

Emergency Preparedness

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Flood Safety Awareness Week

The week of March 12-16 is Flood Awareness Week in Virginia.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management

encourages residents to be prepared:

- Talk to your insurance provider about your policy to evaluate whether you need additional coverage. Typically, property insurance does not cover flood damage.

- Get a kit of emergency supplies and prepare a portable kit in case you have to evacuate.

- Familiarize yourself with the terms that identify a flooding hazard. A **flood watch** or flash flood watch means there is a possibility of flooding or a flash flood in your area. A **flood warning** means a flood is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to evacuate, do so immediately. A **flash flood warning** means a flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately; do not wait for instructions.

If you are caught in a flood

- Go to higher ground. Get out of areas subject to flooding, including dips, low spots, etc.
- If water rises in your home before you evacuate, go to the top floor, attic or roof.
- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if advised to do so.
- Avoid areas already flooded, especially when water flows fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.

- Never drive through flooded roadways. Roadbeds may be washed out under flood waters — 2 feet of moving water can sweep an SUV off the road.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio

for the latest storm information.

- If you've come in contact with floodwaters, wash your hands with soap and disinfected water.

Learn more about flooding and

preparedness at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/prepare/floods.htm, www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/ and www.nws.noaa.gov/floodsafety/floodsafe.shtml.



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The Future Is Now: Dual-Polarization Technology Arrives in the Mid-Atlantic

A major upgrade is being installed in all National Weather Service (NWS) radars across the nation. Dual-Polarization technology takes each sweep of the radar from 2-D to 3-D. Before Dual-Pol, a radar beam was transmitted only in the horizontal plane, so the beam could only receive data about falling precipitation in one direction.

With February's upgrade to the Sterling, Va., NWS radar, forecasters can now get information about

raindrop or hailstone, the "shinier" it will appear to the radar. On a radar screen, the most reflective objects correspond to the more intense colors on the color wheel, red, pink, bright purple.

Light precipitation will have the less alarming colors, light greens and blues, maybe even gray for the lightest drizzle or flurries.

The image below shows the difference between the



precipitation not only in the horizontal but in the vertical as well, telling much more about what forecasters are looking at.

Dual-Pol is a vital part of the Weather-Ready Nation effort by the NWS. Creating a Weather-Ready Nation requires providing the media, government and other key partners with the most accurate warnings and forecasts to protect lives and property.

Conventional radar products only allow forecasters to see the "brightness" of clouds and precipitation (raindrops, hail, snowflakes, etc.). The larger the

horizontal beam that a conventional radar would emit, compared to one that is equipped with Dual-Polarization technology. A dual-polarized beam sends and receives information in both the horizontal and vertical planes – creating a 3-dimensional view. The two images on the right show this in terms of individual precipitation forms, a snowflake, hailstone and raindrop.

More information is online at www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/research/dp/dual-pol.php.

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

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.

Statewide Tornado Drill on March 20

Register now 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.

In 2011 in Virginia there were 51 tornadoes, the second highest number on record (87 struck in



2004). Most tornadoes occurred during April, but tornadoes also were recorded in March, May, August, September, October and November. Nearly every part of Virginia experienced tornadoes during 2011.

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.

VASART Conference

The Virginia State Animal Response Team is sponsoring a training day on July 13, at Blue Ridge Community College, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is limited seating available. Questions: 804-346-2611; www.virginiasant.org.



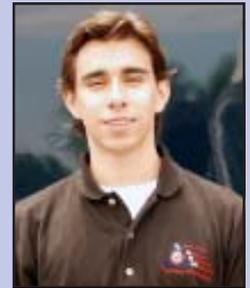
Fairfax County Emergency Blog

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

A screenshot of the Fairfax County Emergency Blog. At the top, it says "Fairfax County Emergency Information" and "Official Fairfax County Government Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Information". There are links for "Digital Preparedness" and "Blog Disclaimer". The main content is a post from February 24, 2012, titled "Wind Advisory Until Midnight; Take Precautions". The post is dated "Posted 1:32 p.m." and states: "The National Weather Service has issued a wind advisory from 3 p.m. until midnight. Winds will be 20-30 mph with gusts up to 55 mph." Below the text, there are two small images: one of a weather station and one of a radio tower. At the bottom right, it says "DIAL 9-1-1".

Marcelo's Minute

Fairfax County Participates in Statewide Tornado Drill



Marcelo Ferreira

Do you know what to do if a tornado warning is issued for Fairfax County?

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2011 was the second or third most active year on record for number of tornadoes and the most property damage from outbreaks. Fifty-one tornadoes hit Virginia, according to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Test your shelter-in-place procedures for tornado warnings by participating in the statewide tornado drill on Tuesday, March 20, at 9:45 a.m.

To support the drill, the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management will send a message through the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) notifying residents that the drill has begun. Take this opportunity to get your workplace involved in the preparedness efforts!

