Emergency Preparedness

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Plan to Participate in Statewide Tornado Drill on March 20

Registration is open for the March 20 Statewide Tornado Drill at *www.ReadyVirginia.gov*. Businesses, schools, organizations, families and individuals are encouraged to take part in this critical safety exercise.

2011 was a tough year in Virginia for tornadoes – here's a look back:

• 51 tornadoes hit, the second highest number on record (87 struck in 2004).
• In April, 10 people died and more than 100 were injured.
• Most tornadoes occurred during April, but tornadoes also were recorded in March, May, August, September, October and November.
• In April, 212 homes and 17 businesses were destroyed; more than 1,050 homes and businesses were damaged.
• Nearly every part of Virginia experienced tornadoes during 2011, including mountainous southwest Virginia. Other areas hit: southside Virginia, Roanoke Valley, Shenandoah Valley, central Virginia, northern Virginia, middle peninsula and Hampton Roads.
• Many of the tornadoes struck at night – the powerful EF3 twister in April hit Washington County shortly after 11 p.m.

The annual Statewide Tornado Drill is sponsored by the National Weather Service and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Learn more about tornado safety and how to hold a drill at *www.Ready.Virginia.gov* or call the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management at 571-350-1000, TTY 711.

In This Issue

Statewide Tornado Drill
Page 1

CDC iPad App
Page 2

Hypothermia
Page 3

Changing Weather May Reveal Chimney Damage
Page 4

Spring Fire Season
Page 5

FEMA's Strategic Initiative Report
Page 6

$25 Million in Aid for Virginia
Page 7

TSA Cares Hotline
Page 8

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. Read more about hypothermia on the next page.

CDC Releases Its First iPad Application

More and more people are using smart phones and tablets to find health information. To meet this need, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced its first application (or "app") for the Apple iPad platform.

The CDC app is free to download. If you have an iPad, tap directly on the icon for the iTunes app store. At the top right of the page, type CDC iPad app in the search box. You will be taken to a page where you can download the CDC app. (Look for the app with the CDC logo.) You can read more about it at CDC Mobile iPad Application on CDC's web site.

The CDC iPad app serves up important information from CDC's website tailored to meet the needs of iPad users. Tabs immediately access health articles, popular journals, fast-breaking health updates, blogs and podcasts.

There are also tabs to access social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) that can help people engage more with CDC, provide additional health information and links back to CDC's main website.

Users can access CDC's content through the following tabs:

• **Health articles** are written by subject matter experts and health communicators from all CDC centers and programs. While most stories are topic- or event-driven, many capture the full scope of CDC's work on cross-cutting topics.

• **Vital Signs** offers recent data on important public health issues. Topics include: colorectal and breast cancer screenings; obesity; alcohol and tobacco use; access to health care; HIV testing; seat belt use; cardiovascular disease, etc.

• **Preventing Chronic Disease (PCD) Journal** is a peer-reviewed electronic journal that addresses the interface between applied public health research, practice and policy.

• **Newsroom** features the latest health news from the CDC Newsroom. From this tab you can access current and archived press releases, media advisories and press briefing transcripts.

• **Public Health Matters Blog** offers CDC bloggers sharing their passion for public health, its evolution and the continual strides that are being made to protect and save lives through education, awareness, research and promoting healthy lifestyles.

• **CDC podcasts** present reliable health and safety information when and where you want it. The tab links to CDC's vast library of audio and video podcasts.

• **Stay connected** and follow CDC by tapping on tabs for Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. By accessing CDC's social media through the iPad, users can view current information on health topics and events.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management is available to deliver emergency preparedness presentations to community organizations and homeowners associations. If interested, contact Marcelo Ferreira at 571-350-1013, TTY 711, or via email at *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

ReadyNOVA
Family & Business Preparedness Planners

Fairfax County and Northern Virginia residents can use the family and business emergency planners at *www.ReadyNOVA.org*.

Fairfax County, Va., publication.

To request this information in an alternate format, call 571-350-1000, TTY 711.

