

Emergency Preparedness

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Volunteers participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service helping area residents get better prepared. Submitted photo.

RSVP Shares Emergency Preparedness Information

By Whitney Kazragis

In honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Jan. 20, the Retired Senior and Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Northern Virginia held a day of service in Alexandria and Arlington and Fairfax Counties to improve emergency preparedness awareness.

The regional door-to-door effort to educate and prepare residents of Northern Virginia reached 633 households, including 194 households in Fairfax County. Sixteen trained volunteers distributed free emergency preparedness information to neighborhoods in the Burke area.

RSVP represents a national effort to engage people 55 and older in meaningful volunteer service to meet critical community needs. RSVP Northern Virginia is sponsored by Volunteer Fairfax in partnership with Volunteer Alexandria and Volunteer Arlington.

To learn more about RSVP, visit www.volunteerfairfax.org/individuals/rsvp.php.

Whitney Kazragis is the community outreach liaison with OEM.

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This newsletter is published by the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management



Emergency Shelter in Fairfax County

If you see someone unsheltered in extreme cold weather, call the county's non-emergency phone line at 703-691-2131, TTY 711.

Fairfax County's emergency homeless shelters have additional capacity during winter months to take in people overnight who are at risk of hypothermia. Emergency personnel will determine which shelter option is best in the situation.

Learn more about our emergency shelters and the hypothermia program at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/hypothermia-prevention/emergency-shelter.htm.

If you temporarily don't have electricity or heat, you can take in a movie, stroll through a shopping center or visit one of the Fairfax County warming centers:

- Libraries.
- Community Centers.
- Fairfax County Government Center.

Please check operating hours to ensure the facility is open before arriving.

Traveling by car in wintery weather conditions can be hazardous and scary. Preparation is critical to ensure safe trips. The three P's of safe winter driving provide tips for winter storms: **Prepare** for the trip, **Protect** yourself and **Prevent** crashes on the road.

- Regardless of the vehicle you drive, slow down for winter driving conditions. Even an SUV with four-wheel drive might be unable to stop or maintain control.
- Leave plenty of room between your vehicle and others. It takes more time and distance to stop your vehicle on wet roads.
- Avoid using cruise control in winter driving conditions. You need to be in control of your speed based on road conditions.

Winter conditions call for different driving tactics – slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering and slower braking. Remember ice and snow, take it slow!



Flat Stanley Helps Kids Be Safe Online

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Stop. Think. Connect. public awareness campaign is joining the Flat Stanley Project to help kids learn the importance of cybersecurity.

By downloading and using the Flat Stanley App (<https://www.flatstanley.com/>), kids will be able to create their own "Flat Stanley" and "Flat Stella" character and send it on a tour of the Internet to learn about staying safe online and helping spread the word about cybersecurity. The Flat Stanley App can be useful for kids, parents and teachers to start a discussion about online safety.

Children will find simple tips on the app that encourage them to:

- Be careful about what information they share.
- Avoid sharing passwords with anyone except their parents.
- Never talk to strangers online or agree to meet someone in person.

With kids spending more time than ever before on the Internet and social media, the partnership with the Flat Stanley Project allows DHS to further its efforts to raise cybersecurity awareness among young Americans.

To learn about what DHS is doing to keep kids safe online and for other cybersecurity tips, visit www.dhs.gov/stophinkconnect. For more on Flat Stanley and Flat Stella, visit www.flatstanley.com/

Reprinted from FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief, Jan. 10 edition



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

FEMA Seeks Applicants for Youth Preparedness Council

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is seeking applicants for its Youth Preparedness Council.

The Youth Preparedness Council is a unique opportunity for youth leaders to serve on a highly distinguished national council and participate in the Youth Preparedness Council Summit. Additionally, the youth leaders have the opportunity to complete a self-selected youth preparedness project and to share their opinions, experiences, ideas, solutions and questions regarding youth disaster preparedness with the leadership of FEMA and national youth preparedness organizations.

Once selected, members serve on the council for one year, with the option to extend for an additional year, if formally requested by FEMA.

Council activities and projects center around five key areas of engagement: programs, partnerships, events, public speaking/outreach and publishing. Members represent the youth perspective on emergency preparedness and share information with their communities. They also meet with FEMA on a regular basis to provide ongoing input on strategies, initiatives and projects throughout the duration of their term.



