyone who ever dismissed your doomsday predictions. Try to be gentle though- they're in for a struggle. It's your turn to lead the way through the chaos, just don't forget your humanity along the way.

Pisces - Don't let Saturn and Neptune in your sign fool you- you're not having a reality crisis. Reality itself is the crisis! The line between illusion and truth is blurred beyond recognition. Be careful who you trust, and be ready to go with the flow. Literally. Flooding is very likely and a kayak might just be a wise investment.

Aries - March 29. Total Solar Eclipse in your sign. This is your moment! You are ready for the action. As the world burns, your instinct is to run right into the chaos. But before you do, stop and think- are you actually saving the day, or just adding fuel to the fire?

Taurus - All. Of. The. Snacks. That is how you will survive these chaotic times. With Jupiter conjunct Uranus in your sign, supply chain disruptions and an unstable economy are inevitable. Start your stockpile NOW! For yourself, and you never know when you'll be able to trade a few Twinkies for a tank of gas.

Gemini - This is NOT The time to send that "just curious" message. Whatever you type will 100% end up in the wrong inbox. Meanwhile, cyber attacks and digital failures are likely, so pile up that emergency cash and don't wait till the last minute to get yourself organized.

Cancer - Good thing you like the water! Because you can expect a LOT of it. With Saturn and Neptune in Pisces, expect flooding, water shortages, burst pipes, and probably some tears (don't worry about being a stereotype, everyone's going to be crying this year.) Pro tip- if you haven't gotten flood insurance yet, do it now!

Leo - Bad news, not everything is about you... even though it feels like it. The world is spiraling into chaos, and you're not getting the attention you deserve. Pluto in Aquarius shifts focus to the collective, and you may find yourself missing the spotlight. It's time to turn inward for validation- or ChatGPT works too (no judgment!). Just have a plan for when the internet goes down! A backup audience is going to be essential.

Virgo - Oof. Virgo, my friend, you are in for a ride. The chaos around you is going to shake up your routine and dismantle every system you rely on. The worst part? No one is going to follow your well-organized disaster plans. Time to be flexible, and maybe look into some adaptive response strategies.

Libra - Pluto in Aquarius is giving you some tough love. If something isn't working- relationships, projects, the entire structure of our society- it might be time to scrap it and start fresh. Find something stable to hold onto, because things are about to be shaken up.

Scorpio - Your trust issues are finally paying off! The world is on fire, everything is suspicious, and you are thriving! Your instincts say that something sinister is lurking beneath the surface, and for once you're not just paranoid, you're 100% right. Now's the time to encourage your friends to take an emotional first aid class- you're going to need it.

Sagittarius - Watch out, Mercury retrograde and a Jupiter/Uranus transit are throwing some curveballs. You'll be tempted to be spontaneous, but now is not the time to go on that once-in-a-lifetime trip. If you need to travel, expect delays, itinerary errors, and pack light- carry on only! Trust me on this one.

Capricorn - You can't control what's coming, don't even try. Corporate structures are collapsing and your five-year plan is now irrelevant. Pluto in Aquarius is forcing you into some radical change, and you have to adapt in order to thrive. But if there's anyone who can turn chaos into an opportunity, it's you!



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