

## Highlights



Substance Use and  
Nicotine

Pages 4-12



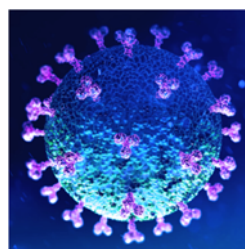
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# NORTH READING 2020-21 HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE

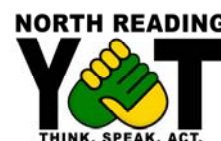


Produced in collaboration with the Community Impact Team, North Reading Youth Substance Use Prevention Coalition, North Reading Youth Action Team, Community Impact Team's Mental Wellness Action Team and North Reading Police Department.

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Thanks to Content Contributors Sgt. Derek Howe, Mary Prenney, and Lynne Clemens

Photo by Meg Robertson



# WELCOME

In 2012, the North Reading Community Impact Team (CIT) was formed to bring together town stakeholders to address quality-of-life challenges. Our five action teams are the Youth Substance Use Prevention Coalition, Social Services Action Team, K-12 Action Team, Mental Wellness Action Team and Public Safety.

Together, volunteers and town departments maximize resources and communication to work for residents of all ages. Funding for this project is provided by our federal Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Grant.

This **second edition** guide represents a range of tools and information useful to all ages. Topics include alcohol and drug use prevention, healthy behaviors and more. In addition, relevant local data is provided whenever possible. The Core Measurement Survey is a comprehensive tool used to collect information about challenges facing students in grades 6-12. Additional data is provided from national partners and the North Reading Police Department.

We ask that you share this information and take advantage of the local resources available to you. A digital copy is also posted on our website at [www.northreadingma.gov/cit](http://www.northreadingma.gov/cit). Together, we will increase the health and safety of our residents.

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## ALCOHOL USE & ITS IMPACT

Like other drug use, youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience problems with:

- School, such as increased absence and falling grades
- Social interaction, such as fighting or disinterest in activities
- Legal issues, including civil lawsuits and DUI infractions
- Physical impact, such as hangovers or illness
- Financial stress, due to poor decision-making and legal fees

In youth, alcohol can disrupt normal growth and sexual development, leading to risky behaviors. Cognitive impacts include impeded memory, changes in brain development that have lasting impact, and increased incidence of suicide and homicide.

### Spotlight on North Reading

North Reading students' perceptions of risks associated with alcohol use decreases as they get older. 77% of 6th grade students said alcohol use was risky while that number dropped to 61% among 8th graders. (2019 Core Measurement Survey)

**Communication with youth about alcohol and its impact is critical to avoiding these dangers. For help in talking with your children, visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources/why-you-should-talk-your-child>. Talk to children early; they're listening.**

## HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE BODY

Alcohol affects all body systems, causing negative near-term and long-term impacts.

**Excretory System** Excessive alcohol use can cause the pancreas to produce toxic substances and result in serious inflammation or pancreatitis. Excessive drinking can damage the liver, leading to alcohol hepatitis or severe scarring, known as cirrhosis.

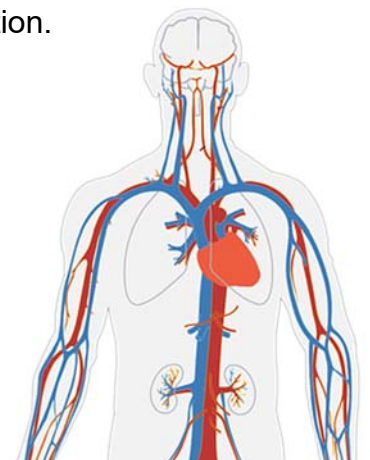
**Central Nervous System** One of the first signs of alcohol is difficulty with talking, walking, balance, remembering, and controlling impulses, significantly impacting safety while impaired.

**Digestive System** Alcohol use can damage salivary glands and lead to gum disease, tooth decay, and tooth loss. The esophagus and stomach can also be damaged, as can the ability to absorb nutrients, leading to malnutrition.

**Circulatory System** Alcohol can lead to poisoning of heart muscle cells, and health issues including irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, and heart failure. It also leads to increased complications for diabetics.

**Skeletal and Muscle Systems** Long-term use makes it harder to produce new bone, increasing the risk of osteoporosis and bone fractures.

**Immune System** Alcohol abuse weakens the immune system, making it harder to fight off viruses and illnesses like pneumonia, tuberculosis, and, possibly, COVID-19.





# MASSACHUSETTS SOCIAL HOST LIABILITY

When prom and graduation season approaches, many families consider hosting post-prom and graduation parties. Many well-meaning adults offer their homes as a safe alternative for students to stay out after hours. Unfortunately, oftentimes alcohol is present. Some families, however, do not consider liability when it comes to the social host law enacted by the Massachusetts legislature. Please review this information regarding Social Host Liability and consider your role as a parent. M.G.L.c. 138 s34 *Selling or Furnishing Alcoholic Beverages to a Person Under 21* was amended to include the following important information for homeowners:

**To Furnish**, is to knowingly supply, give, provide, or allow a person under 21 to possess an alcoholic beverage on a premises or property owned by the person in charge.

**A Social Host** is anyone who invites others to their home or property for a social gathering where alcohol is served and is done so with no motive for monetary gain.

**Penalties** Fine of up to \$2,000, imprisonment for up to a year, or both.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Does the law apply if I am not home when minors consume the alcohol?**

Yes, the law applies.

**Will my homeowner's insurance policy cover the costs of litigation and any judgment against me or my child?**

Unlikely. If you are charged criminally, your policy will not apply. If it does apply, limits of your policy will likely be too small to cover the legal fees and substantial awarded damages.

**What should I do if one of my child's underage friends bring alcohol into my home and starts drinking?** Call the child's parents/guardians and/or the police.

**If a minor consumes alcohol in my home and injures a third party outside of my home, am I liable?** You may still be held liable.

**Can I avoid Social Host Liability if I rent a space elsewhere for my child or another person?** No, the law still applies.

### Spotlight on North Reading

Think you're not at risk for a lawsuit? North Reading students report that the most popular places to drink alcohol are at home or a friend's house.

(2019, 2020 Core Measurement Survey)

### Spotlight on North Reading

91% of 6th graders,  
92% of 8th graders,  
74% of 10th graders, and  
48% of 12th graders  
feel that their parents disapprove of  
them using alcohol.

(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

**STOP**  
**UNDERAGE DRINKING**

# NORTH READING SOCIAL HOST ORDINANCE

**What is a social host ordinance?** It is a bylaw that makes it illegal to provide an environment where underage drinking takes place, regardless of who provides the alcohol.

## Penalties

1st Violation: Fine of \$100 + \$100 recoupment of police expenses related to the incident

2nd Violation: Fine of \$200 + \$100 recoupment of police expenses related to the incident

3rd Violation: Fine of \$300 (within 12-month period)

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Who is a social host?** Anyone (regardless of age, even if under the age of 21) who knowingly allows the possession or consumption of alcohol by underage drinkers on private property.