Winter Weather: Hypothermia

Highlights

- When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced.
- Low body temperature may make you unable to think clearly or move well.
- You may not know you have hypothermia.
- If your temperature is below 95°, the situation is an emergency—get medical attention immediately.

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. Body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and won't be able to do anything about it.

Hypothermia is most likely at very cold temperatures, but it can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat or submersion in cold water.

Victims of hypothermia are often elderly people with inadequate food, clothing or heating; babies sleeping in cold bedrooms; people who remain outdoors for long periods – the homeless, hikers, hunters, etc.; and people who drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.

Warnings Signs of Hypothermia

Adults

- Shivering, exhaustion.
- Confusion, fumbling hands.
- Memory loss, slurred speech.
- Drowsiness.

Infants

- Bright red, cold skin.
- Very low energy.

Read more at *http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/hypothermia.asp*.

Get a free prevention guide from CDC at *www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp*.

Marcelo's Minute

Keeping Your Business Informed During a Disaster

Marcelo Ferreira

How will your business receive important information during and after an emergency?

The **Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) for Businesses** delivers alerts, notifications and updates during a major crisis or emergency, in addition to day-to-day notices about weather and traffic.

Local businesses may also receive important private-sector specific alerts that could impact employees and workplaces during the recovery from a disaster.

Alerts can be delivered to five individuals in all devices that are registered:

- Email.
- Cellphone.
- Text pager.
- Satellite phone.
- Wireless device.

Sign up for the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) for Businesses at *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean/business*.

It is also important for businesses to develop an emergency plan. For an easy-to-use template, visit *www.ReadyNOVA.org*.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management encourages every business, organization and family to get involved in emergency preparedness efforts.

If you need additional information, contact me at 571-350-1013, TTY 711, or email *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

Marcelo Ferriera, OEM community liaison, holds the Associate Emergency Manager (AEM) credential from the Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA).

Teachers: Add Student Tools for Emergency Management (STEP) preparedness materials to your school lesson plans. www.fema.gov/privatesector/step.shtm

Changing Weather May Reveal Chimney Damage

Masonry chimneys and fireplaces are especially vulnerable to earthquake damage, and many Virginia residents experienced such damage firsthand. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) inspectors have visually inspected nearly 4,400 homes and in nearly 30 percent of those visits, inspectors suspected chimney damage.

Chimney damage can be deadly and may continue to lurk in the homes of unsuspecting Virginians. Do not take a chance with the health of your household, and find a licensed inspector to ensure the safety of your home.

Chimney damage can be identified. Masonry chimneys tend to be large, rigid and brittle structures. During earthquakes the chimney will not generally move in unison with the home. The distinct difference in a chimney's motion will create the potential for significant damage to the chimney and the structure. Masonry chimneys may collapse, break or crack. Also look for shiny areas on your metal chimney pipe. This means the chimney moved during the earthquake.

Damage to any part of the chimney opens the door to potential disaster. Homeowners need to pay close attention to large cracks and loose masonry. Expansion from the heating and cooling of the masonry as well as water penetration during repeated freezing and thawing cycles can lead to structural problems.

Many older historic homes have brick chimneys without terra cotta or metal flue liners. In these chimneys an inner course of brick acts as the liner. Homeowners with this style of chimney should be very concerned finding brick or mortar in the ash box, on top of a damper or in the firebox. Evidence of damage on the inside the chimney can be a serious concern.

Damage to flues can remain undetected without a professional inspection because the damage is within the interior of the chimney. Flue damage can allow carbon monoxide, generally vented through the flue, to escape and possibly enter the home's living space. Inhalation of this gas can be deadly. Homes should have working carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.

A broken flue has the potential of releasing burning embers into walls and attics, creating the opportunity for a home fire, which is known as a chimney fire.

Homeowners and business owners in the counties of Culpeper, Fluvanna, Goochland, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania and the City of Fredericksburg are encouraged to register with FEMA and may be eligible for benefits. Virginians have until March 5 to register.

To register, call 800-621-FEMA (3362), if you use a TTY, call 1-800-462-7585, if you use 711-Relay or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 1-800-621-3362 or go online to *www.DisasterAssistance.gov*. Phone lines are open 7 a.m.-10 p.m. EST, seven days a week. Online registration is available at any time. Those with smart phones or other mobile devices can register at *m.fema.gov*.

