

Emergency Preparedness

Published by the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management
January 2012

Resolve to be Ready in 2012

As 2011 – one of the most active years for disasters in recent history – came to a close and we ring in a new year, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourages everyone to “Resolve to be Ready in 2012.”

As a recent report by the National Climatic Data Center highlights, 2011 has seen more billion-dollar natural disasters than any year on record. This year alone, the U.S. experienced its first hurricane landfall since 2008, the most deadly series of tornadoes since the 1950s, significant earthquakes and severe flooding – hazards that impacted every region of the country.

All of these events serve as important reminders that disasters can strike anytime, anywhere. Being prepared is one of the most effective things we can do to protect our homes, businesses and loved ones.

FEMA kicked off its annual campaign, “Resolve to be Ready in 2012,” which urges residents to make preparedness a priority during the holiday season.

By resolving to take a few simple steps in advance, residents can minimize the impact of an emergency on their families, homes or businesses.

To take the pledge, visit www.ready.gov/resolve or www.listo.gov, which includes free information, checklists and guidelines about how to put together a kit, make a plan and stay informed.

“Resolve to be Ready in 2012” is a nationwide effort to increase awareness and encourage individuals, families, businesses,

and communities to take action and prepare for emergencies in the new year.

This effort is led by FEMA’s Ready Campaign in partnership with Citizen Corps and the Advertising Council.

For more information, visit www.Ready.gov and www.CitizenCorps.gov or follow the campaign on Twitter using the hashtags #ready2012 and #resolve.

In This Issue

Resolve to be Ready in 2012
Page 1

Statewide Tornado Drill Registration | PPD 8 Dialogue
Page 2

CERT Basic Training Manual | Marcelo’s Minute
Page 3

Get Where You Need to be Before the Weather Gets Bad
Page 4

Record-Setting Year for Natural Disasters
Page 5

Prepare Your Phones for Emergencies
Page 6

Tip Sheet: How to Communicate During Disasters
Page 7

DHS Secretary Visit | Videos to Watch
Page 8

Statewide Tornado Drill Registration

Everyone in Virginia can participate in the statewide tornado drill, scheduled for 9:45 a.m. on March 20. Register to participate at www.surveymonkey.com/s/TornadoDrillRegistration.

Residents and county employees are encouraged to participate in the drill. If you need more information or assistance, contact OEM at 571-350-1000.

If there is widespread bad weather March 20, then the drill will be rescheduled for Wednesday, March 21. The drill is an opportunity for schools, businesses and individuals to practice important tornado safety steps.

During the drill, NOAA Weather Radio will sound a tornado warning tone alert to start the drill, and participants will practice a quick evacuation to designated safe areas in their buildings. Radio and TV stations also will broadcast the tornado warning sound.

Detailed instructions for identifying safe areas, conducting a tornado drill and registering participation in the statewide tornado drill are available online at www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/tornadoes.

Now's the Time.

Resolve
to be




Ready.



FEMA www.ready.gov

Presidential Policy Directive 8 Dialogue

Earlier this year, President Barack Obama released Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8): National Preparedness, which is intended to strengthen the security and resilience of the nation. PPD-8 calls on all levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and individual residents to play a more active and well-defined role in strengthening the nation's security and resiliency.

PPD-8 sets a vision for an America that is prepared for its greatest risks, such as terrorist attacks, natural disasters or pandemics. The directive calls for a number of actions to be taken in the near term to improve security and resilience.

FEMA and its partners have created a National Preparedness Goal, which sets the vision for building a more resilient and secure nation, and a National Preparedness System, which identifies the programs, processes and tools for achieving that vision.

FEMA, and its partners, are now focusing on the next set of activities. Earlier this month, FEMA launched an ongoing dialogue and is asking for input to help develop the next documents to meet the milestones required by the policy directive. This forum provides an opportunity to provide input into the development of several activities over the coming months.

To provide input, visit fema.ideascale.com and click on one of the topics in the left sidebar under Presidential Policy Directive 8 to share and vote on ideas.

Your ideas and votes help FEMA understand what works in the real world – in your community, school or business.



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

CERT Basic Training Participant Manual in Braille and Screen Reader Versions

The National CERT Program continues to promote CERT training for all audiences. In addition to the recent release of the low vision and Spanish versions of the “CERT Basic Training Participant Manual” is the release of the participant manual in Braille and PDF screen reader versions.