This includes:

- The person(s) who owns, rents, leases, or otherwise has control of the premises where the event, gathering, or party takes place
- The person(s) in charge of the premises or the person(s) who organized the event


**Does the bylaw have any exclusions?** Yes, the law does not prohibit you from furnishing alcohol to your own child. It also does not apply to religious ceremonies or religious traditions.

**If I host a party where alcohol is served, how can I avoid breaking the law?** Don't allow minors to drink alcohol. A host must take "reasonable steps" to prevent underage drinking.

**What should I do if I find underage drinkers at a party I am hosting?** Ask them to stop and then contact an adult to get them home, OR you may contact the North Reading Police Department.

**What are considered "reasonable steps"?**

- 1) Control Access: keep alcohol away from minors at your party
- 2) Control Quantity: know how much alcohol is available
- 3) Verify Age: you have a responsibility to know how old everyone is at your party
- 4) Supervise: supervise the activities of minors in attendance and ensure they are not consuming alcohol



**Taking keys from  
underage drinkers  
is not considered  
reasonable steps  
to prevent  
drinking.**

**If I go away and my child hosts an underage drinking party, am I responsible?** Parents are not criminally responsible for hosting the party if they are not home and their child hosts a drinking party without their knowledge or consent. A teen or other person in control of the house could be cited criminally as well as receive a Social Host Ordinance fine. If an injury occurs as a result of alcohol consumption, a family may sue another family for the damages.

**Will it go on their permanent record if my child is cited by this bylaw?** No. In addition, all violations involving those under the age of 18 are kept confidential.

# THE STATS ON UNDERAGE DRINKING

## North Reading Spotlight

3% of 6th graders, 2% of 8th graders, and 21% of 10th graders reported consuming alcohol in the past 30 days (of the survey date). 43% of 12th graders reported past 30 days use. The national average for this age group is 29%.  
(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

## North Reading Spotlight

The average age of first use of alcohol has remained fairly consistent over the past two years of data collection. In 2018, the average age was 15.57 years old. In 2019, the average age to begin drinking was 15.43 years old. Raising the age of the onset of substance use (of all kinds) is a goal of the North Reading Youth Substance Use Prevention Coalition. Delaying first use is a major strategy to prevent addiction and reduce negative health and social consequences of use.  
(2018, 2019 Core Measurement Survey)

According to a 2018 report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), about 7.4 million underage people aged 12 to 20 drank alcohol in the past month, which represents 1 in 5 individuals aged 12 to 20.

**Around age 9, children begin thinking alcohol may not be just for adults. (SAMHSA)** By the time they are seniors in high school, almost 70 percent of the students will have tried alcohol, half will have taken an illegal drug, and more than 20 percent will have used a prescription drug for a nonmedical purpose. (SAMHSA)

**Underage drinking and other drug use can have severe consequences for those under 21, including:**

- Injury or death from accidents
- Poor school performance
- Poor judgment and decision-making
- Alcohol and other drugs can also harm child brain development

In 2019, the Monitoring the Future Survey reported that 8% of 8th graders and 30% of 12th graders drank during the past 30 days, and 4% of 8th graders and 14% of 12th graders binge drank during the past two weeks (*Miech RA, Schulenberg JE, Johnston LD, Bachman JG, O'Malley PM, Patrick ME. National Adolescent Drug Trends in 2019: findings released. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan; 2019.* )

## Key Points

Early initiation of drinking is associated with development of an alcohol use disorder later in life.

Delaying the first use of alcohol helps reduce potential dependency later in life.

Adults who drink with their minor child do not mitigate risks of physical harm nor addiction.

**Need help with finding treatment options?**

**Contact Laura Miranda at (978)357-5038 or email [lmiranda@nrpd.org](mailto:lmiranda@nrpd.org).**

# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DRUG USE

Though people react differently to substances. Here are some general signs to look for:

- Isolation from family
- Frequent and sudden mood changes
- Dishonesty about whereabouts
- Dishonesty about random topics
- Early cigarette smoking
- Change in peer groups
- Draws or references drug symbols
- Defiance to parents/teachers
- Red, watery, or glassy eyes
- Eye drop use to hide red eyes
- Late or unexplained hours
- Sudden rejection of family values
- Unexplained paraphernalia
- Disappearance of money/possessions
- Finding pieces of cotton and/or cotton swabs without cotton ends
- Spoons missing or with residue
- Needles or needle parts
- Powder in clear baggies
- Loss of interest in previous hobbies
- Unexplained drop in grades
- Outbursts when questioned
- Changes in appearance/sanitation
- Sleeping at abnormal times

If you have a concern, speak up. It could save their life. North Reading Mental Health/Substance Abuse Clinician Laura Miranda is available to connect residents to resources. Contact her at (978) 357-5038 or at [lmiranda@nrpd.org](mailto:lmiranda@nrpd.org).

## North Reading Spotlight

2% of 8th graders, 4% of 10th graders, and 6% of 12th graders admit to using prescription drugs not prescribed to them in the past 30 days (of the survey date). (2019 Core Measurement Survey)

## North Reading Spotlight

North Reading students who said they started using prescription drugs not prescribed to them said that they began using (on average) at age 15. (2019 Core Measurement Survey)

## How to get naloxone (commonly sold by the brand name NARCAN®), to help prevent overdose deaths.

Nasal 4mg naloxone rescue kits are available at many pharmacies in MA with or without prescriptions. There are two ways to get a naloxone rescue kit from a pharmacy:

1. Obtain a prescription from your prescriber and have it filled at your preferred pharmacy. The pharmacy can dispense it and bill your insurance.
2. Go directly to a pharmacy and request a naloxone kit. A prescription from a prescriber is not needed. The Department of Public Health has issued a statewide standing order that allows retail pharmacies to dispense naloxone without a prescription. All MA retail pharmacies licensed by the Board of Pharmacy must maintain a continuous, sufficient supply of rescue kits.

MassHealth covers the cost of Naloxone for members, as do many other insurers. Call or visit your local pharmacy to find out more. When you go to the pharmacy to get a rescue kit under the standing order, all you need is your insurance card and preferred payment method. When at the pharmacy, tell staff you want naloxone/NARCAN. Ask about the cost or co-pay before they fill the order. Insurance coverage and co-pay costs vary. Keep in mind that generic formulations tend to be less expensive for consumers who are paying out of pocket. You should then be given a naloxone rescue kit, your insurance will be billed, and you will pay any co-pay costs. An auto-inject option may also be available. Consider ordering multiple sets, as you may have to give more than one dose of the naloxone to revive someone. Visit [www.mass.gov/service-details/how-to-get-naloxone](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/how-to-get-naloxone) for more information.



## DRUG TAKE-BACK PROGRAM



The Community Impact Team (CIT) wants to protect you and the community. The drug take-back program gives residents a safe place to dispose of old or unused prescription drugs. The drug and needle drop off boxes are located in the lobby of the North Reading Police Department.

**Where:** 152 Park Street, North Reading, MA

**When:** Kiosks are available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week

### The Risk of Keeping Unused Prescription Drugs

Unused opioids, benzodiazepines, and stimulants are major sources of misuse. A common source of abused prescription medications identified in the North Reading PRIDE survey were unused tablets prescribed to someone else at home or at a friend's home. Another concern is that people will use these drugs to self-medicate for an illness other than that for which the drug was prescribed.