Follow this link to a related FEMA video: *www.fema.gov/medialibrary/media_records/7146*

Disasters and emergencies can affect anyone at any time. Do you have the plans and supplies in place to help withstand the first three to five days after a disaster?

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management suggests three steps that each individual and family should take to prepare for an emergency:
1. **Make a Plan** – Determine how you will contact your family, and get back together, if you are separated during an emergency. Be sure to identify what you will do in various situations. More information is available at *www.ReadyVirginia.gov* and *www.MakeaPlan.org*.
2. **Assemble a Kit** – An emergency kit should contain basic supplies to help you withstand a disaster. It's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth.
3. **Stay Informed** – The most convenient way to stay up-to-date about local emergencies is to register for the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN), which delivers important emergency alerts, notifications and updates during a major emergency, in addition to regular weather and traffic alerts. Register at *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean*.

Start of Virginia Spring Fire Season

As Virginia prepares for the beginning of spring fire season, which runs from Feb. 15 through April 30, Governor Bob McDonnell is warning Virginians that the threat of wildfires is increased this year due to Virginia's mild winter.

"Wildfires in the Commonwealth are very weather-dependent," McDonnell said. "When you combine the effects of the 2011 tornadoes and Hurricane Irene with the relatively mild and dry winter we're experiencing, it adds up to a potentially dangerous spring wildfire season."

Ninety-five percent of wildfires in the commonwealth are caused by humans, so residents need to help the Department of Forestry reduce the risk.

"The best thing people can do is to obey the law by not burning trash or debris before 4 p.m. each day during spring fire season," McDonnell said. "Virginia's 4 p.m. law has been in place for almost 70 years and is one of the best tools we have for reducing the threat of wildfires. Because humidity levels typically increase and wind speeds usually decrease after 4 p.m., the likelihood of a fire escaping is reduced."

The Department of Forestry offers additional fire safety tips including:
• Even if it's after 4 p.m., don't burn if the wind speed is in excess of 20 miles per hour and humidity levels are below 30 percent.
• Burn in small piles rather than one big pile.
• Before igniting your fire, clear the area around the pile down to bare dirt.
• Don't add to the fire after midnight.
• Keep a fully charged hose and a shovel on hand to extinguish any spot fires that ignite away from the burn pile.
• Dial 9-1-1 as soon as a fire escapes your control.

State Forester of Virginia Carl Garrison says that more than 40 percent of the 1,114 wildfires in Virginia last year were caused by people burning trash or debris.

www.governor.virginia.gov/News/viewRelease.cfm?id=1107

FAIRFAX COUNTY citizen corps
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps

The Fairfax County Citizen Corps harnesses the power of individuals through education, training and volunteer service to make communities safe, stronger and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues and disasters of all kinds. There are five core programs:

Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

Provides support for the police department by incorporating volunteers so that law enforcement professionals have more time for frontline duty. VIPS includes auxiliary police officers, administrative volunteers, and the Citizen's Police Academy.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/vips.htm

Neighborhood Watch

Brings private citizens and law enforcement together to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. It brings to life the simple concept of neighbors watching out for neighbors. Volunteers may join an existing group or establish one in their neighborhood.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/nw.htm

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

Operated by the Health Department, MRC is composed of medical and non-medical volunteers trained to assist the community in dispensing medication during public health emergencies.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mrc/

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Trains people in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools in basic disaster response skills, such as fire suppression and search and rescue, and helps them take a more active role in emergency preparedness.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/cert.htm

Fire Corps

Volunteers are trained to perform non-operational administrative duties at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Headquarters and at volunteer fire stations.
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/firecorps.htm

When it's cold, you can ward off frostbite/hypothermia by wearing warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in layers . www.ready.gov/winter-weather

FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative Releases Report On Future Challenges in Emergency Management

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released the "Crisis Response and Disaster Resilience 2030" report. The report includes analysis of the future role of emergency and disaster management; strategic needs and gaps the emergency management community will have to address; and insights that provide high-level observations to inform and guide decision-makers. This report is a product of FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI), an effort bringing together a cross-section of the emergency management community at all levels of government, nonprofits, businesses and individuals.