Each version includes the same content as the standard version participant manual – the nine units of the course and 13 hazard annexes.

Access the screen reader version of the participant manual on the national CERT website, https://www.citizen corps.gov/cert/training_mat.shtm#screenreader.

Local CERT program coordinators/managers can request copies of the Braille version of the participant manual. Call the FEMA Distribution Center at 1-800-480-2520 or email FEMA-Publications-Warehouse@dhs.gov. Use Publication Number P-856 and Catalog Number 11189-2 to order the participant manual (four volumes in Braille). Allow six-eight weeks for delivery.

For additional tools for communicating with all audiences, including people with disabilities, visit the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination Preparedness Resources Web page at www.fema.gov/about/odic/preparedness.shtm#2.



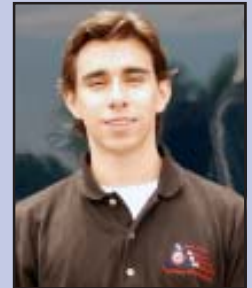
Fairfax County and Northern Virginia residents can use the family and business emergency planners at www.ReadyNOVA.org.



Marcelo's Minute

Make a Kit

Emergencies can strike at any time in any location. As part of “Resolve to be Ready,” take the time to develop emergency preparedness kits in your home, workplace and vehicle. Having essential items collected in each of these locations will help ensure that you are prepared in any situation.



Marcelo Ferreira

For your **home**, be prepared to be self-sustaining for at least three days. Depending on the type and scale of the emergency, it may take several days for the government and utilities to return services.

Workplace preparedness kits don't have to be as extensive as a home kit, but should contain items necessary to shelter-in-place and keep you comfortable for at least 24 hours. Review your workplace emergency plans and procedures, including evacuation routes and shelter-in-place locations, so that you know what to do *before* an emergency happens.

Maintaining a kit in your **vehicle** will help keep you ready and resilient anywhere you travel. In case you get stranded or stuck in severe traffic, having essential items in your car may keep you safe and comfortable until help arrives.

For a comprehensive list of items to include in your emergency kit, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/make-a-kit-checklist.pdf or www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/checklist.pdf.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management encourages every business, organization and family to get involved in emergency preparedness efforts. If you or your organization are in need of a presentation about emergency preparedness or other emergency-related topics, let me know at 571-350-1013, TTY 711 or by email at marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Marcelo Ferreira, OEM community liaison, holds the Associate Emergency Manager credential from the Virginia Emergency Management Association.

This Winter: Get Where You Need to Be Before the Weather Gets Bad

Overall, most winter storm deaths result from vehicle or other transportation accidents caused by ice and snow.

Residents should **avoid driving when conditions include sleet, freezing rain or drizzle, snow, or dense fog**. These are serious conditions that are often underestimated, and they make driving – and even walking outside – very hazardous.

It is safer for everyone if you stay put – and not travel during inclement weather – whether you are at home, work or school.

By staying off the roads during the worst of the weather, local departments of transportation are more easily able to access roads that need treatment, snowplows can more freely clear roads and get to areas needing plowing and public safety officials can respond more quickly to residents in need of emergency services.

It may require employees to take a couple of hours of personal leave during the winter, but leaving early enough to avoid bad weather and traffic gridlock caused by slippery road conditions is worth the investment. Thinking strategically about your travel and where you really need to be will require some planning and thought.

Check out the video at <http://youtu.be/ztIv33SJcnw>.



Do NOT Travel During Winter Storms

- Curtail “elective” travel; avoid unnecessary travel. If it is not a life safety issue, stay off the roads.
- If you don’t have to travel... don’t! The safest place during a winter storm is indoors. About 70 percent of deaths related to ice and snow occur in automobiles.
- Stay at the office an extra hour, or leave early, to avoid travel during a winter storm.
- If residents stay off the roads during a storm, transportation workers and public safety officials are better able to clear roadways and respond quicker.

Weather Changes Quickly

- Be prepared for the worst. Be ready to spend an extra hour at the office, or leave an hour or two early, to avoid a more time-consuming commute home during the height of a storm.
- Have an emergency supply kit in your office and car.

Listen to Local Officials

- If local officials advise residents to stay off the roads – then stay off the roads.
- Public safety and emergency management officials, along with National Weather Service meteorologists, base travel advisories and guidance on weather forecasts. Heed their advice!
- Businesses that follow closing/delay policies from local jurisdictions or the federal Office of Personnel Management need to monitor those sources and release employees when advised.

