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**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
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**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
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Commissioner

**Field Operations Memo 98-51**  
**December 1, 1998**

**TO: Transitional Assistance Office Staff**  
**FROM: Joyce Sampson, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations**  
**RE: Emergency Assistance Benefits for Natural Disasters**

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- Background**
- State Letter 1167 issues changes to the Emergency Assistance Program for providing advance rent and security deposit payments to EA households that have had a natural disaster. This policy change is retroactive to July 1, 1998.
  - EA benefits for a natural disaster may be authorized to an otherwise-eligible EA household even if it has already received EA within the past 12 months. This policy change eliminates the need for "state-funded" EA benefits for a natural disaster. An EA-eligible household may receive EA disaster benefits within the same 12-month period that another EA benefit had been authorized. This policy change is retroactive to July 1, 1998.
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**Natural  
Disaster**

In the event of a natural disaster beyond the control of the applicant, such as fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, etc., the EA household may be provided with disaster benefits. If the EA household has a disaster and already received EA benefits within the past 12 months, the otherwise-eligible EA household is again eligible for EA and will be provided with EA natural disaster benefits.

If the disaster occurred on or after 7/1/98, the Red Cross may have provided for the advance rent and security deposit. A household is not eligible for these benefits if the need for them no longer exists. If the need still exists, follow the Transitional Assistance Worker responsibilities outlined later in this memo.

**Natural  
Disaster  
(continued)**

The EA natural disaster benefits of temporary emergency shelter, housing search services, food, household supplies, and/or clothing have not changed.

If the disaster is of such severity that the EA household must relocate but has no feasible alternative housing, the EA household may also be provided with:

- one month's advance rent payment,
- a certificate for one month's security deposit, or
- both the advance rent and the security deposit.

The amount of the advance rent or the security deposit may not exceed the amount of the applicable TAFDC Payment Standard for an assistance unit of the same size as the EA household or the amount of one month's rent, whichever is less. (See 106 CMR 204.420 or 204.425.)

- Use the Payment Standard found in 204.425 for an EA household in which all members are receiving the TAFDC reduced Payment Standard.
- Use the Payment Standard found in 204.420 for all other EA households.

If the EA household received EA benefits within the past 12 months, another EA-1 to authorize the EA benefits based on a **new situation** (disaster) must be entered onto SSPS. This additional EA-1 will not change the original date of the 12-month EA period.

If the EA household has not received EA within the past 12 months, complete the EA-1.

The EA-1 form has been revised for collecting specific information about the EA situation. The form will no longer be preprinted with "F" situation code. See Attachment A. The particular situation codes may be found in the *Systems User's Guide*, Volume 3, SSPS User's Guide, Appendix C. For natural disasters, the situation code is "D" - disaster.

**Advance  
Rent and  
Security  
Deposits**

Two forms have been developed for providing advance rent and/or security deposits:

- the *Rental Information Form*, EA-10 (Attachment B), which collects information about the new rental unit and the landlord; and
- the *Security Deposit Certificate*, (Attachment C), which is redeemed by the landlord for the amount of damages at the end of the tenancy. The amount claimed for damages may not exceed the amount of the security deposit certificate.

The *Notice to Individuals Requesting Emergency Assistance Services*, NFL-16 (Attachment D) has been revised to collect data for the disaster benefits of advance rent and security deposit.

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**Transitional  
Assistance  
Worker  
Responsibility**

To authorize advance rent or security deposit or both, the Transitional Assistance Worker must:

- complete and give the NFL-16 to the applicant;
- complete the information in the "Tenant Information" section of the *Rental Information Form*, EA-10;
- obtain an SSPS invoice for issuing the advance rent and/or security deposit and write the SSPS invoice number on the top of the EA-10;
- advise the applicant to take the EA-10 to the landlord or management agency for completing the *Rental Information* and the *Landlord Agreement* sections;
- advise the applicant to return the completed EA-10 form to the Transitional Assistance Office as soon as possible;
- complete the EA-1 for SSPS data entry, if needed.

**Transitional  
Assistance  
Worker  
Responsibility  
(continued)**

- upon receipt of the completed EA-10 from the landlord, complete the *Invoice for Special Services*. Enter the following codes for the advance rent and/or security deposit:

Procedure Codes:

Situation Code:

**720** for one month's advance rent;  
**770** for security deposit;  
**775** for a combination of one month's  
advance rent and security deposit.

**D**

In Block 23 of the *Invoice for Special Services*, only the advance rent amount is entered. **No amount is included in Block 23 for a security deposit as the amount of the security deposit is captured when Data Entry enters the data from the EA-10 onto SSPS.**

- if code 720 and rent is \$500, enter \$500 in Block 23;
- if code 770 and rent is \$500, enter \$0 in Block 23;
- if code 775 and rent is \$500, enter \$500 (advance rent amount only) in Block 23.

The Service Codes and Procedure Codes are also found in the *Systems User's Guide, Volume 3, SSPS User's Guide, Appendix C*;

- attach a copy of the completed EA-10 to the completed SSPS invoice;
- submit the SSPS invoice with the EA-10 to Data Entry for the control number and entry onto SSPS. After the control number is recorded, remove the yellow copy;
- file the yellow copy of the SSPS invoice and a copy of the completed EA-10 in the case record;
- give/mail the white and pink copies of the SSPS invoice and a copy of the completed EA-10 to the vendor;
- give a copy of the completed EA-10 to the applicant for his/her records; and
- complete the NFL-9 for approval or denial, sending the original to the applicant and filing a copy in the case record.

**Security  
Deposit  
Certificate**

The security deposit certificate is issued by the Accounting Unit in Central Office to the landlord upon receipt of the signed Invoice for Special Services from the landlord. The landlord has 30 days from the time of the termination of the tenancy to file a claim for an amount he or she is entitled to under law but the amount may not exceed the amount of the certificate. The instructions and the acceptable proofs are on the reverse side of the certificate.

The security deposit certificate is valid for 36 months from the date of issuance. If the household remains in the rental unit beyond 36 months, the landlord may request a renewal of the certificate by submitting the original certificate to the Accounting Unit.

This material is provided for your information only. The Transitional Assistance Worker is not responsible for issuing the security deposit certificate to the landlord nor for transmitting the certificate to the Accounting Unit for redemption.

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**Questions**

If you have any questions, have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617 348-8478.

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Massachusetts Department of  
Transitional Assistance

Authorization for  
Emergency Assistance Benefit

1. Authorization Number

\_\_\_\_\_

2a. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2b. Address \_\_\_\_\_

2c. City/Town, State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

3. Category	4. Case Social Security Number		5. Benefit Code
6. Situation	7. Household Size	8. Region	9. Office
10. CAN	11. Authorization Date	12. 30-Day-Authorization Period?	13. Ineligibility Date
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

14. Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
a. CAN \_\_\_\_\_ b. Signature \_\_\_\_\_ c. Date \_\_\_\_\_

15. Authorized by: \_\_\_\_\_  
a. CAN \_\_\_\_\_ b. Signature \_\_\_\_\_ c. Date \_\_\_\_\_

16. TAO Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
a. CAN \_\_\_\_\_ b. Signature \_\_\_\_\_ c. Date \_\_\_\_\_

For Department/Data Entry Use Only			
Date Keyed	Keyed by	Error Message	Error Code