

Emergency Preparedness

Published by the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management
June 2013

Hurricane Season Underway

By Laura Southard

Last year in the U.S., more than 450 people died and nearly 2,600 were injured as a result of severe weather. Hurricane Sandy contributed to more than 280 of those deaths and has become the second costliest hurricane in our country's history.

Hurricane/flooding season started June 1 – are you ready? Here are important tips for staying safe before, during and after severe weather:

- Listen to local radio and TV stations for updated emergency information.
- Get the latest weather information from the National Weather Service at www.weather.gov.
- Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio or battery-powered/hand crank radio with a NOAA Weather Band to get weather warnings directly from the NWS.
- Make sure you have a safe place

to go when severe thunderstorm or tornado warnings are forecast. Safe areas include basements and interior rooms such as bathrooms or closets on the lowest level of a sturdy building. Stay away from windows.

- Do not drive or walk through floodwater. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Turn around and find another route if a road is flooded – it is almost always more dangerous than it appears.
- Have a family emergency plan.

Continued on Page 4

Active 2013 Atlantic Hurricane Season

In its 2013 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is forecasting an active or extremely active season this year. For the six-month hurricane season, which began June 1, NOAA's Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook says there is a 70 percent likelihood of 13 to 20 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher), of which seven to 11 could become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher), including three to six major hurricanes (Category 3, 4 or 5; winds of 111 mph or higher). Learn more at www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories201320130523_hurricane_outlook_atlantic.html.

In This Issue

Hurricane Season

Page 1

Before, During and After a Tornado

Page 2

Wildfires | Marcelo's Minute

Page 3

GAO Report | New Weather Station

Page 4

Spring Cleaning Safety

Page 5

Survey Shows Small Businesses Still Not Prepared

Page 6

Smartphones | National Planning Frameworks Virtual Roundtables | UN Report

Page 7

Insurance Planning

Page 8

Before, During and After a Tornado

As the recovery effort continues in states devastated by the recent storms and tornadoes, it is important to review what should be done to prepare for a tornado, how to act during the disaster and what steps can be done afterwards for those affected by the storm and those looking to volunteer, donate or assist neighbors in need.

This information, reprinted from the Ready campaign (www.Ready.gov), looks at how to prepare for, survive and recover from a tornado.

Preparing Before a Tornado

Every state is at some risk of tornadoes and the damage that they leave behind. Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible.

To begin preparing for any disaster, you should build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan. When your area is under a tornado watch, be alert to changing weather conditions and listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.

Ready.gov has planning tools whether you are a business, school, workplace, or anything in between.

Through the use of everyday technology, individuals, families, responders and organizations can successfully prepare for, adapt to and recover from disruptions brought on by emergencies and/or disasters. With effective planning, it is possible to take advantage of technology before, during and after a crisis to communicate with loved ones and manage your financial affairs.

Taking Cover During a Tornado

If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately! Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris, so remember to protect your head. Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe

room, basement, storm cellar or the lowest building level. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.

If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Put on sturdy shoes. Do not open windows.

Continue to monitor your battery-powered radio or television for emergency information.

Recovering After a Tornado

After a disaster strikes, use extreme caution when returning home. You may be anxious to see your property, but do not return to your home before the area is declared to be safe by local officials. Before entering your home, be sure to take the following measures:

- Check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage.
- Keep a battery-powered radio with you so you can listen for emergency updates and news reports.
- Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home.
- If you have any doubts about safety, have your residence inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before entering.

Text, email and use social media to let everyone know you're okay. Avoid making phone calls to free up the lines for first responders. You can also let your family and friends know you are safe and well after an emergency via <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>. This website is designed to help make communication between family members and friends easier.

If you are a parent or guardian, keep in mind that children affected by disasters can have trouble coping with the effects and aftermath of disasters. Even children who are not directly affected by a disaster can have fears. For tips on talking to children and helping to support them after a disaster, Ready.gov offers a "Listen, Protect and Connect" coping guide at www.ready.gov/kids/parents-teachers.



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

Getting Prepared and Protected from Wildfires

Wildfires spread quickly and often go undetected until it's too late. Across our nation every year communities are affected by major wildfires. While some homes survive, more homes do not.

Homes have a much higher likelihood of surviving wildfires when residents are prepared. Predictability, prevention and being prepared can minimize your risk in case of wildfire and help reduce the loss of life, property and resources.