Find out how to conduct your own drill at home or in the workplace by visiting the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's website at www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stay-informed/tornado/conductdrill.

For additional information about tornado preparedness, visit:

- www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/prepare/tornadoes.htm
- www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stayinformed/tornadoes
- www.ready.gov/tornadoes

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 Associate Emergency Manager (AEM) credential from the Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA).

Virginia Spring Fire Season Underway

Virginia's spring fire season started Feb. 15 and runs 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 to reduce the risk of wildfires.

Department of Forestry fire safety tips include:

- 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.

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.

Find more information: www.ready.gov/earthquakes.

What is Phishing?

Phishing is an attempt by an individual or group to solicit personal information from unsuspecting users by employing social engineering techniques.

Phishing emails are crafted to appear as if they have been sent from a legitimate organization or known individual. These emails often attempt to entice users to click on a link that will take the user to a fraudulent website that appears legitimate.

The user then may be asked to provide personal information such as account usernames and passwords that can further expose them to future compromises. Additionally, these fraudulent websites may contain malicious code.

For more information on phishing visit U.S. CERT at www.us-cert.gov.

Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) – Celebrating a Decade of Service

2012 marks the 10th year the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program has provided volunteer support and resources to state, local, territorial, tribal and campus law enforcement agencies.



VIPS will be adding to its wealth of resources by launching its second e-learning course, VIPS and Disaster Response, and will release a new resource highlighting youth volunteers in law enforcement.

Keep your eyes on the VIPS website (www.policevolunteers.org/) and the VIPS newsletter for more information throughout the year. Subscribe to "VIPS Info" at www.policevolunteers.org/feedback/?src=newsInfo.

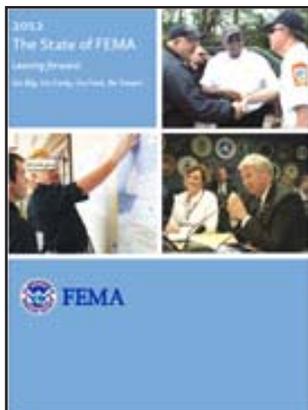
Locally, Fairfax County residents interested in volunteering should register on the VIPS website.



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2012 State of FEMA Report

For the first time, FEMA has captured the highlights of the agency's accomplishments for the year, laid out who it is and provided a vision for where the agency is going. The "2012 State of FEMA" report also shows how applying the "whole community" approach has allowed FEMA to collaborate to better prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards. Read the report online at www.fema.gov/pdf/about/state_of_fema/state_of_fema.pdf.



Over \$39.3 Million in Disaster Aid Approved for Virginia

Since the counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fluvanna, Goochland, King George, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania and the city of Fredericksburg have been eligible for individual assistance (due to the earthquake), 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 \$39.3 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).

"Virginia's rebuilding process is well underway because of the financial aid received, and as the weather improves even greater numbers of Virginians will be able to start repairs on their homes and businesses," said State Coordinating Officer Michael Cline.

The rebuilding of Louisa County High School also took a giant step forward with a \$19.1 million FEMA grant. The balance of the anticipated \$42.9 million project will be funded through insurance proceeds, the commonwealth and local sources.



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

TSA Pre Check Program to Expand to Busiest U.S. Airports, Including Two Local Ones

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Administrator John S. Pistole last month announced the expansion of TSA Pre Check, a passenger pre-screening initiative, to additional airports across the country following the program's success at seven pilot locations.

With more than 336,000 passengers screened to date through TSA Pre Check lanes, this screening concept enhances security by enabling TSA to focus its efforts on passengers the agency knows less about while providing expedited screening for travelers who volunteer information about themselves prior to flying.

The TSA program is currently operating with American Airlines at airports in Dallas, Miami, Las Vegas, Minneapolis and Los Angeles, and with Delta Air Lines at airports in Atlanta, Detroit, Las Vegas and Minneapolis. US Airways, United Airlines and Alaska Airlines are all opting in new passengers and will begin operations later this year.

As part of the initiative's expansion, it will be implemented at the Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) and the Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) this year.

TSA will continue expanding the program to additional airlines and airports once they are operationally ready.

If TSA determines a passenger is eligible for expedited screening following the pre check vetting process, information will be embedded in the barcode of the passenger's boarding pass.

TSA will read the barcode at the security checkpoint and then may refer the passenger to a TSA Pre Check lane,

where they will undergo expedited screening, which could include no longer removing the following items:

- Shoes.
- 3-1-1 compliant bag from carry-on.
- Laptop from bag.
- Light outerwear/jacket.
- Belt.

TSA will always incorporate random and unpredictable security measures throughout the airport and no individual will be guaranteed expedited screening. As part of the agency's risk-based security initiative, TSA is currently testing several other screening initiatives, including initiatives designed to provide positive ID verification for airline pilots and the use of expanded behavior detection techniques.

For more information about TSA's risk-based security initiatives, visit www.tsa.gov.

