

Emergency Preparedness

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Lifesaving Text Messages

Stay ahead of the severe weather curve with emergency text message alerts sent directly to your mobile phone. These alerts won't get backlogged and can be lifesaving because they inform you and your family to take preventive measures immediately.

To get emergency alerts, first check to see if your mobile phone is equipped to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) – more details at www.fema.gov/commercial-mobile-alert-system.



Be sure to also subscribe for alerts in your area through www.weather.gov/subscribe as well as weather alerts via CEAN, Fairfax County's Community Emergency Alert Network at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean.



For text message updates from FEMA (standard message and data rates apply), text PREPARE to 43362 to sign up and STOP to 43362 to unsubscribe.



CDC, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has joined millions of "pinners" around the country with an official presence on Pinterest, a virtual pinboard sharing site. Find CDC's Pinterest at <http://pinterest.com/CDCgov>.

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Emergency News
by email
 Receive emergency preparedness information and emergency news by email
Subscribe → www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

Get Tech Ready Before Power Outages

Power outages often accompany severe weather. Make sure you can stay connected with loved ones by using these technology tips:

- Keep extra batteries for your phone in a safe place or purchase a solar-powered or hand crank charger. These chargers are good emergency tools to keep your laptop and other small electronics working in the event of a power outage.
- If you own a car, purchase a car phone charger because you can charge your phone if you lose power at your home.
- Program "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) contacts into



your cellphone so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you are unable to use your phone.

- Conserve your cellphone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in airplane mode, closing apps you are not using and keeping phone calls brief.
- If you do not have a cellphone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster.

For more information on how to get ready before severe weather, visit www.ready.gov/get-tech-ready.

CapitalRegionUpdates.Gov

News & Info - Around the Region

Bookmark www.CapitalRegionUpdates.gov for regional news and information.

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.

Did you get the text message (shown at right) or the email message about the March 12 Statewide Tornado Drill?

If not, you need to sign up for text/email messages from CEAN, the Community Emergency Alert Network. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean so you won't miss any important emergency news and information from Fairfax County.



National Terrorism Advisory System

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) is a robust terrorism advisory system that provides timely information to the public about credible terrorist threats and replaces the former color-coded alert system.

Under NTAS, DHS will coordinate with other federal entities to issue detailed alerts to the public when the federal government receives information about a credible terrorist threat.

NTAS alerts provide a concise summary of the potential threat including geographic region, mode of transportation or critical infrastructure potentially affected by the threat, actions being taken to ensure public safety, as well as recommended steps that individuals, communities, business and governments can take to help prevent, mitigate or respond to a threat.



NTAS alerts will include a clear statement on the nature of the threat, which will be defined in one of two ways:

- "Elevated Threat": Warns of a credible terrorist threat against the United States.
- "Imminent Threat": Warns of a credible, specific and impending terrorist threat against the United States.

Depending on the nature of the threat, alerts may be sent to law enforcement, distributed to affected areas of the private sector or issued more broadly to the public through both official and social media channels – including a designated DHS webpage (www.dhs.gov/alerts), Facebook and via Twitter @NTASAlerts.

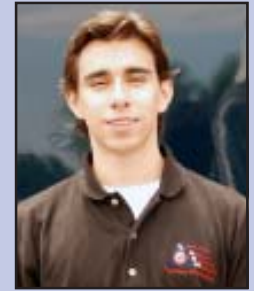
NTAS alerts and posters will also be displayed in places such as transit hubs, airports and government buildings. NTAS threat alerts will be issued for a specific time period and will automatically expire.

Alerts may be extended if new information becomes available or as a specific threat evolves.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov/alerts.

Marcelo's Minute

Communities Gather to Strengthen Resiliency



Marcelo Ferreira

Recovering from a local disaster requires the support of the entire community. On March 8, 67 individuals representing 36 organizations gathered to increase collaboration during local emergency response and recovery efforts at a Volunteer and Donations Management Workshop. Those represented included nonprofits, faith-based groups and community-based organizations.

The workshop was just one step in an effort to bring groups together that may have a role in providing services to residents during and after an emergency. Last October, 120 community representatives came together during the Fairfax County Roundup to gain an understanding of local disaster response and recovery systems. Following that workshop, an annex to the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan was developed to outline a framework for coordinating the use of volunteers and donations after gaps had been identified from previous emergencies. By utilizing a "building block" approach from the roundup, the Volunteer and Donations Management Workshop educated participants on past initiatives and current procedures, while identifying next steps to strengthen and build relationships.

Many organizations have been leading the way to ensure that Fairfax County is prepared, including the Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council; Faith Communities in Action: Emergency Planning Steering Committee; Northern Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and Volunteer Fairfax. Organizations with a role in an emergency are encouraged to join one of these groups.