Tips for Preventing Home Fires

Home fires occur more often in winter than in any other season. Here are some steps you can take to prevent home fires:

- Review safety tips for portable heaters, woodstoves, fireplaces, generators and candles.
- Develop a home escape plan and practice it periodically.
- Ensure that you have working smoke alarms in every bedroom and outside every sleeping area. Test them monthly.

Visit the U.S. Fire Administration for more safety information. www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens

Any individual between the ages of 12 and 17 who is engaged in individual and community preparedness or who has experienced a disaster that has motivated him or her to make a positive difference in his or her community, may apply to serve on the Youth Preparedness Council.

Individuals who applied last year are highly encouraged to apply again. Adults working with youth and/or community preparedness are encouraged to share the application with youth who might be interested in applying.

Youth interested in applying to the council must submit a completed application form and two letters of recommendation. Specific information about completing and submitting the application and attachments can be found in the application instructions.

All applications and supporting materials must be received **no later than Feb. 24, 11:59 p.m. EST** in order to be eligible. New Youth Preparedness Council members will be announced in May 2014. For more information about the Youth Preparedness Council and to access the application materials, please visit www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness-council.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management is available to deliver emergency preparedness presentations to community organizations and homeowners associations. If interested, contact OEM at 571-350-1000, TTY 711, or via email at oem@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Ice Safety — Winter Preparedness Tips

By Dean Sherick

The snow stopped falling, the sun is shining brightly and you have a strong desire to escape the confines of your home so out into the winter-wonderland you go. That path through the woods is inviting for more exploration but the area where you remember the stream is located is hard to differentiate from the rest of the landscape. You still venture forth and soon find yourself waist deep in the frigid water.

If you fall through the ice, don't panic. If there are people with you, have them call 9-1-1. If they are unable to reach you from the water's edge, have them throw something you can grab such as a rope, branch or coat sleeve. Another possibility is to form a human chain with them lying down on the ice to distribute weight over a wider area. Have the lightest person reach out to you and pass whatever is available to help pull you onto the ice, where you can roll or wiggle to safety.

If you're alone, turn toward the direction you came from, get your arms on the unbroken surface of the ice and kick hard with your feet to help lift you onto the ice then roll to safety keeping your weight distributed until you return to solid ice or land.

Remember that cold water is dangerous below 70 degrees and robs the body of heat 25-30 times faster than air. Safety experts estimate that half of all drowning victims die from the fatal effects of hypothermia, not from water in the lungs.

Ice skating on county ponds, lakes and retention ponds is prohibited for safety reasons. Due to fluctuating temperatures, it is not safe to venture on any ice-covered lake, stream or stormwater retention pond. Even if the ice is a foot thick in one area, it can be 1-inch thick just a few yards away. It's impossible to judge the strength of ice by its appearance, thickness, daily temperature or snow cover alone. Ice strength is actually dependent on all four factors, plus water depth under the ice, the size of the body of water, water chemistry, currents and distribution of the load on the ice.



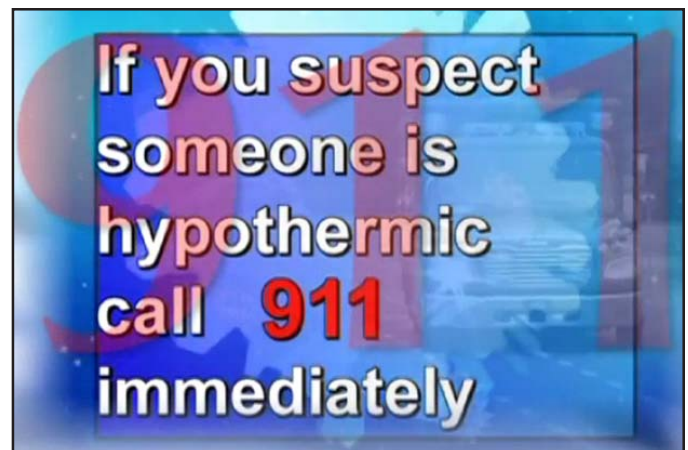
Office of Emergency Management
4890 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030
571-350-1000, TTY 711

The basics of ice safety are:

- Never go onto the ice alone. A friend may be able to rescue you or go for help if you fall through.
- Always keep your pets on a lease. If a pet falls through the ice, do not attempt to rescue your pet. Go for help.
- New ice is usually stronger than old ice. As ice ages, the bond between the crystals decays, making it weaker, even if melting has not occurred.
- Ice formed over flowing water (rivers or lakes containing a large number of springs) is weaker.
- Ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be a foot thick in one spot and only an inch thick 10 feet away.
- Be aware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it strong, but can also keep it from freezing. Snow can hide cracks, weak ice or open ice.