Monitor the Weather

- Listen to local radio/TV weather forecasts; monitor social media.
- Sign up for text alerts from your local government.
- Sign up for weather alerts from NOAA/National Weather Service, including RSS feeds of your forecast and weather watches/warnings.
- Purchase a NOAA weather radio for your home/office.

Know the Emergency Plans for your Child’s School

- If your child is safe at school, why risk a traffic accident during the worst weather to reach him/her, and then put all of you in danger? Let the school system implement their emergency plan, stay off the road and let transportation crews clear the roadways.

2011 Record-Setting Year Nationwide for Natural Disasters

A recent report by the National Climatic Data Center says that 2011 has seen more billion-dollar natural disasters than any year on record. April tornadoes, a historic earthquake, Hurricane Irene and the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee hit Virginia during 2011, causing loss of life and property and leaving millions of dollars in damage.

- **April Tornadoes, April 8, 27-28 and 26** – At least 30 tornadoes killed 10 people and injured more than 100. Approximately 212 homes were destroyed, with more than 1,050 homes and businesses damaged. The lack of federal assistance led Gov. Bob McDonnell to establish the Virginia Disaster Relief Fund to help tornado victims. The fund has since been expanded to help victims of any disaster in Virginia.
- **Mineral, Va. Earthquake, Aug. 23** – A 5.8-magnitude earthquake and more than 50 aftershocks have led to nearly \$7 million in federal assistance to individuals in Louisa County. Funds have been approved to repair damage that includes Thomas Jefferson Elementary School and Louisa County High School. Also, about \$1.6 million has been approved by the Small Business Administration in the form of low-interest loans to approximately 50 individuals and businesses.
- **Hurricane Irene, Aug. 27** – Flooding and high winds killed four people and caused approximately \$39 million in damage to public property and associated emergency response costs; 2.5 million people were without power, some for up to a week; Virginia received a pre-landfall federal Public Assistance emergency declaration, allowing FEMA to provide supplies, equipment and other needed resources.
- **Remnants of Tropical Storm Lee** – Sept. 8-9; heavy rains and flooding killed five and caused more than 100 homes and business to be destroyed or sustain major damage; approximately 500 people were displaced from their homes in Prince William County; residents in several areas were evacuated, and at least 50 swift water rescues of citizens were completed.

Reprinted from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management EM Update email newsletter, Dec. 28, 2011.

FAIRFAX COUNTY



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

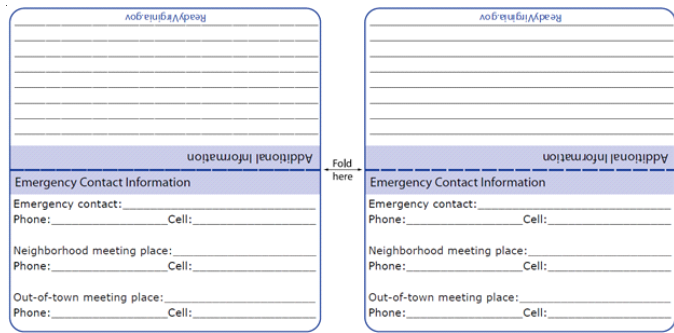
Prepare Your Phones for Emergencies

By *Laura Southard*

Destructive tornadoes, a 5.8 magnitude 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.

Follow these tips to make sure you can communicate during and after an emergency:

- If you have a traditional landline, keep a non-cordless phone in your home, because it will work even if you lose power.



- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in your cellphone and near your home phone.
- Prepare a family contact sheet with at least one out-of-town person who can serve as your family's emergency contact. Often it's easier to make long distance rather than local calls during an emergency. Get a worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov. Click on "Make a Plan" and look on the right side of the page for wallet cards (shown left).
- Have charged batteries and car phone chargers for back-up power.
- Subscribe to text alert services from local or state governments and schools to receive emergency alerts.
- Use text messaging, email or social media instead of making calls on your cell phone. Texts and emails are less likely to experience network congestion. You also can use social media to let family and friends know you are okay.
- Keep all phone calls brief to avoid tying up voice networks.
- Conserve your cellphone battery by reducing screen brightness and closing apps you are not using.
- Limit streaming videos, downloading music or playing video games on cellphones after a disaster to help emergency calls get through to 9-1-1.
- If you have a life-threatening emergency only, call 9-1-1. At this time, 9-1-1 cannot receive texts.