Self-medication with antibiotics is an especially common practice for sore throats. However, most sore throats are caused by viral infections. Using antibiotics in this setting may cause risk without benefit, including the promotion of bacterial resistance. Also, people with bacterial infections who use leftover antibiotics can delay getting medical treatment and may not get a correct diagnosis.

Accidental ingestion of unused prescription drugs by toddlers is a common risk. Between 2001 and 2008, more than 450,000 cases of poisoning in children under six years of age were reported to U.S. poison control centers. All age groups are at risk for prescription drug use. By properly disposing of unused drugs, residents minimize the probability for misuse.

## MEDICATION SAFE DISPOSAL BAGS

The CIT acknowledges that some residents may be unable to make it to the NRPD lobby for disposal. In order to help those families and residents dispose of their unused and expired medications, the North Reading Youth Substance Prevention Coalition has purchased medication safe disposal bags. The easy-to-use instructions on the bag show residents how to safely deactivate their unused drugs and dispose of them in the regular trash. Bags can be dropped off by request by calling:

**Amy Luckiewicz at (978) 357-5051 or email [coalition@northreadingma.gov](mailto:coalition@northreadingma.gov).**



**Never dump medication down the drain or flush down the toilet, as medication leaches into groundwater.**



# INFORMATION ON TODAY'S MARIJUANA

With the increased potency of today's marijuana, the effects of use vary from mild to life-threatening. Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, is the chemical compound that gets you "high." When a person uses (smokes or vapes) marijuana, THC quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream.

## North Reading Spotlight

0% of 6th graders, 4% of 8th graders, 15% of 10th graders, and 43% of 12th graders reported vaping marijuana in 2019. They reported beginning, on average, at age 15.  
(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

The blood carries the chemical to organs throughout the body. Normally, a person feels the effects in 30 minutes to two hours, causing a variety of reactions.

**Short-Term Effects** Heightened senses (for example, seeing brighter colors), altered sense of time, mood changes, impaired body movement, difficulty with thinking and problem solving, and/or impaired memory.

**Long-Term Effects** Marijuana affects brain development. When beginning marijuana use as a teen, the drug may

reduce thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between these areas. These abilities do not always fully return. Research shows those who started smoking marijuana as adults didn't show notable IQ declines. However, those who used marijuana as teenagers did show a significant decline in verbal ability and in general knowledge.

**Other Concerns** Marijuana purchased on the street is not monitored nor regulated by any government authority and may be contaminated by other substances. In addition, potency is far higher than in previous decades and research shows that increased potency leads to increased risk.

**Other Effects** Problems with child development during and after pregnancy, increased heart rate, breathing problems, temporary hallucinations, temporary paranoia, and worsening symptoms and earlier onset of symptoms in patients predisposed to schizophrenia.







**Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome** is a condition that leads to repeated and severe bouts of vomiting. It is rare and only occurs in daily long-term users of marijuana. Currently, the origin of this syndrome is not known. However, there is increasing evidence that the illness occurs because of the effects that marijuana has on the gastrointestinal tract and the central nervous system. The most effective treatment is abstinence from cannabis use.

**What to do if you think someone else has Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome?** Call 911. These individuals need medical treatment in order to overcome the illness.

## Did You Know?

Although marijuana was decriminalized in MA, marijuana possession for anyone under 21, selling marijuana, carrying over an ounce on your person, and using marijuana while driving is still illegal.

## Symptoms of Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome

Nausea 	Tendency to use extremely hot baths/showers for relief 	Stomach pain 
Difficulty eating or keeping food down 	Weight loss 	Severe vomiting and/or diarrhea, sometimes for days or weeks 

Source: Annals of Internal Medicine, March 2019; Base & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology, January 2018; BMJ Journals Gut, October 2004

BUSINESS INSIDER

## BUYER BEWARE: CBD



CBD (cannabidiol) is a non-psychoactive chemical found in marijuana that is being investigated for beneficial therapies. Currently, in Massachusetts hemp-derived CBD food products are banned.

### Areas of Concern

- CBD products are largely unregulated, and buyers should be aware that some products have been tested with far higher AND far below the advertised amount of CBD.
- In MA, CBD products can contain up to 0.3% THC, the psychotropic chemical of marijuana.
- There are no dosing recommendations for CBD therapies.
- They often appear as candy or treats. Although illegal in MA, they are easily ordered online, and their resemblance to candy is very attractive to young people.

## BUYER BEWARE: KRATOM

Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, with leaves that contain the key compounds mitragynine and 7-a-hydroxymitragynine that can have a psychotropic effect. Kratom products come in hundreds of forms, including leaves to chew, pill form, powder, candy, body creams, and more. Although Kratom sellers claim it has a variety of positive effects, it can be abused, and users have been treated for Kratom overdose and addiction. In November 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommended a ban on the chemicals in Kratom, and two chemicals in Kratom can be classified as having high potential for abuse. In April 2018, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention released a report announcing Kratom was the cause of death in 91 overdoses in the U.S. from July 2016 to December 2017. Seven of the 91 overdoses found Kratom to be the only substance to test positive in a toxicology report. A study published in February 2019 found that calls related to Kratom exposures to poison control centers nationwide increased more than 50 times from 13 in 2011 to 682 in 2017.



### Other Concerns

- Other contaminants such as THC and synthetic marijuana have been found in Kratom.
- Major *salmonella* risk, especially for home production.
- Physical dependence can occur with prolonged use.
- Additional concerns related to fake claims on social media.
- The vape form "Liquid Gold" has high association to overdose, and also contains high levels of THC.



## VAPING AND E-CIGARETTES

### North Reading Spotlight

0.7% of 6th graders, 5% of 8th graders, and 21% of 10th graders, and 25% of 12th graders reported using a vape device in the past 30 days (of the survey date).  
(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

Vaping is a growing trend among many age demographics. What started out as a device to help people quit smoking has become an addictive habit. **Vaping** is a form of breathing in artificial liquid chemicals by way of an electronic device. Devices are known as vapor cigarettes, e-cigarettes, personal vaporizers (PVs), e-pipes, e-cigars, or tank devices. Liquid “e-juice, e-liquid, or juice” is heated and inhaled using the device. **Vaping is NOT inhaling water vapor.**

### What are the dangers associated with vaping?

First, flavored products, such as watermelon, bubblegum, and other e-juices, are extremely attractive to young children. If these products

contain nicotine, an acute toxin, they can be absorbed through the skin and/or ingested, causing nicotine poisoning. Nicotine exposure, either by swallowing or contact with the skin, can result in mild to severe symptoms and even death. Also, as the device heats up to transform the liquid into vapor, the device can reach dangerously high temperatures. As an unregulated product, devices have been known to catch fire, burn in pockets, and cause burns.

**What can parents do?** Talking to your child about the risks of vaping, nicotine and tobacco is the first step. Families can also request a private or group education session on substances through the North Reading Youth Substance Prevention Coalition. Contact [Amy Luckiewicz at coalition@northreadingma.gov](mailto:Amy.Luckiewicz@northreadingma.gov).