In most cases, people start wildfires. Promote and practice wildfire safety with these tips:

- Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches out of their reach.
- Clearly mark all driveway entrances and display your name and address.
- Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.
- Post fire emergency telephone numbers.
- Ensure adequate accessibility by large fire vehicles to your property.
- Plan several escape routes away from your home - by car and by foot.

For more information, visit www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/wildfire/.

The State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians to consider their insurance options before the winds and rains arrive. Hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30. No matter where you live in Virginia, hurricanes and their resulting flooding can threaten lives and property. Once a hurricane develops in the Atlantic, it will be difficult to find an insurance company willing to write related coverage until the storm threat passes. The Bureau of Insurance offers free consumer guides for homeowners and commercial property owners at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi. For more information, contact the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560, TDD 804-371-9206. For additional emergency preparedness information, visit www.ready.virginia.gov.

Marcelo's Minute

Summer Weather



Marcelo Ferreira

I'm sure you know by now that hurricane season started on June 1. The "official" first day of summer happens in June. June also is National Safety Month, and includes Lightning Safety Awareness Week.

As you can tell, there are a lot of summertime conditions that can cause injury and damage to our homes and businesses.

I encourage you to follow our emergency information blog this month – which can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog – as we will be featuring two articles each week on summer safety issues as we get outside and become more active after the winter. Topics include swimming pool safety; heat and sun safety; slips, trips and falls.

The blog is a great way to receive preparedness information on an on going basis. And you don't need to remember to visit it. Just sign up to receive email updates. That way, anytime an article is published on the emergency information blog, you'll receive the information in your inbox. This is especially helpful during emergency events.

And finally, if you have not yet signed up to receive emergency alerts from the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean – I encourage you to do so right after you sign up for the blog.

By signing up for the blog and CEAN, you will have the latest emergency information and be much better prepared for any future emergency event.

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

Marcelo Ferreira, OEM community liaison, holds the certified emergency manager (CEM) credential from the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued a new report, "Emergency Alerts: Capabilities Have Improved, but Additional Guidance and Testing Are Needed." According to the report, an effective system to alert the public during emergencies can help reduce property damage and save lives. Since 2009, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has taken actions to improve the capabilities of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and to increase federal, state and local capabilities to alert the public, but barriers remain to fully implementing an integrated system. The GAO examined how IPAWS capabilities have changed since 2009 and what barriers, if any, affect its implementation and results of the nationwide EAS test and federal efforts to address identified weaknesses. The GAO recommends that FEMA work in conjunction with the FCC to establish guidance for states to fully implement and test IPAWS components and implement a strategy for regular nationwide EAS testing. Without a strategy for regular nationwide testing of the relay distribution system there is no assurance that EAS would work as intended. Find the report at www.gao.gov/assets/660/654135.pdf.

Hurricane Season

continued from Page 1

Everyone should know what to do in case family members are not together when severe weather happens. Get a free emergency plan worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov or from the Ready Virginia app.

- Evacuate immediately if advised to do so.
- Keep emergency supplies on hand, including at least three days' non-perishable food and water, flashlights and batteries, first-aid kit, medicines.
- Follow the instructions of local and state officials.

For more on family preparedness for hurricane season, go to www.ReadyVirginia.gov or www.ListoVirginia.gov and download the Ready Virginia app from the App Store or Google Play.

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



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



New Weather Station at Virginia Emergency Operations Center

A new weather station at the Virginia Emergency Operations Center is available for the public and for local emergency managers, as well as staff members at the EOC.

Online at <http://vdem-richmondva.alerteagle.com/> and on display at the EOC, the weather station reports hour-by-hour rainfall, lightning, humidity and barometer data. The station data is free online and accessible on mobile devices, and posts NOAA Weather Radio alerts as well as text alerts from the National Weather Service.

The station also features historical graphs to assist local emergency managers with after-action and mitigation reports; with organizing data such as proof of lighting to support damaged radio insurance claims in addition to how much rainfall accumulated in specific time frames to gauge the amount of damage and flooding.



Weather station at the Virginia Emergency Operations Center. Photo by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management

Spring Cleaning Safety

For many residents, it is time to work on their spring cleaning checklist. As many begin the arduous task of cleaning and clearing the debris that accumulated over the winter months, Fairfax City fire officials recommend that residents add home fire safety to their to-do list.