9-1-1 Education Month

The month of April is 9-1-1 Education Month, a time to recognize the importance of 9-1-1 and the role they play in ensuring effective and efficient emergency response in times of crisis.

Things to Know About 9-1-1

- Know WHEN to call 9-1-1. 9-1-1 is for emergencies only. You should only be dialing 9-1-1 if someone is hurt or in danger, or if you are in immediate need of police, fire, or medical assistance.
- Know where you are.
- Stay calm.
- Never hang up.

April is National 9-1-1 Education Month





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

National Fire Academy Begins Eighth Year of Coffee Break Training

The U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) National Fire Academy (NFA) recently began its eighth year of providing timely and useful instructional tips for first responders through its popular online *Coffee Break* training series.

Launched on Nov. 29, 2005, *Coffee Break* training consists of one-topic weekly training vignettes delivered to USFA website visitors and more than 43,000 email subscribers in the U.S. and around the world. Each training item is designed to be consumed in just a few minutes over a "cup of coffee." The NFA has delivered more than 350 of these training segments since the program began.

The initial *Coffee Break* series focused on fire protection topics such as automatic sprinkler systems, building and fire codes, fire protection water supplies and safe storage practices. From time to time there are special lessons developed called "Hot Coffee" (significant emerging issues) and "Special Blend" (reminders of historically significant events / lessons learned). In the last few years, the *Coffee Break* series has expanded to include fire investigation, fire prevention management, public education, emergency medical services and research techniques at the NETC Learning Resource Center. Recently, other parts of the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency began adopting the NFA's *Coffee Break* model.



Stay up-to-date with news and information from around the National Capital Region. Visit and bookmark www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov. Learn about emergency preparedness and more.

U.S. Fire Administrator Ernie Mitchell said, "The *Coffee Break* training series is one of our most popular media for sharing up-to-the minute training. Busy first responders can get a quick and easy-to-read training tip that they can apply the same day it appears."

Deputy Fire Administrator Glenn Gaines added, "The purpose of the *Coffee Break* training program is to deliver provocative topics with measurable learning objectives. They are modeled on Gordon Graham's insightful 'five minutes of short, verifiable training' that over time accumulates into real performance improvements."

Students who receive the *Coffee Break* training series can earn free continuing education units through quarterly exams posted on NFA online. For more information, or to sign up for the free *Coffee Break* training series, visit the USFA's website: www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/index.shtm.

Earthquake Is Center Stage for the March 2012 Symposium

The 2012 Virginia Emergency Management Symposium, March 28-30, at the Hilton Richmond Hotel and Spa-Short Pump in Richmond, Va., will cover many diverse subjects, but not surprisingly Virginia's earthquake will be the subject of several sessions. During the general session, Martin Chapman, the state geologist and Scott Keim, Louisa County, Va., fire chief and emergency management coordinator will provide an overview of the quake and discuss response efforts.

Breakout sessions will cover the quake from several angles including schools and power. Additional breakout sessions will address a Caroline County bus accident, private sector support and cyber terrorism joining previously highly rated topics such as legal concerns for emergency managers and social media.

Register at www.vemaweb.org.

Remember “Turn Around, Don’t Drown”

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other severe weather-related hazard.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous floodwater. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near floodwaters. Why? The main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water. Many of the deaths occur in automobiles as they are swept downstream. Of these drownings, many are preventable, but too many people continue to drive around the barriers warning that the road is flooded.

Most flood-related deaths and injuries could be avoided if people who come upon areas covered with water followed this simple advice: **Turn Around, Don’t Drown.**

The reason that so many people drown during flooding is because few of them realize the incredible power of water. A mere 6 inches of fast-moving floodwater can knock over an adult. It takes only 2 feet of rushing water to carry away most vehicles. This includes pickups and SUVs.

If you come to an area covered with water, you will not know the depth of the water or the condition of the ground under the water. This is especially true at night, when your vision is more limited.

Play it smart, play it safe. Whether driving or walking, any time you come to a flooded road, **Turn Around, Don’t Drown.**

Safety Rules

Turn Around, Don’t Drown

- Monitor the NOAA Weather Radio, or your favorite news source for vital weather-related information.
- If flooding occurs, get to higher ground. Get out of areas subject to flooding. This includes dips, low spots, canyons, washes, etc.
- Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams. It takes only 6 inches of fast-flowing water to sweep you off your feet.
- Roadbeds may be washed out under floodwaters. NEVER drive through flooded roadways.
- Don’t allow children to play near high water, storm drains or ditches. Hidden dangers could lie beneath the water.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

More information on flood safety is available through the National Weather Service, www.noaa.gov/floods.htm, or the Federal Alliance For Safe Homes, www.flash.org. Call the toll-free help desk at 1-877-221-SAFE or email flash@flash.org.

You can also visit <http://tadd.weather.gov/> for the “Turn Around, Don’t Drown” toolkit.