For more tips and to download a tip sheet on communicating during disasters (shown on Page 7), go to www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/how-to-communicate. (Direct link for the tip sheet: www.vaemergency.gov/sites/default/files/Communicate.pdf.)

Laura L. Southard is public outreach coordinator with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

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.

Virginia Citizen Corps Creates Web Resource

Virginia Citizen Corps (VCC) has created an online resource library. The library, available at www.vaemergency.gov/volunteer/va-cit-corps-councils, includes:

- FEMA and FEMA Region III information, resources, updates, opportunities.
- VOAD information and opportunities.
- Selected Virginia Citizen Corps initiatives, updates and postings.
- National Citizen Corps information and updates.
- Other important preparedness information.

All VCC partners are encouraged to check the library often for updates. VCC will continue to send emails regarding grants, regional Citizen Corps Council meetings, Virginia Citizen Corps and National Preparedness Month initiatives and CERT information as requested.



- ✓ Get a kit
- ✓ Make a plan
- ✓ Stay informed

Tip Sheet: How to communicate during disasters

Destructive tornadoes, a 5.8 magnitude 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 cell phones because the mobile networks were so busy. When disaster strikes, you may need to call 9-1-1 or let loved ones know that you are okay. Follow these tips to make sure you can communicate during an emergency.

Before a Disaster

Preparing Your Home and Mobile Device

1. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in your cell phone and near your home phone.
2. Have charged batteries and car-phone chargers for back-up power for your cell phone.
3. If you have a traditional landline, keep a non-cordless phone in your home, because it will work even if you lose power.
4. Prepare a family contact sheet with at least one out-of-town contact. Often it's easier to make long-distance rather than local calls during an emergency.
5. Program "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) contacts into your cell phone so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you can't use your phone.
6. If you are evacuated and have call-forwarding on your home phone, forward your home phone number to your cell phone number.
7. If you do not have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone card to use.
8. Have a battery-powered radio or television available (with spare batteries).
9. Subscribe to text alert services from local or state governments and schools to receive emergency alerts.

During and After a Disaster

Reaching Friends, Loved Ones & Emergency Services

1. If you have a life-threatening emergency only, call 9-1-1.
2. For non-emergencies, use text messaging, e-mail or social media instead of making calls on your cell phone. Texts and emails are less likely to experience network congestion. You also can use social media to let family and friends know you are okay.
3. Keep all phone calls brief to avoid tying up voice networks. Just share vital information.
4. Conserve your cell phone battery by reducing screen brightness, placing your phone in airplane mode and closing apps you are not using.
5. If you lose power, you can charge your cell phone in your car. Just be sure your car is in a well-ventilated place – not in a garage – but do not go to your car until danger has passed. You also can listen to local radio stations in your car for important news alerts.
6. Tune into local TV and radio stations for important news alerts.
7. Unless you have a hands-free device in your car, do not talk, text or tweet on a cell phone while driving.
8. Immediately following a disaster, resist using your mobile device to watch streaming videos, download music or videos, or play video games. Limiting use of these services can help life-saving emergency calls get through to 9-1-1.

For more information on preparing for emergencies, visit www.ReadyVirginia.gov or www.ListoVirginia.gov, email plio@vdem.virginia.gov or call (866) 782-3470.

DHS Secretary Visits With County's Search and Rescue Team

In late December, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano toured operations and received briefings at several DHS facilities in the National Capital Region. Among the stops on the tour was the DHS FEMA warehouse in Herndon.

The secretary's tour highlighted the major steps the department has taken this year to enhance America's capabilities to guard against terrorism; secure the nation's borders; engage in smart enforcement of immigration laws; safeguard and secure cyberspace; prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters; and to mature and strengthen the homeland security enterprise.



Secretary Napolitano meets Elizabeth Cheney and her dog Ventoux during the visit. Photo courtesy of DHS.

Videos to Watch



"VDOT: Getting Ready for Winter"
<http://youtu.be/HICKXqSQRHg>



"Get Where You Need to Be Before the Weather Gets Bad"
<http://youtu.be/ztIv33SJcnw>



FEMA's "Resolve to be Ready in 2012"
<http://youtu.be/A--ilmjiOLE>