## JUULING & NICOTINE PRODUCT RISKS



A Juul is the brand name of a vape device, and “juuling” is the term used for vaping with this device. The Juul device is discreet, looks similar to a computer flash drive, and it is charged using a USB port. Like other vaping products, Juuls are sold in stores and online. Online, most products can be purchased by underage youth using pre-paid gift cards. Like other vape products, Juuling is unsafe. Vape products create an aerosol (**not water vapor**) consisting of a mix of chemicals and sometimes heavy metals which may include propylene glycol (found in antifreeze), formaldehyde, cadmium, chromium, lead and nickel. Like many other vape juices, Juuls contain nicotine, an addictive substance. Juul uses nicotine salt, which provide quicker nicotine fixes as it is absorbed into the blood more rapidly.

### North Reading Spotlight

In North Reading and Massachusetts, flavored tobacco products are banned as well as products with nicotine levels over 35 mg/ml. The age to buy any tobacco or nicotine product is 21 years of age or older.



**Nicotine is the most addictive chemical legally sold and may require medical assistance to quit.**

Nicotine treatment is available now for

adults and adolescents. Contact your primary care physician or North Reading's Mental Health/Substance Abuse Clinician Laura Miranda at (978) 357-5038.

## MENTAL HEALTH WARNING SIGNS

These warning signs may mean that it may be time to reach out to access mental health help.

#1 Changes in Behavior	#2 Increased Substance Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look for a shift in behavior, from how you know yourself or the individual to be.</li><li>• Someone who is typically active may display signs of increased lethargy, oversleeping, overeating, and/or lack of concern for their well-being.</li><li>• Conversely, someone who typically has an average-to-low activity level may start to display a sharp increase in energy, not need sleep, and overcommit to activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An individual may find themselves increasing their consumption of substances, often referred to as “self-medicating.”</li><li>• This includes all substances; pay attention to the individual’s use, and make note of an increase over a short period of time.</li><li>• Commonly abused substances include, but are not limited to: alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, over-the-counter medications, opiates, and benzodiazepines.</li></ul>
#3 Increase in Risky Behavior	#4 Withdrawing from Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You may see an increase in impulsivity and in risky behavior management.</li><li>• “Risky behavior” is behavior that could inflict some sort of physical, psychological, or emotional harm to oneself or to others.</li><li>• Commonly seen risky behaviors include, but are not limited to: over-spending money, impulsive shopping, reckless driving, lack of regard for the safety of oneself or those around them, and/or increased sexualized behavior.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It’s important to note if someone stops engaging in activities that you know bring the individual joy or satisfaction.</li><li>• This can also take many forms. It may look like an avoidance of social engagement, withdrawing from commitments, quitting teams or clubs, or lack of response to outreach. Understand that during COVID restrictions this may be easier to hide.</li><li>• A person may ignore hygiene.</li></ul>

## SELF-CARE

Taking time for yourself is a positive habit to protect your mental health; it isn’t selfish.

**Slow Down** Take time to practice self-reflection and mindfulness through yoga, meditation, journaling, or any other preferred method. Deep breathing can help bringing a racing heart down.

**Speed Up** Some benefit from a ramp-up of activities including exercise, starting a new hobby, or increasing outdoor explorations. Staying active can provide a healthy distraction.

**Connect** Find new ways to connect with others or put effort into meaningful connections.

**Need help with finding treatment options?**

**Contact Laura Miranda at (978) 357-5038 or email [lmiranda@nrpd.org](mailto:lmiranda@nrpd.org).**



## DO I NEED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT?

Are you engaging in behaviors that are out of the norm for you? (increased substance use, more risky behaviors, changes in sleep?)

Are you removing yourself from activities or people that you enjoy?

Do you feel that you are lacking mental health support, should you need access to it?

**Need help with finding treatment options?**  
**Contact Laura Miranda at (978) 357-5038 or email [lmiranda@nrpd.org](mailto:lmiranda@nrpd.org).**

**If you answered YES to ANY of these questions...**

Reach out! Laura Miranda can connect you to a mental health or substance use treatment provider.

**If you answered NO to ALL of these questions...**

This is great news! Make use of the supports that you have in place, and be sure to attend scheduled appointments. If you need more help, reach out to Laura Miranda.

## GAMBLING ADDICTION

If you believe you are struggling with an addiction to gambling, it is recommended that you speak to your primary care physician about an evaluation or seek support from a mental health treatment provider. Treatment for compulsive gambling may include these approaches:

**Therapy** Behavior therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy may be beneficial. Behavior therapy uses systematic exposure to the behavior you want to unlearn and teaches you skills to reduce your urge to gamble. Cognitive behavioral therapy focuses on identifying unhealthy, irrational, and negative beliefs and replacing them with healthy, positive ones. Family therapy also may be helpful.

**Medications** Antidepressants and mood stabilizers may help problems that often go along with compulsive gambling — such as depression, OCD, or ADHD. Some antidepressants may be effective in reducing gambling behavior. Medications called narcotic antagonists, useful in treating substance abuse, may help treat compulsive gambling.

**Self-Help Groups** Some people find that talking with others who have a gambling problem may be a helpful part of treatment. Ask your health care professional for advice on self-help groups, such as Gamblers Anonymous and other resources.

Live Chat: 24-Hour Helpline	(800) 426-1234
Hotline for all New England States	(888) 830-2217
Gam-Anon for Family and Friends Support	(718) 352-1671
Gambler's Anonymous International Hotline	(855) 222-5542

**Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling has several options for recovery support under the "Find Help" tab on [masscompulsivegambling.org](https://masscompulsivegambling.org)**

## DIGITAL ADDICTION

Internet, gaming, and digital addiction is similar to other types of addictions because it interrupts your real-life relationships with friends and family. Time away from real-life relationships can cause social challenges because you haven't practiced social skills with real people.

### Digital addiction can cause:

- Insomnia (not sleeping well)
- Not showering or keeping up with personal hygiene
- Dry eyes from looking at a screen for a long time
- Physical challenges like not eating regularly, headaches, and backaches
- Carpal tunnel syndrome (numbness or tingling in your hand and arm)



Use a free app to track your Internet usage. MassGeneral suggests:

- **Break Free Cell Phone Addiction®** This app lets you track and take control of how much you use the Internet or mobile apps. It also has timers that let you set how much time you spend online and tools to help you break free from Internet addiction.
- **Quality Time – My Digital Diet®**. This app lets you track your Internet and app usage. It also lets you set your own time limits and breaks.
- **Screen Time Companion®**. This app works with the Screen Time Parental Control® app. Your family decides how long to spend on different apps and the internet.

# INTERNET SAFETY

## Tricky People: Your Online Audience

Children and young adults may find it hard to judge strangers they meet in person, and it's even harder to distinguish friends from foes online. Parents with younger children should attempt to stay aware of what apps their kids use and the apps' functions. Most apps that attract younger age groups have a social media aspect to them. This puts youth at risk because of the "strangers" they can meet online.

## North Reading Spotlight

Did you know that School Resource Officer Det. Lucci visits classrooms starting in elementary school to discuss age-appropriate Internet concepts and risks?

