

Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee Charter

Committee Type:	Standing Committee
Authority:	SILC Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.17
Effective Date:	May 7, 2026
Last Revised:	April 2026

I. Purpose

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee ensures that people with disabilities in Hawaii are fully included in all phases of emergency management—mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Hawaii’s unique geography and exposure to natural hazards including hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, flooding, wildfires, and earthquakes make disability-inclusive emergency planning essential. The Committee works to eliminate barriers that prevent people with disabilities from receiving timely warnings, accessing shelters, obtaining necessary supplies and services, and recovering from disasters on an equal basis with others.

II. Scope of Authority

- Monitor federal, state, and county emergency management plans and policies for disability inclusion and accessibility, including compliance with the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA).
- Develop and recommend emergency preparedness policy positions for the Council’s consideration and approval.
- Build and maintain relationships with the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA), county civil defense agencies, the American Red Cross, FEMA Region IX, and other emergency management stakeholders.
- Advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities and their representatives in emergency planning bodies, exercises, and after-action reviews at the state and county levels.

- Coordinate with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to identify and address the emergency preparedness needs of their consumers, including personal emergency planning, accessible communication, and continuity of independent living services during disasters.
- Develop resources and training materials on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities, including accessible formats and culturally appropriate content.
- Monitor disaster events and coordinate the SILC's response, including information sharing, resource referral, and post-disaster needs assessment for people with disabilities.
- Coordinate with other SILC committees on cross-cutting emergency preparedness issues (e.g., accessible transportation during evacuations, legislative advocacy for inclusive emergency policies).

III. Composition

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee shall consist of:

- A Committee Chair appointed by the SILC Chair
- At least two (2) additional Council members
- The Executive Director (non-voting, staff support)

Representatives from emergency management agencies, disability organizations, public health agencies, and community-based organizations may be invited to participate in an advisory capacity. The Committee shall seek to include members with lived experience of disasters as people with disabilities.

IV. Meetings

- The Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee shall meet at least quarterly, and more frequently during active disaster events or emergency planning periods.
- A majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum.
- Meetings may be conducted in person, by telephone, or by video conference.
- During an active disaster or emergency, the Committee Chair may convene an emergency meeting with 24 hours' notice, or less if circumstances require immediate action.

V. Responsibilities

Preparedness and Planning

- Review and provide input on state and county emergency operations plans, hazard mitigation plans, and continuity of operations plans for disability inclusion.
- Develop and maintain a resource guide of disability-specific emergency resources, services, and contacts across all islands.
- Promote personal emergency preparedness among people with disabilities through workshops, toolkits, and partnerships with CILs.
- Advocate for accessible emergency alert systems, including visual, auditory, and plain-language notifications.

Response and Recovery

- Serve as a point of coordination for disability-related information and resource referral during and after disaster events.
- Monitor the accessibility of emergency shelters, distribution points, and recovery services for people with disabilities.
- Coordinate with CILs and partner organizations to assess and address the post-disaster needs of people with disabilities, including housing, durable medical equipment, personal assistance services, and mental health support.
- Participate in after-action reviews and advocate for improvements based on the experiences of people with disabilities.

Training and Community Engagement

- Organize training sessions for Council members and the disability community on emergency preparedness, evacuation planning, and disaster recovery resources.
- Coordinate with HI-EMA and county agencies to include people with disabilities in emergency drills and exercises.
- Ensure emergency preparedness information and materials are available in accessible formats, multiple languages, and culturally appropriate for Hawaii's diverse communities.

VI. Reporting

- The Committee Chair shall report on emergency preparedness activities, policy developments, and disaster response efforts at each regularly scheduled Council meeting.
- Minutes of all Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee meetings shall be recorded, approved, and made available to Council members.
- In the event of an active disaster, the Committee Chair shall provide situation reports to the Executive Committee as conditions warrant.

VII. SPIL Alignment

The work of this committee directly supports the following goals of the Hawaii State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) for FFY 2025–2028:

Goal #4: People with disabilities will have equal access to community resources during disasters whether natural (pandemic, hurricane, tsunami, volcanic eruption and lava flow, flooding, storm surge, fire), human-made (terrorism, civil unrest, or mass shooting) or technological (chemical releases, power outages, mass cyber-security breach).

Alignment: This committee is the primary body responsible for advancing SPIL Goal #4. It ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to community resources during all types of disasters through inclusive planning, accessible communication, and coordinated response efforts.

Goal #2: Enhance systems change that will support inclusive and accessible communities to ensure people with disabilities will obtain and maintain independence where they live and visit statewide.

Alignment: The Committee advocates for systems change in emergency management by promoting disability-inclusive policies, accessible infrastructure, and equitable recovery processes across all levels of government.

VIII. Review

This charter shall be reviewed annually by the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee and the full Council.

Committee Chair Signature / Date

SILC Chair Signature / Date