For more details about emergency preparedness, contact me at 571-350-1013, TTY 711; e-mail marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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

Disaster Preparation, Response and Recovery Knows No Borders

By Tom Lambiase

When natural disasters hit locally or elsewhere within the U.S. many are quick to respond with financial, physical and/or spiritual help. But what about disasters that strike other, less affluent or prepared countries?

Haiti is a case in point. A massive earthquake in early 2010 brought this, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, to the attention of the world community. Estimates of the number killed exceed 300,000, but while recovery efforts continue today, they are much less in the limelight.

Haiti has since borne the effects of other disasters such as Hurricane Sandy last year. The pictures on the next two pages were taken just days after Sandy struck this island during a medical relief mission sponsored by the Lazarus Project Haiti (<http://lazarusprojecthaiti.org>).

One very old lady with tears running down her cheeks explained how the river, now running through their village, had destroyed her garden, which for her was all she had to live on.

Although initial response to these disasters is usually best left to trained professionals, preparation and recovery efforts can be a very rewarding way of serving those less fortunate. A “God way” of connecting with the teams providing this support is through local faith-based organizations.

Tom Lambiase is chairman of the Faith Communities in Action: Emergency Planning Steering Committee and their representative to Citizen Corps Council and Northern Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Read a short journal-style diary of his week in Haiti on Page 5. All pictures on these two pages provided by Lambiase.



The small child in my arms is a 9-day old born with a club foot. A condition easily treated in the U.S., but in Haiti – if the infant survives childhood – the condition will likely confine him to an extremely hard existence.



The massive flooding.



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

A Week in Haiti

I am happy to return, but a bit sad that the trip has ended. I got in yesterday afternoon after I was able to get an earlier than expected flight out of Miami (a story in itself). This trip was very different from all the others. It was a mobile medical mission with two doctors and nurses and assorted other clinic staff (lab/pharmacy/triage) – 14 total. I got to do miscellaneous support including crowd control. And having seen 650-700 folks over the course of the week there were crowds.

We were supposed to spend the first three days in a remote village in the district of the school (but several miles away) and the final two at another village even farther inland.

Monday the road to this village was blocked by running water and an angry crowd protesting the government's lack of help to stop the river running through their village (either the hurricane that hit two days earlier had changed the course of the river – or someone did). So we turned around and went to a school for the day's clinic.

Tuesday we got to do the "river" crossing (about a quarter mile of water flowing over the major roadway east-west to the Dominican Republic, and into the remote village. The same for Wednesday, although for some reason the water was higher – it was actually coming in over the running board of the van. I had (wisely?) opted to ride the big truck, in the photo, with a much higher clearance.

Lots of ailing folk/women with small children/old folk. Rewarding to give even a little help and hope.

Thursday the water was back with a vengeance and we diverted to the Little Children Orphanage for the day's clinic.

Friday – no safe passage again and went instead to the home of one of the translators who brought in his neighbors and folks from the nearby tent city. Many stories to tell and pictures to see.

Please keep the Haitian people in your prayers. Hugs and blessings.

Tom



The open-air tent is the triage area for the mission team that provided very basic medical services to a remote village.



Above and below: Running water from a river diverted by the storm, now flowing over the main east-west road between the Dominican Republic and Port-au-Prince. At times this water was running two or more feet deep and virtually impassible even for the semitrucks that frequent this route.





Do You Want to Be a Disease Detective?

New outbreaks happen every day and CDC's disease detectives are on the front lines, working 24/7 to save lives and protect people. When a new outbreak happens, disease detectives are sent in to figure out how they started, before they can spread.

In the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's new, free iPad app, you get to "Solve the Outbreak."

You'll play the role of an epidemic intelligence service agent. Find clues about outbreaks and make tough decisions about what to do next.

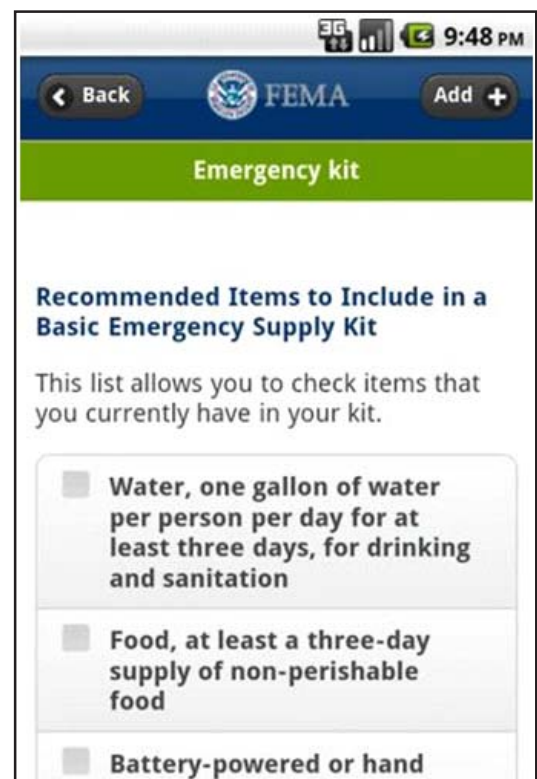
- Do you quarantine the village?
- Talk to people who are sick?
- Ask for more lab results?