## (Over) Sharing Information: Revealing Too Much

Encourage students to be aware of how much they're revealing about themselves online. Providing intimate details of their lives may increase their risk of a cyberbullying, attracting a predator, or theft.

## Hidden Info in Photos: Know What You Post

Everyone should know the potential risks of what they're posting online, including pictures. It's important to resist sending photographs. Photos contain EXIF data, or metadata, which shares information about your camera and, potentially, the location where the photo was taken.

## Staying Power: Consider the Future

When information is posted on the internet, it is there forever and that can have consequences in the future. Social media postings can later be reviewed by colleges, potential employers, insurance boards, and more. Take this into consideration before you post information online.

## Cyberbullying: Ask "Will Others Get Hurt?"

When we use the internet, we all have a responsibility to ensure we are respecting each other. The tone of your post or comment does not always translate well over text. People may interpret your thought differently than intended. Ensure that you have considered possible reactions before posting. Cyberbullying has consequences.

Massachusetts has a variety of laws designed to punish those engaged in acts of bullying, whether communicated verbally, physically, through gestures, in writing, or over the internet. These crimes range from assault and stalking to criminal harassment and identity theft. Offenders can be classmates, co-workers, estranged family members, peers, strangers, or trolls.



**Do you know that most online apps and accounts require the user to be at least 13 years old?**

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media use is everywhere. Very often, you share exciting news with your kids or friends, and they respond, “Yeah, I know. I saw it on Facebook/Instagram.” Statistics show that response is not surprising. According to the nonpartisan Pew Research Center:

- 95% of teens have access to a smart phone, with 45% online almost constantly
- 31% of teens see social media as a positive
- 45% of teens see social media as a neutral
- 24% of teens see social media as a negative, citing bullying, harm to personal relationships, setting unrealistic expectations, and distraction from school work or other pursuits
- 72% of the overall public reports using social media, with the majority using it daily

### Risks and Benefits

As the data above show, teens have a love/hate relationship with social media. While it helps them communicate with peers, learn, and engage in causes they find important, those who use social media are at risk of cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content, or worse, to predators.

## SETTING LIMITS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children and teens engage in screen time no more than two hours daily. Excessive exposure can lead to attention issues, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, obesity, and illicit or risky behaviors.

**The Good News: You are in charge! Here are some tips to manage your digital landscape:**

- Make a family media use plan that works for your family at [HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](https://www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan). You can also use their Media Time Calculator to visualize how much time your child spends on media.
- Be a good role model, modeling kindness online and limiting your own screen use, as children are great mimics.
- Set limits and encourage physical and offline unstructured play to stimulate creativity.
- Create tech-free zones in your home: Turn off TVs, keep children’s bedrooms screen free, and recharge devices outside bedrooms overnight. A charging station is a great way to enforce tech-free zones.
- Check out [www.verywellfamily.com](https://www.verywellfamily.com) for a sample Cell Phone Contract for Parents and Tweens.





## COMMUNITY PHOTOS



Youth and community members were invited to submit photos of North Reading positive assets. Thank you to all who shared their photos! Photos submitted by community members (clockwise): *Digital Piano Lessons* by Bree Dobbyn, *North Reading History* by Lieutenant Tom Romeo, *YAT 2020* by the 2020 Youth Action Team, and *Ryers* by Meg Robertson.



## COMMUNITY PHOTOS



Photos (clockwise):  
*Bradford Pond* by Macy Kurchian,  
*Freeform Youth Event* by Jennifer Ford,  
*Concord Street Pond* by Detective Mike Marra,  
*Morning View from NRPD* by Detective Mike Marra

## CYBERBULLYING CHECKLIST

Reviewing these points with your child will help identify, prevent, and intervene in cyberbullying:

- ☐ Have they received mean, hateful, threatening text messages, instant messages, emails, social media messages, or any other form of social media communication?
- ☐ Has someone forwarded their texts, posts, or emails to another person without their permission in order to stir trouble?
- ☐ Has someone used their pictures in a hateful, derogatory, or simply mean manner and posted them online for others to see?
- ☐ Has someone stolen their personal account passwords and started sending messages or posting and sharing things while posing as your child?
- ☐ Is someone excluding them from an online group, for school work or activities, and spreading mean rumors about the child?
- ☐ Has someone started an offensive blog or social media page or maybe a malicious hashtag to spread rumors or say bad things about your child?

**Next time you go to post a comment online think to yourself, "Is this going to hurt someone's feelings?"** How would I feel if this message came to me? Does this feel threatening in any way?" Taking the time to think about what you are posting can have a huge impact for the other person.

### North Reading Spotlight

4% of High Schoolers and 5% of Middle Schoolers admitted to using social media to threaten or embarrass someone by posting mean messages or photos. (2019 Core Measurement Survey)

### North Reading Spotlight

13% of High Schoolers and 26% of Middle Schoolers said that they've been threatened or embarrassed by someone using social media or a cell phone to post mean messages or photos. (2019 Core Measurement Survey)



**Parents have a role:** Monitor your child's social media for signs they may be bullying or being bullied.

**If this sounds too familiar, then you should...**

- Report the incident to online service providers, the North Reading Police Department, and/or your school.
- Avoid responding to or forwarding the messages.
- Keep the evidence. Record, save, and print the dates, times, messages, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred.



## PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure is the feeling that someone is pushing you to make a choice, good or bad. **It can happen at any age.** People want to be accepted and liked by other people their own age. There are times when this is appropriate and potentially light-hearted fun, but it is very important to know your limits and make the final decision for yourself, not because your friends push you to do something you don't want to. Be mindful that peer pressure can result in bullying, participating in an activity that you don't want to do, reaching out to someone you don't want to talk with, visiting a place you don't want to go to, or on paths that cause you discomfort. If you aren't sure if you're being pressured, ask yourself "Does this activity or suggestion align with my values? Could anyone, including myself, get hurt or upset?"

### North Reading Spotlight

4% of High Schoolers and 6% of Middle Schoolers admitted to bullying someone at least once.  
(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

### North Reading Spotlight

19% of High Schoolers and 42% of Middle Schoolers say they have been bullied by someone at least once.  
(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

## STRATEGIES TO MANAGE PEER PRESSURE

- Give yourself permission to avoid people or situations that don't feel right and to leave a situation that becomes uncomfortable.
- Check in with yourself. Ask "does this seem right to me?"
- Spend time with people who respect your decisions and won't put unfair pressure on you to conform. Remember that you can't (and don't have to) please everyone or be liked by everyone.
- It's okay to use an excuse if the truth is too challenging.
- Bring a friend who will support you if you are going to be in a pressure-filled situation and share your intentions with them (e.g., "I don't want to drink, so if you see me about to, please remind me that I wanted to stay sober").

### Quick Tips on Resisting Peer Pressure at Any Age

- Say "no" and let them know you mean it. Practice this.
- Stand up straight.
- Make eye contact.
- Say how you feel.
- Don't make excuses.
- Stand up for others when you see them being pressured.
- Ask for advice or support from a parent or other trusted family member, a clergy person, a mentor, or a counselor if you need it.
- Use the "Code Word Strategy." Plan a "code word" with your family. Using the designated word means that the other person needs help getting out of a tough situation. No questions asked for 24 hours. This person may not be a parent, but the child's parent should be aware of the plan.

# SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between ages 10 and 24. Everyone deserves help.

A suicidal person may not ask for help, but that doesn't mean that help isn't wanted. Suicide prevention starts with recognizing the warning signs and taking them seriously. Talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life.

## Warning Signs: What to Look for

**No hope for the future:** Feelings of helplessness, being trapped or hopelessness

**Self-loathing, self-hatred:** Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, shame, or self-hatred; feeling like a burden ("Everyone would be better off without me")

**Seeking out lethal means:** Guns, pills, knives, or other objects that could be used in an attempt

**Preoccupation with death:** Unusual focus on death, dying, or violence

**Getting affairs in order:** Making out a will. Giving away prized possessions; making arrangements for family members

**Saying goodbye** to people as if they won't be seen again

**Withdrawing from others** by pulling away from people, social isolation, or desire to be left alone

**Self-destructive behavior** by taking unnecessary risks as if they have a "death wish"

**Sudden sense of calm** and happiness after being depressed

## North Reading Spotlight

34% of High School students admit to having thought about suicide at last once. Of those, 6% said they thought about it "a lot" or "often".

(2019 Core Measurement Survey)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1 (800) 273-8255**  
**Anyone can use the Prevention Lifeline Number**  
**to get advice or help!**



For non-emergency help, please contact the **North Reading Mental Health/ Substance Abuse Clinician Laura Miranda** at (978) 357-5038 or at **[lmiranda@nrpd.org](mailto:lmiranda@nrpd.org)**. Laura can connect you to help regardless of insurance. Confidentiality is a priority.

**In an emergency,**  
**always call 911**

## SELF-HARM

Self-injury, also known as self-harm, self-mutilation, or self-abuse, occurs when someone intentionally and repeatedly harms themselves in a way that is impulsive and not intended to be lethal. People who self-injure often say that they feel empty inside, over or under-stimulated, unable to express their feelings, lonely, not understood by others, and fearful of intimate relationships and responsibilities. Self-injury is their way to cope with or relieve painful or hard-to-express feelings, and is generally not a suicide attempt. This relief is temporary and can cause a self-destructive cycle without proper treatment. Self-injury can also be a way to have control over their body when they can't control anything else in their life.

By engaging in self-injury, a person intends to obtain relief from a negative feeling or mental state, resolve an interpersonal difficulty, deal with negative, anxious, or provoking thoughts, and/or induce a positive feeling.

**Warning signs that someone might be injuring themselves may include:** Unexplained frequent injuries including cuts and burns, low self-esteem, and/or always wearing clothing that covers a body part, especially when seasonally inappropriate.

If a person presents any of these warning signs, make sure they receive help. Scars and injuries may be hidden. Effective treatment for self-injury is most often a combination of approaches under a doctor's care. Medication is often useful in the management of depression, anxiety, racing thoughts, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors that may accompany self-injury. Avoid self-medicating with alcohol, binge eating, etc. Cognitive behavioral therapy helps individuals understand and manage their destructive thoughts and behaviors. Contracts, journals, and behavior logs are useful tools for regaining self-control. Interpersonal therapy assists individuals in gaining insight and skills for the development and maintenance of relationships. In all cases, it is best to seek the help from a professional. For non-emergency help, please contact the **North Reading Mental Health/Substance Abuse Clinician Laura Miranda at (978) 357-5038 or at [lmiranda@nrpd.org](mailto:lmiranda@nrpd.org)**.

## AUTOMATED NEGATIVE THOUGHTS (ANTS)



Thoughts have a certain tone based on the types of feelings we have. When the brain's emotional system becomes overactive toward the negative, the mind can collect negative thoughts sometimes leading to Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs). ANTs are cynical, gloomy, and complaining thoughts that just seem to keep coming all by themselves.

**Examples of common ANTs** include, "Just because we had a good year in business doesn't mean anything," "I'm sure you don't like me," "This situation isn't going to work out. I know something bad will happen," and "I'll try, but I know it won't work."

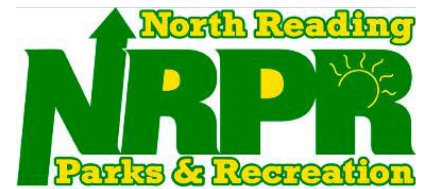
**Tips to Cope with ANTs:** Identify and write down each negative thought. Become more aware of how you are thinking. When you begin to feel yourself thinking negatively, try to think about the positives in your life and smile, even if it isn't real. Do this every time. Repetition is the key to success. Be persistent, and don't give up! Changing your mindset and thought patterns takes time.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

North Reading Parks and Recreation has much to offer throughout the year for the entire family to stay fit and socially active!

- Toddler programming throughout the school year
- After-school programs
- Half-day events
- Adult programming
- Annual family special events
- Monthly toddler special events
- Summer playground day program for school-age children
- Summer playground day program for preschool age children
- Summer sports camps
- Summer enrichment programs
- First Aid and CPR courses
- Babysitting courses
- Summer Concert Barbeque Series with children's entertainers



### Did You Know?

Participating in recreational activities may cause high levels of laughter and fun. It may also result in unforgettable experiences and friendships. Recreation may be habit-forming.

(North Reading Parks and Recreation)

Visit our beautiful local parks and enjoy the amenities, including basketball courts, tennis courts, skate park, roller rink, sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, walking paths, fishing, canoeing, and kayaking.

- Ipswich River Park, 15 Central St.
- Chestnut St. Complex, 168 Chestnut St.
- Kids' Spot, 168 Chestnut St.
- Benevento Memorial Park, 251 Central St.
- Rita J. Mullin Field, 96 Lowell Rd.
- Murphy Field, 235 North St.
- Clarke Park, 61 Burroughs Rd.
- Arthur J. Kenney Turf and Track Facility, 189 Park St.
- North Parish Park, 248 Park St.



**To find local activities, contact the North Reading Parks and Recreation Department at [www.northreadingma.gov/parks-recreation](http://www.northreadingma.gov/parks-recreation) or call (978) 664-6016.**

# FLU, COVID-19, AND DISEASE PREVENTION

The North Reading Board of Health takes your health seriously. Please review the information below and prepare your family for the flu, COVID-19, and other health-related concerns.

**Infectious diseases** continue to be present in our community. Some of these diseases are preventable. It is the first responsibility of the Health Department to protect individuals and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks. Vaccines are safe, effective, and prevent serious illnesses that may lead to additional medical visits and/or hospitalizations. The North Reading Board of Health stresses the importance of vaccines for adults, pregnant women, children, and healthcare professionals. Adults have the power to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases by choosing to update vaccinations. Your child, depending on age, needs protection against specific vaccine-preventable serious diseases. Vaccines are tested for safety and carefully monitored. Most side effects are mild and go away quickly. Please review the website [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/) to evaluate your family's recommended vaccination schedule.

**Influenza** is a seasonal infectious disease that affects the respiratory system. Influenza presents as respiratory distress with a fever, cough, sneezing, and body aches. The illness can be mild or severe and result in hospitalizations or possibly death. People with some health conditions are at high risk for serious complications. Influenza spreads person-to-person by droplets from talking, coughing, or sneezing. Everyone six months and older should get a flu vaccine each year.