If you would like to ice skate, check out the county's Mount Vernon Ice Arena online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/mv/mv-ice.htm.

Dean Sherick is community liaison assistant with the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). He has nearly 40 years of experience in public safety and is a graduate of the University of Maryland University College.



Ice and cold water safety matters; too many residents are injured from falling through ice and exposure to cold water. Learn how to protect yourself this winter in this video from Fairfax County: <http://youtu.be/KJjL5kO5mVs>.

Winter Care for Seniors

Winter is an especially important time to keep an eye on seniors to make sure they are living as safely as possible. In addition to cold weather, ice and snow, the winter season can bring health problems and injury to senior citizens. That's why it's important for relatives and friends to check in with their older adult family members, friends and neighbors. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Falls are a concern for seniors. Putting road salt, cat litter or sand on sidewalks, steps and driveways will make these areas as slip-free as possible. Seniors should also wear boots with non-skid soles to make a fall less likely to occur. Older adults, especially those with heart disease or high blood pressure should leave snow shoveling to others.
- Cold temperatures make senior citizens susceptible to hypothermia, a dangerous drop in body temperature. Older adults tend to produce less body heat than younger people and it's hard for them to tell when the temperature is too low. Learn the warning signs of this weather-related illness and how to prevent it.
- Keep indoor temperatures no lower than 55 degrees. If going outdoors is necessary, dress in layers to stay warm. Wearing two or three thin layers of loose-fitting clothing is warmer than a single layer of thick clothing. It's a good idea to check on elderly loved ones regularly or, if you live out of town, make arrangements for neighbors to check in and provide their number to call in an emergency. With your help, older adults can enjoy the winter months safely.

<http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/hypothermia.asp>

Reprinted from FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief, Jan. 22 edition.

	Emergency Blog (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog)
	Twitter (www.twitter.com/fairfaxcounty)
	Facebook (www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty)
	Fairfax County Government Radio (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio)

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/police/getinvolved/120711volunteers.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)



The Medical Reserve Corps is composed of medical and non-medical volunteers of the Fairfax County Health Department that could support the Health Department if called upon to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and man-made disasters and 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

Fairfax County Community Collaboration Summit for Disaster Resiliency

The Fairfax County Community Collaboration Summit for Disaster Resiliency is designed for organizations that provide day-to-day support to Fairfax County community members and sustained support when a disaster strikes.

Organizations such as faith- and community-based organizations, disaster volunteer groups, residential management groups, civic associations and representatives from the private, public and nonprofit sectors involved in disaster recovery are invited to attend.



Come together with other organizations involved in disaster recovery at the Fairfax County Community Collaboration Summit for Disaster Resiliency and:

- Discuss your organization's roles in community disaster resiliency.
- Learn how disaster resiliency organizations interact with each other.
- Start working on your organization's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

The summit is sponsored by Volunteer Fairfax and Fairfax County's Neighborhood and Community Services and Faith Communities in Action offices.



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

Summit Details

Date: Tuesday, March 25

When: 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Where: Mount Olive Baptist Church
6600 Old Centreville Road
Centreville, VA 20121

If you are interested in attending, register online at <https://2014summit.eventbrite.com>.

For more, contact Tracy Friend at 703-246-3553, TTY 711 or Sandy Chisholm at 703-324-5185, TTY 711.

Virginia Emergency Management Symposium Hosts Sandy and Boston Marathon Experts, Recovers.org

The 2014 Virginia Emergency Management Symposium, set for March 19-21 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, welcomes emergency management experts from across the nation to share best practices in recent disasters.

Keynote speaker Michael Oppegaard, coordinator of the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management in New Jersey, will present lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy. Kurt Schwartz, undersecretary of public safety for Massachusetts, will cover his experience managing the Boston Marathon event, and Caitria and Morgan O'Neill will delve into their online crisis software for managing emergencies, Recovers.org.

"We hope that all emergency managers in Virginia will join us for what is going to be another wonderful year of incredible speakers and networking experiences," says Sara Ruch, Virginia Emergency Management Association president.

For registration and details, go to www.vemaweb.org/content/symposium2014.

Save the Date: Statewide Tornado Drill March 11

Registration is now open for the March 11 Statewide Tornado Drill. Businesses and organizations, schools and colleges, and families and individuals can practice taking cover from tornadoes by participating in this annual safety exercise, set for 9:45 a.m.