- With fictional outbreaks based on real-life cases, you'll have to puzzle through the evidence to earn points for each clue.
- The better your answers, the higher your score – and the more quickly you'll save lives.
- You'll start out as a trainee and will earn badges by solving cases, with the goal of earning the top rank of disease detective.
- The new app includes three outbreaks, with more coming soon. Get more details at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/solve-the-outbreak/id592485067?mt=8>

FEMA's Preparedness App

Prepare for severe weather hazards with free mobile apps on your smartphone. The FEMA app (shown at right) contains disaster safety tips, interactive lists for storing your emergency kit and emergency meeting location information and a map with open shelters and open FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers.

FEMA's app is free to download through your smartphone provider's app store. More details at www.fema.gov/smartphone-app.



ReadyNOVA
Family & Business Preparedness Planners

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

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.

Get more details online from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/workersafety.asp>.

Visit the New Citizen Corps and CERT Web Pages

The Citizen Corps website and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Web page have relocated to new homes. FEMA has consolidated all of its online content, including content currently on the Citizen Corps website, into two websites: *FEMA.gov* and *Ready.gov*.

In addition to reducing costs, this website migration provides an opportunity to increase visibility of the programs to an entirely new audience and to recruit new volunteers. The new website locations also give easy access to more resources than ever and an updated look and feel for online content.

Now when you try visiting the original Citizen Corps website, you should be automatically redirected to the new page at www.ready.gov/citizen-corps. Likewise, if you try visiting the original CERT website, you should be automatically redirected to its new page at www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams.

The new Web pages should have all of the functions of the original Citizen Corps and CERT websites, including program registration and profile updates. State-specific pages are forthcoming, built to drive more traffic to the state websites.

Be sure to check out the new Citizen Corps and CERT Web pages for the latest program news and updates. If anything is missing or does not work properly, email citizencorps@fema.dhs.gov.

Governor Hosts First Annual Governor’s Cyber Challenge at George Mason University

Governor Bob McDonnell hosted the first annual Governor’s Cyber Challenge in early March. This challenge invited all high school students in the commonwealth to participate in a series of online cyber quizzes, with the top 40 students asked to participate in a live championship competition at George Mason University for \$10,000 in scholarships. The program featured 110 schools, from throughout the commonwealth, that registered 733 students for the challenge.

“Our culture continues to become more technology centered and reliant on our information systems,” said McDonnell. “Increasingly the threat of a cyber attack is real and urgent. To be prepared, we need a workforce properly trained in cyber security. Unfortunately, as of today, estimates show that the nation as a whole is short an estimated 20,000 workers trained in cyber security. We must continue to support and encourage programs like this that prepare the next generation for the important jobs of the future.”

“The commonwealth’s higher education institutions already produce a robust and educated information technology workforce, contributing more than 2,150 technology graduates annually to the labor pool,” added Secretary of Technology Jim Duffey. “But we know we could be doing more. Therefore, we created the Governor’s Cyber Challenge to help educate and excite our students about education and careers in cyber security.”

This year’s winners are:

- First Place (winning a \$5,000 scholarship): Arlan Jaska, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.
- Second Place (winning a \$3,500 scholarship): Anirudh Bagde, Chantilly Academy, a Governor's STEM Academy.
- Third Place (winning a \$1,500 scholarship): Collin Berman, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

For more on the winners and the top 40 participants, visit www.technology.virginia.gov/docs/CyberAces.pdf.

Prepare for Meteors and Other Space Weather

As Russia continues to recover from the recent meteor damage, here's some helpful information to prepare for similar emergency events.


The American Red Cross offers safety tips for meteors (<http://redcross.chat.org/2013/02/15/betcha-never-thought-about-preparing-for-meteors/>).



Share these tips with others in your community, so everyone is prepared in case a meteor strikes in your backyard:

- Move away from windows, as they may shatter from the sonic boom.
- Have basic first aid tips available by downloading an app.
- Move to the bottom floor of a building to get away from any falling debris.

In addition to the information above, Ready.gov also has space weather safety tips. Visit www.ready.gov/space-weather for more information.



When buying emergency supplies for home, office or vehicle, make sure you have plenty of flashlights; don't forget to stock extra batteries as well.



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

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)

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