**COVID-19** is a serious and new virus causing an infectious illness. There is not a seasonal presentation; it has continued to infect people despite weather. COVID-19 infections present as a respiratory complaint with cough, sneezing, and shortness of breath, or neurological complaints with loss of taste or smell, fatigue, and headache, or abdominal complaints of abdominal pain, nausea, or diarrhea. The illness may not present any symptoms, but can still be transmitted to another by droplets carrying the virus by talking, coughing, or sneezing. The disease may cause mild or severe illness and require hospitalization or may result in death. Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent this illness.

## Preventing Virus Spread

Illness is the result of transmission from one infected person to another by droplets, which can spread by cough, sneeze, or talking. The longer someone is exposed to the virus and the closer one is to the infected person, the higher the chance of infection.

The best way to prevent the spread of the disease is:

1. Practice social distancing. Keep a six-foot distance between you and others.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or other facial covering.
3. Do not touch your face or eyes when in public.
4. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or use sanitizer with at least 65% alcohol.

**Please contact the Board of Health office with questions regarding vaccinations, COVID19 or other infectious diseases at (978) 357-5242.**

## MOSQUITOES & TICKS

**Mosquitoes** are more than pests; they can spread diseases. Thankfully, by using repellent and netting you can protect yourself and your family from mosquito and tick bites and the illnesses they can cause. In Massachusetts, the diseases linked to mosquitoes are West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus.

**Ticks** are insects that feed on the blood of mammals, birds, and reptiles. Deer ticks and dog ticks are found in Massachusetts and may spread different disease-causing germs, such as Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis. Ticks do not fly or jump. They attach to animals or people that come into direct contact with them.

**What should I do if I find a tick on me?** The longer a tick remains attached, the greater the chance it will be able to spread a germ. Any tick should be removed as soon as possible using fine-point tweezers. The tick should not be squeezed or twisted, but grasped close to the skin and pulled straight out with steady pressure. Contact a health care provider for follow-up.

## RABIES

Rabies is a very serious virus that affects the brain and spinal cord of mammals and can spread from an infected animal to a person through a bite. If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

1. Immediately wash the wound with soap and water for ten minutes.
2. Call your health care provider or North Reading Board of Health at (978) 664-6042.
3. Call the NRPD Animal Control Officer at (978) 664-3807 to see if the animal can be contained.

Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. Wound washing and treatment are key to survival from a rabies infection. Human rabies is 100% vaccine-preventable.

**Stay vigilant! If you are bitten by an animal that might have rabies, get help quickly.**

## WILDLIFE

One of the facts of suburban living is sharing our neighborhoods with local wildlife. As North Reading has become more developed, the natural habitats of the local wildlife have diminished, leading to increased contact between humans and animals. With this in mind, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game offers the following tips on how to safely coexist with wildlife:

- Do not feed wildlife. Direct feeding can alter an animal's normal behavior. Problems occur when animals become habituated (accustomed to people).
- Keep trash and garbage around your yard contained and picked up. Do not put your trash out for pick up the night before unless it is in a sealed container.
- Do not feed pets outdoors. The pet food attracts wildlife to your door.
- Close off crawl spaces under porches, decks, and sheds.
- Do not approach or try to touch wildlife.

## SILVER ALERT

**The Silver Alert program** is a national initiative to enable a more rapid response for individuals with cognitive disorders who have wandered away from their home or caretaker. Enrollment in the Silver Alert program will decrease the public safety response time, which is essential in trying to ensure a safe return of the missing person.

**Complete a registration form to enroll:** The registration form is available on the North Reading Police Department's website ([www.NRPD.org](http://www.NRPD.org)), and for pick-up at the police station or the North Reading Senior Center.

The form should be filled out by a loved one or caretaker, and submitted to either the North Reading Police Department or North Reading Elder Services. This registration form will request identifying and biographical information to help first responders locate the missing person. While the Silver Alert program is strictly voluntary, the NRPD strongly recommends using this resource.



**Questions or concerns can be brought to Sergeant Derek Howe either by email at [dhowe@nrpd.org](mailto:dhowe@nrpd.org) or phone at (978) 357-5064**

## ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over the age of 60 are abused, neglected, or financially exploited. This is called elder abuse.

**There are many types of abuse:**

- Physical abuse happens when someone causes bodily harm.
- Emotional abuse, also called psychological abuse, can include a caregiver saying hurtful words, yelling, threatening, or repeatedly ignoring the older person.
- Keeping that person from seeing close friends and relatives is another form of emotional abuse.
- Abandonment is leaving a senior alone without planning for his or her care.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing an older adult to watch or be part of sexual acts.
- Financial scams online or by friends or family are also a form of abuse.

**Report suspected abuse to the Massachusetts Elder Abuse Hotline. Everyone is entitled to help. Please call either: (781) 324-7705 (Monday-Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm) or the 24-hour hotline: 1 (800) 922-2275.**

## BEWARE OF COMMON SCAMS

**Grandson/Granddaughter Scam:** In a typical grandparent scam, a con artist calls or emails the victim, posing as a relative in distress or someone claiming to represent the relative (such as a lawyer or law enforcement agent). The "relative" of the grandparent explains that they are in trouble and need the grandparent to wire them funds that will be used for bail money, lawyer's fees, hospital bills, or another fictitious expense. The victim is urged not to tell anyone, such as the parent of the "grandchild," because they do not want them to find out about the trouble they've gotten themselves into. The grandparent never hears from their fake grandchild again and is tricked out of hundreds or thousands of dollars.

**IRS Scams:** A sophisticated phone scam targeting taxpayers, including recent immigrants, has been making the rounds throughout the country. Callers claim to be IRS employees, using fake names and bogus IRS identification badge numbers. They may know a lot about their targets, and they usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling. Victims are told they owe money to the IRS and that it must be paid promptly through a gift card or wire transfer. Victims may be threatened with arrest, deportation, or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes hostile and insulting. Victims may be told they have a refund due to try to trick them into sharing private information. If the phone isn't answered, the scammers often leave an "urgent" callback request.



**Note that the IRS does NOT:**

- Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card, or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail you a bill if you owe any taxes.
- Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.
- Demand payment without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

**Identity Theft:** Identity (ID) theft happens when someone steals your personal information to commit fraud. The identity thief may use your information to fraudulently apply for credit, file taxes, or get medical services. These acts can damage your credit status, and cost you time and money to restore your good name. You may not know that you're the victim of ID theft immediately.