“During the past three years, 67 twisters struck Virginia,” said Brett Burdick, acting state coordinator for emergency management. “April 2011 was particularly dangerous when 10 people died and more than 100 were injured. Tornadoes are common in Virginia. In fact, three struck southeast Virginia Jan. 11, so it is essential that everyone knows what to do when a tornado warning is issued.”

The annual drill is a joint effort of the National Weather Service and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. To start the drill, at approximately 9:45 a.m., a test tornado warning will be sent by the NWS to NOAA Weather Radios.

These radios will sound a tone alert and show a message (or flash to indicate a message) to simulate what people will hear or see during an actual tornado warning. The test message then will be broadcast by many local radio and TV stations.

Registration for the Statewide Tornado Drill is not required, but residents are encouraged to sign up to show their support. Learn more about tornado safety, how to hold a drill and how to register for the drill at www.ReadyVirginia.gov.



- Here's a look back at tornadoes in Virginia during 2013:
- 5 tornadoes were recorded (4 EF0 and 1 EF1).
- There were no reported injuries.
- Property damage was nearly \$72,000.
- One tornado occurred in April and four struck in June.

During 2012:

- 11 tornadoes were recorded (8 EF0 and 3 EF1).
- There were no deaths, but six people were injured.
- Property damage totaled \$3 million.
- The highest number of tornados occurred in June (6).

During 2011:

- 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, including mountain areas.
- One-third of the tornadoes struck at night when people were asleep.



Emergency News

by email

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Receive emergency preparedness information and emergency news by email

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog



Get emergency alerts by email, as well as by text or pager. Sign up at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean. Businesses can also register up to five people in their organizations – such as security officers – who can receive alerts and then share that information with their workforce.

January 21, 2014

by [fairfaxcounty](#)

in [Shelters, Snow, Uncategorized, Weather, Winter](#)

3 Comments

Call 703-691-2131 to Report Anyone Who Needs Emergency Shelter in Fairfax County

If you see someone unsheltered in this extreme cold weather, call the non-emergency phone line at 703-691-2131, TTY 711.

Fairfax County's emergency homeless shelters have additional capacity during winter months to take in people overnight who are at risk of hypothermia. Emergency personnel will determine **which shelter option is best** in the situation. Learn more about our **emergency shelters and hypothermia program**.

Even after the snow passes through our area later tonight, we are facing very cold temperatures for the rest of the week. There is also a **wind chill advisory until noon on Wednesday**. Temperatures will feel as low as 12 degrees below zero.

If you don't have electricity or heat, however, you can take in a movie, stroll through a shopping center or visit one of the **Fairfax County Warming Centers**:

- **Libraries**
- **Community Centers**
- **Fairfax County Government Center**

You are encouraged to check the operating hours to ensure the facility is open before arriving.

Please Share This Information

Email Facebook 55 Twitter 73 LinkedIn Pinterest Tumblr Reddit Google Print

Follow the emergency information blog (a recent post pictured above) at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog for the latest news and information during times of emergency or severe weather in Fairfax County.

Prescription for Readiness

In an emergency or natural disaster first responders may be overwhelmed trying to respond to an event. In some instances you may be unable to reach a hospital or clinic. That's why it's important to keep medical records, supplies and prescriptions easily accessible and to learn simple first-aid techniques.

Creating a "stay healthy" kit will help you keep up with urgent medical needs. The kit should include:

- A week's supply of medicines in a plastic bag labeled with each family member's name.
- Place special tags on specialized equipment with operating instructions so someone unfamiliar with the item can provide help.
- First aid supplies such as bandages, aspirin and antiseptic cream.
- A list of prescription medications, medical conditions and copies of medical insurance.

Use the household health information sheet in FEMA's "Rx For Readiness" guide to fill in medical information for each family member. Make copies of the sheet to keep in your home, car and workplace.

If a natural disaster disrupts basic services like water, contagious diseases can spread. Simple preventive measures including using alcohol-based hand sanitizer can help you avoid getting or spreading germs.

Learn more from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) online at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/staysafe/hypothermia.asp>.

Reprinted from FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief, Jan. 22 edition.

When using gasoline and diesel generators to supply power to a building, switch the main breaker or fuse on the service panel to the "off" position before starting the generator. This will prevent supplying electricity to outside power lines from your generator, and help protect utility line workers from possible electrocution. <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/workersafety.asp>