To assist you in fireproofing your home during the spring season, consider the following safety tips:

- Check and clean your smoke alarm.
- Check and clean your carbon monoxide alarm.
- Check your fire extinguisher.
- Make sure electrical outlets and extension cords are not overloaded.
- Have air-conditioning units and other electrical appliances checked by a licensed professional.
- Clear your basement and attics of old papers, oily rags and broken furniture.
- Make sure all fire exits or escape routes that are identified in your fire escape drill are clear of any debris and are not blocked-off.
- Inspect your charcoal/gas grills.
- Spread mulch at least a foot away from the house with a non-combustible barrier in between, such as rock.

Finally, when you are finished spring cleaning make sure all cleaning products are stored in child safety latched drawers and cabinets with the original labels.

This fire safety message is reprinted from the "Fire Safety Message of the Month" produced by the City of Fairfax Fire Department.

Hurricane Sandy After-Action Report from New York City

This after-action report is a high-level summary of recommended improvements to the city's operations before, during and immediately following Hurricane Sandy and was developed by the Mayor's Office with input from the many city agencies that responded and continue to participate in the city's recovery from the storm. Read the complete report at www.nyc.gov/html/recovery/downloads/pdf/sandy_aar_5.2.13.pdf.

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



Despite Recent Disasters, Survey Shows Most Small Business Owners Still Not Getting Prepared

Despite the devastation and lasting effects caused by Superstorm Sandy and other disasters over the past year, 70 percent of small businesses don't consider themselves at risk for experiencing a similar disaster in the future, according to a new survey from FedEx Corp. and the American Red Cross.

Fewer than 10 percent of small businesses surveyed report taking any disaster preparedness actions based on the effects of Sandy. Even those small businesses that have been impacted by Hurricane Sandy or another disaster (13 percent were impacted by Hurricane Sandy, eight percent impacted by other local/regional disasters), half feel it's unlikely they will be affected again in the next five years.

This lack of concern by many small businesses has led FedEx and the American Red Cross to take action to help boost preparedness levels across the country.

While most small businesses aren't worried about the next disaster, 51 percent do have a plan in place to continue providing services to customers if one does happen. Most of their plans center on technology and the fear of losing data, with 92 percent having data back up and 81 percent having server recovery plans in place. But for the 49 percent of businesses that don't have any plan, one disaster could mean the end of their business.

The Red Cross recommends several steps that all small business owners should do to prepare themselves and their employees for disasters:


- 1. Obtain necessary safety equipment. Budget for and purchase any safety equipment, first-aid kits, Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and shelter-in-place supplies that may be needed. Make sure employees know how to access and use these supplies.
- 2. Write a plan for responding to emergencies.
- 3. Develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). For more tips and information, including a downloadable "SMBe Prepared Playbook" created in conjunction with Joe Gibbs, NFL Hall of Fame coach and small business owner, visit www.readyrating.org/JoinNowFedEx.aspx.

Source: MarketWatch
www.marketwatch.com/story/despite-recent-disasters-survey-shows-most-small-business-owners-still-not-getting-prepared-2013-05-02



Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN)
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.

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.



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

How Do I Protect the Information on My Smartphone?

We've come to depend on our smartphones so heavily it is hard to remember what we did before we had them. If you have a smartphone, you now carry a fully functional computer in your pocket or purse. That's a tremendous amount of information at your fingertips! Therefore, it is paramount that you safeguard the smartphone.

What are some simple steps you can take to protect your smartphone?

- Update the operating system.
- Password protect your device.
- Be cautious with public Wi-Fi.
- Enable encryption.

Additional tips and more information is online in the MS-ISAC Cyber Tips newsletter at <http://msisac.cisecurity.org/newsletters/2013-02.cfm>.

Virtual Roundtables for The National Planning Frameworks

Join FEMA for upcoming virtual roundtables to have in-depth discussions of the National Planning Frameworks. During these 60-minute events, you will learn how to apply the National Planning Frameworks to build, sustain and deliver the core capabilities.

The dates for the virtual roundtables are:

- Monday, June 10; 2 p.m. EDT
- Friday, June 14; 10 a.m. EDT
- Wednesday, June 19; 6 p.m. EDT

Framework authors will be on hand to provide background information and engage in an interactive dialogue. To prepare for the virtual roundtable, you may view the online tutorial and download the Frameworks at www.fema.gov/national-planning-frameworks.