The SFI helps the emergency preparedness community understand the factors driving change in our world and how those changes will impact the emergency and disaster management field over the next 20 years. The strategic needs, highlighted in the report are focused around essential capabilities to meet future challenges identified in the report, innovative models and tools to optimize resources and anticipate events, and dynamic partnerships to meet surge requirements or to absorb critical new skills and capabilities.

The report's findings are intended to be a catalyst for leadership discussion throughout the emergency management community, as well as a reference point to prepare us, and the nation at large, for whatever challenges and opportunities the future holds. FEMA invites its partners to make full use of this report within their own organizations, and to make it available to their membership and constituency groups.

For more information on the SFI, or to provide views on the report, you can contact the SFI Project Team via email at *FEMA-OPPA-SFI@fema.gov* and you can visit the SFI Web page to read the relevant research papers at *www.fema.gov/about/programs/oppa/strategic_foresight_initiative.shtm*.

Winter Weather Patterns Can Increase Risk for Flooding

Floods are a year-round hazard and do not end when cold weather begins. Although this winter has not yet proven to be as severe as in past years, the coming months can bring about a range of conditions across the country that could affect your community.

Areas that receive less snow and rain this winter season may later experience drought-like conditions that, when it does rain, can lead to flash flooding. The onset of seasonal rains and snowmelt can also lead to flooding.

FEMA encourages residents to understand the unique flood risks associated with winter weather, and prepare now with an emergency plan, which may include purchasing flood insurance to protect property and possessions from flood damage. The good news is that there are simple steps that residents can take to address these risks. These include having an emergency supply kit with items such as non-perishable food, water, a flashlight with batteries, and a family emergency plan that considers your insurance coverage, especially flood insurance. Anyone can visit *www.ready.gov* for helpful tips on how to prepare for the risks associated with flooding.

Many people mistakenly believe that their homeowners insurance covers flood damage. Only flood insurance financially protects properties from flooding, which is the nation's most common and costly natural disaster. However, it typically takes 30 days for a new flood insurance policy to take effect, so residents should not wait for a storm to strike before purchasing coverage. It only takes a few inches of water in a home or business to cause thousands of dollars of damage. The time to get protected is now.

Between 2006 and 2010, the average flood claim was nearly $34,000. That's more than many survivors can afford to pay out of pocket for damages due to flooding. Learn more about flood risk and options for insurance coverage by visiting *www.FloodSmart.gov* or by calling 1-800-427-2419.

Over $25.2 Million in Disaster Aid Approved for Virginia

Since the counties of Culpeper, Fluvanna, Goochland, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania and the city of Fredericksburg have been eligible for Individual Assistance disaster aid, significant amounts of federal aid have begun to flow into the affected areas.

Families, individuals, business owners and local governments who suffered damage have been approved to receive over a combined $25.2 million in Individual Assistance and Public Assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

"We continue to make substantial progress in our efforts to assist Virginia residents and businesses recover from the earthquake," said federal coordinating officer Don Keldsen.

"This financial aid will allow many residents and businesses to begin the rebuilding process," said state coordinating officer Michael Cline.

Below is the breakdown of federal aid for the seven areas affected by earthquake as of Jan. 12:

- Almost 4,600 households have registered for Individual Assistance.
- Over $8.4 million in grants have been approved through the FEMA Individuals and Household Program.
- Over $2.3 million in loans have been approved by the SBA for homeowners, renters and business owners affected by the earthquake.
- Over 4,100 home inspections have been requested. Almost 3,900 requests have been completed. There are currently nine inspectors in the field.
- Over 2,600 people have visited the two disaster recovery centers in Louisa and Spotsylvania counties.
- Over $14.5 million in grants have been obligated to the commonwealth under FEMA'S Public Assistance program, whose applicants include the commonwealth and its agencies, local governments and certain nonprofit organizations.