**You could be a victim if you receive:**

- Bills for items you didn't buy
- Debt collection calls for accounts you didn't open
- Denials for loan applications

**Report a scam to the North Reading Police Department as soon as you learn about it.**

**For more information on scams, please visit  
[www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/](http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/)**



# CREATING A HOME EMERGENCY PLAN

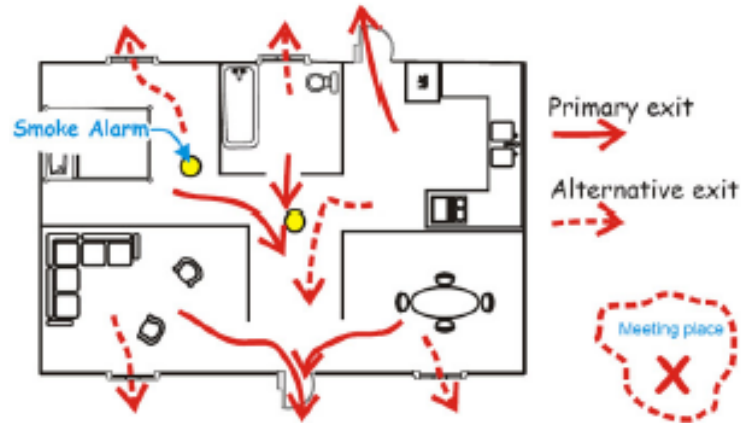
Where will you meet up with your family if you have to get out of your house quickly? Where will you meet if your neighborhood is being evacuated and you're not at home?

## Draw a map of your nearby neighborhoods.

Put a triangle to show your home. Mark your out-of-neighborhood meeting spot with an "X" and label it: this can be a school, family member's house, or store.

## Know the exits.

Do you know two ways out of every room in your house? Draw a floor plan of your bedroom and circle the two ways to get out. Hint: One may not be a door! Some families also have emergency ladders on higher floors.



## Memorize your family's home and cell phone numbers.

Let them know you're okay! Pick the same person for each family member to contact. Call the person once you have reached the designated safety space on your map. Leaving a list of phone numbers with neighbors, friends, and schools is a best practice.



## Emergency Supply Kit

Having an emergency supply kit is an essential component of personal and family preparedness. Emergency kits should include essentials items that will help sustain you and your family for up to three days in the event you are isolated in your home without power.

First, think about essential items you will need for basic survival: water, food, warmth, and necessary medications and medical equipment. Additionally, utilities and basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days or weeks. Your supply kit should contain items to help you manage during these outages. Make sure your emergency kit is customized to meet the unique needs of your family.

**Having an emergency plan can save lives. Visit [fema.org](https://www.fema.org) for more information.**

## SMOKE DETECTORS

According to the National Fire Protection Association:

- Three out of five home fire deaths result from fires in properties without working smoke alarms.
- More than one-third (38 percent) of home fire deaths result from fires in which no smoke alarms are present.
- The risk of dying in a home fire is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms.

### North Reading Spotlight

Did you know that the Senior Safe Program provides senior citizens with free smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. The Town of North Reading will also install these devices for seniors. Contact the North Reading Fire Department for more info.

Having at least one reliable smoke detector on each floor of your home is critical to your safety. Ideally, one alarm should be located inside and outside of each bedroom and sleeping area, placed on the ceiling or high on the wall. Be sure to check the manufacturer's instructions for the best place for your alarm. Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries every six months to ensure they are working properly.

## CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that kills without warning. It claims the lives of hundreds of people every year and makes thousands more ill. Many household items, including gas and oil-burning furnaces, portable generators, and charcoal grills, produce this poisonous gas. The Town of North Reading encourages everyone to **"Beat the Beep."** This campaign is meant to alert residents that their CO alarms may be reaching the end of their lifecycles. Detectors should be replaced BEFORE the beeps indicate end of life by testing the detector every six months. Exhaust vents should be kept clear, especially after snow. Also, do not sit in a running car with a blocked tail pipe or running while in a garage.

**The symptoms of CO poisoning** may include headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, or confusion.

### Carbon Monoxide



### Did You Know?

CO symptoms are often described as "flu-like." If you breathe in a toxic level of CO, it can make you fall unconscious or kill you.

**Call 911 if you suspect carbon monoxide in your home or experience the symptoms of CO poisoning.**

# ANONYMOUS TIP REPORTING



## If you see something, say something.

Help law enforcement solve and prevent crime in North Reading. You can now submit an anonymous tip 4 ways:

- 1) Download the free P3 Tips app (blue version). Please note that in most cases, a detective will have further questions. Please log into your tip often to check for updates as communication through the app maintains anonymity. Instructions and a code are provided when you submit a tip.
- 2) Call our hotline at (978) 357-5151 and leave a message.
- 3) Submit a tip at [www.nrpdp.org](http://www.nrpdp.org) and click "Submit a Tip".
- 4) Click on "Anonymous Tip" in the NRPS app.

**Tip lines are available 24/7 but may not be answered immediately.**

**Anonymous tips should not be sent for emergency situations or anything that needs urgent attention.**

**In an emergency, always dial 911.**



## MORE RESOURCES

### Helplines

#### Animal Abuse

North Reading Animal Police Control (978) 664-3807  
MSPCA (800) 628-5808

#### Child Abuse

National Child Abuse Hotline (800) 422-4453  
Massachusetts Child Abuse Hotline (800) 792-5200

#### Domestic Violence

The SafeLink: Casa Myrna (877) 785-2020  
Gay Men's Domestic Violence (800) 832-1901  
HAWC 24-Hour Hotline (800) 547-1649

#### Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse Hotline (After 5pm) (800) 922-2275  
MVES Protective Services (Before 5pm) (781) 324-7705

#### Sexual Abuse

Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (800) 656-4673  
North Shore Rape Crisis Center (800) 922-8772  
Center for Hope & Healing of Lowell (800) 542-5212

#### Substance Abuse

Treatment Facility Locator (800) 662-4357  
Mass. Information and Education (800) 327-5050  
Alcoholics Anonymous (617) 426-9444  
Narcotics Anonymous (866) 624-3578

#### Family and Children Services

Mass. Department of Youth Services (617) 727-7575  
Parental Stress Line (800) 632-8188  
MA Alliance on Teen Pregnancy (617) 482-9122

#### Food Insecurity

FoodSource Hotline (800) 645-8333

#### Housing Assistance

MA Coalition for the Homeless (781) 595-7570

#### LGBTQ+

LHBTQ Helpline (888) 340-4528  
Greater Boston PFLAG (781) 891-5966

#### Suicide Prevention

Samaritan 24-hour Helpline (877) 870-4673  
Samarateen Crisis Hotline (800) 252-8336  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255

#### Veterans

Crisis Hotline (press 1) (800) 273-8255

### North Reading Resource Departments

Batchelder School (978) 664-7814  
Board of Health (978) 664-6042  
E. Ethel Little School (978) 664-7820  
Elder Services (978) 664-5600  
Flint Memorial Library (978) 664-4942  
Food Pantry (978) 276-0040  
High School (NRHS) (978) 664-7800  
NR Housing Authority (978) 664-2982  
J Turner Hood School (978) 664-7817  
Mental Health Clinician (978) 357-5038  
Middle School (NRMS) (978) 664-7806  
Parks & Recreation (978) 357-5216  
Police (NRPD) (978) 664-3131  
(non-emergency, press 0)  
School Department (978) 664-7810  
Substance Use Education (978) 357-5054  
Veterans Department (978) 357-5212  
Youth Services (978) 357-5281

Visit [www.northreadingma.gov](http://www.northreadingma.gov)  
for more local resources and  
department contacts

### Follow us!



NRCommunity



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**In an emergency, always dial 911**