The National Planning Frameworks are part of the National Preparedness System (www.fema.gov/national-preparedness-system), which outlines the tools and processes to help achieve national preparedness. There is one framework for each of the five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery.



UN Secretary-General Warns: "Economic losses from disasters are out of control"

On May 15, the United Nations issued a stark warning to the world's business community that economic losses linked to disasters are "out of control" and will continue to escalate unless disaster risk management becomes a core part of business investment strategies.

UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, said: "We have carried out a thorough review of disaster losses at the national level and it is clear that direct losses from floods, earthquakes and drought have been underestimated by at least 50 percent. So far this century, direct losses from disasters are in the range of \$2.5 trillion.



"Economic losses from disasters are out of control and can only be reduced in partnership with the private sector, which is responsible for 70 percent to 85 percent of all investment worldwide in new buildings, industry and small to medium sized enterprises. The principles of disaster risk reduction must be taught at business schools and become part of the investor's mind-set."

The UNISDR 2013 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR13): Creating Shared Value: the Business Case for Disaster Risk Reduction highlights how the transformation of the global economy over the last 40 years has led to rapid increases in disaster risk in low, medium and high income countries.

Learn more online: www.unisdr.org/archive/33003.

SCC's Bureau of Insurance Encourages Virginians to Plan Now for Hurricane Season

Virginians know all too well that Mother Nature can be a determined adversary. With hurricane season just around the corner, the State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Bureau of Insurance encourages Virginians to consider their insurance options before the winds and rains arrive. Hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30. Once a hurricane develops in the Atlantic, it will be difficult to find an insurance company willing to write related coverage until the storm threat passes.

Review your existing insurance policy carefully so you know what it does and does not cover. Contact your insurance agent or company or the Bureau of Insurance if you have any questions.

Some homeowners policies contain a special deductible for wind or hurricane losses. Some insurance companies automatically include a wind or hurricane deductible, while others offer this deductible at the policyholder's option. The deductible is the amount that you are responsible for paying before the insurance company pays its portion of the claim.

Wind or hurricane deductibles may be written as a flat amount, such as \$1,000. Or, they may be applied to the loss as a percentage of the insurance coverage on the dwelling. For example, assume a hurricane causes damage amounting to \$3,000 and the dwelling is insured for \$100,000. If the policy has a 2 percent hurricane deductible, the insured would pay \$2,000 and the insurance company would pay \$1,000. The amounts of these deductibles may vary depending upon where you live, so the bureau suggests that you shop around and compare prices and terms.

The bureau reminds residents that most hurricane damage comes from flooding, not high winds. Homeowners insurance policies issued in Virginia generally do not provide coverage for damage to your home and belongings due to floods. However, the federal government does sell insurance for direct flood and flood-related damage to residents of eligible communities through its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There is a waiting period for flood insurance policies to take effect. For more information

on this program, contact your insurance agent or the NFIP at 1-888-225-5356 or visit www.floodsmart.gov. Be sure to find out whether your flood policy provides coverage for your contents. Policyholders may also want to consider the following:

- Does your insurance pay replacement costs, or actual cash value for a covered loss?
- Are the contents of your home covered in the event of a hurricane? Homeowners policies generally cover contents up to specified limits, but additional coverage may be purchased.
- Are automobiles and other vehicles covered in the event of a hurricane or other windstorm?
- Have you purchased coverage for sewer backup? Most homeowners policies do not provide coverage for sewer backup, but policyholders may purchase additional coverage for this.

Ask your insurance agent or company how you can reduce the severity of a loss, should a hurricane strike. If you must evacuate, know the name of your insurance company and take your homeowners, auto and other insurance policies with you. They will contain your policy number and the phone number of your insurance company in case you have questions or need to file a claim. Prepare a complete inventory of your personal property ahead of time including serial numbers, photographs and videotapes. Keep your home inventory in a safe place and take it with you if you evacuate. If your property is damaged by a hurricane, make any necessary emergency repairs and take reasonable steps to protect your property from further damage. Make a list of all damage to the house and its contents and include photographs, notes and repair-related receipts. The Bureau of Insurance offers free consumer guides for homeowners and commercial property owners with information about what to do when a disaster strikes.

These and many other consumer insurance guides are available at www.scc.virginia.gov/boi. For more information, contact the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560, TDD 804-371-9206. For additional emergency preparedness information relating to hurricanes and other types of disasters, visit www.ready.virginia.gov.

Reprinted from the Virginia SCC Bureau of Insurance