Joining with the American Burn Association and the U.S. Fire Administration, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department spotlighted National Burn Awareness Week, Feb. 5-11.

Parents and caregivers were encouraged to take action to keep loved ones safe from fire and burn hazards. The theme for this year is "Scalds."

Scald injuries are painful and require prolonged treatment. They may result in lifelong scarring and even death. Scalds can be prevented through increased awareness of scald hazards and by making common sense changes.

Provide a "kid-safe" zone while preparing and serving hot foods; cook on back burners when young children are present; keep all pot handles away from the stove edge; and use non-slip placemats instead of tablecloths. Additionally, you are encouraged to lower the water heater thermostat to deliver water at no more than 120 degrees.

Annually, over 500,000 people receive medical treatment for burn injuries. Approximately half of these injuries are scalds. Most burns occur in the home, usually in the kitchen or bathroom. Young children and older adults are most vulnerable.

For more information, visit *www.usfa.fema.gov* and *www.burnprevention.org*.

FEMA Industry Liaison Web Page

The FEMA Industry Liaison Web page is a single point of access for vendor information. In addition, the FEMA Industry Liaison Web page was recently re-launched to provide readily accessible information:

- FEMA Industry Liaison Fact Sheet.
- How FEMA Procures IT.
- Current FEMA Contracts.
- Central Contractor Registration.

Visit the FEMA Industry Liaison Web page for more information: *www.fema.gov/privatesector/industry/index.shtm*.

Shutting off gas may require a specialty wrench, find out what your utility requires before an emergency. www.ready.gov/utility-shut-safety

TSA Announces Launch of TSA Cares Helpline for Travelers with Disabilities and Medical Needs

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced the launch of TSA Cares, a new helpline number to assist travelers with disabilities and medical conditions, prior to getting to the airport.

Travelers may call TSA Cares toll free at 1-855-787-2227 prior to traveling with questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint.

Since its inception, TSA has provided information to all travelers through its TSA Contact Center and customer service managers in airports nationwide. TSA Cares will serve as an additional, dedicated resource for passengers with disabilities, medical conditions or other circumstances or their loved ones who want to prepare for the screening process prior to flying.

When a passenger with a disability or medical condition calls TSA Cares, a representative will provide assistance, either with information about screening that is relevant to the passenger's specific disability or medical condition, or the passenger may be referred to disability experts at TSA. TSA recommends that passengers call approximately 72 hours ahead of travel so that TSA Cares has the opportunity to coordinate checkpoint support with a TSA customer service manager located at the airport when necessary.

Every person and item must be screened before entering the secure area of an airport and the manner in which the screening is conducted will depend on the passenger's abilities and any specific equipment brought to the security checkpoint.

All travelers may ask to speak to a TSA supervisor if questions about screening procedures arise while at the security checkpoint.

The hours of operation for the TSA Cares helpline are Monday through Friday 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. EST, excluding federal holidays. After hours, travelers can find information about traveling with disabilities and medical needs on TSA's website, *www.tsa.gov.*

www.tsa.gov/press/releases/2011/1222.shtm

Would You Know What to Do During an Earthquake?

Drop, cover and hold on. You only have seconds to react to an earthquake, so it's important to know what to do when the ground starts shaking. Remember:
- **DROP** to the ground.
- Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table.
- **HOLD ON** to it until the shaking stops.

Learn more at *www.ready.gov/earthquakes*.

How to Communicate During Disasters

Dozens of destructive tornadoes, a historic earthquake, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee all hit Virginia in 2011.

In the minutes and hours after these disasters, it was difficult to make calls on cellphones because the mobile networks were so busy.

Ready Virginia has created a new downloadable tip sheet about phone use during disasters. Topics include "Before a Disaster: How to Prepare Your Home and Mobile Device" and "During and After a Disaster: How to Reach Friends, Loved Ones & Emergency Services."

For more information visit *www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/how-to-communicate*.

Download and print the tip sheet: *www.vaemergency.gov/sites/default/files/Communicate.pdf*.

Spanish version of the tip sheet: *www.vaemergency.gov/sites/default/files/Listo_Communicate.pdf*.