Emergency Preparedness

Published by the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management
October 2010

Fox 5 Live from the EOC

OEM Coordinator Dave McKernan (above) was one of several emergency management staff interviewed by Fox 5 reporter Matt Ackland on Monday, Sept. 13.

The television station broadcast live from the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (MPSTOC) and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during the station's focus on the nine-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Also featured on the Fox 5 broadcasts were Marcelo Ferreira, community liaison (top right), and Sulayman Brown, EOC manager, as well as MPSTOC General Manager Tracy Shelton and Matt Lyttle from Volunteer Fairfax.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed a revised draft for "Appendix I: Discovery" of FEMA's "Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners."

The appendix is available for public review and comment through Nov. 26, at *www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=4340*.

Written comments and suggestions via track changes or document comments may be submitted by e-mail to FEMA at *guidancecomments@starr-team.com*. Comments and suggestions also may be mailed or faxed to:

PBS&J
12101 Indian Creek Court
Beltsville, MD 20705
Fax: 301-210-5156
Attention: Jen Marcy

In This Issue

Fox 5 Live from the EOC
Page 1

Business Preparedness Plan Vital to Recovery
Page 2

A NIMS Nugget
Marcelo's Minute
Page 3

Special Needs Require Special Preparation
Page 4

Flu Season Is Here
Page 5

Ready for Kids
October Events
Page 6

Fire and Drought in Virginia
Page 7

Cyber Security
Page 8

Prepare for cyber security risks with computer safety information from U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team. See page 8 for details.

Business Preparedness Plan Vital to Recovery

One-fourth of all businesses that close because of a disaster never reopen, according to the Institute for Business and Home Safety. But businesses that have a disaster preparedness plan – and implement it – typically have less damage, loss and downtime than those that do not.

A business disaster preparedness plan should include measures to protect the organization's staff, building, data and inventory during a damaging event. It's critical to plan for continuing operations if the worst happens and the main business premises are unusable due to disaster damage. A sound plan typically includes a pre-identified site where the business can temporarily relocate; means to retrieve data, including employee, customer and vendor records; and a method for operating effectively with a smaller staff of key individuals.

FEMA provides a step-by-step approach to emergency planning, response and recovery for companies of all sizes in its Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry in the FEMA Library at *www.fema.gov*. Additional preparedness information can be found at the Department of Homeland Security's site: *www.ready.gov/business*.

FEMA's Private Sector Division serves as a central point of information and collaboration between federal disaster response/recovery efforts and the private sector - businesses, associations, for-profits, academic institutions and other non-governmental organizations.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) also has a preparedness guide for businesses at *www.sba.gov*; search for "disaster planning guide." SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private, nonprofit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.

Planning ahead also includes purchasing insurance, but not all perils are covered by typical commercial business policies.The SBA also recommends obtaining Business Interruption Insurance because most insurance policies do not cover lost income.

Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan

Fairfax County is susceptible to a variety of natural hazards, including floods, hurricanes and tornadoes, as well as man-made hazards such as terrorist acts and accidental releases of hazardous materials. Some of these events have the capacity for catastrophic local and regional impacts.

Following a major disaster, complex issues with impacts far beyond county government will arise. The local economy may falter due to supply-chain disruptions, infrastructure failures, business closures and/or inaccessible workplaces. There will likely be population displacement, housing shortages and rebuilding issues, and potential social and psychological impacts.

While the effects of disasters are wide ranging and cannot be predicted, pre-event planning can position Fairfax County to recover from a major incident. Methodical, thoughtful pre-event planning can establish priorities, decision-making structures and procedures, and recovery goals. These can focus and accelerate the recovery process during the stressful and often fraught post-disaster period.

Fairfax County is committed to ensuring not only that stakeholder interests are considered throughout the Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning process, but that nonprofit and private sector partners help drive and define the outcomes.

For more information about Fairfax County's Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning process, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 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 e-mail at *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

A NIMS Nugget

Does your volunteer organization interact with local government during natural and/or man-made disasters or planned events to provide some community service?

If the answer is yes, then there are some excellent training opportunities to improve your competency and understanding of the nationally recognized incident/event management processes used by federal, state, local government, assisting and coordinating agenices and non-governmental organizations. It is the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which utilizes a form of management by objectives called the Incident Command System (ICS).

Whether you are the driver of a mobile canteen vehicle providing coffee and snacks for public safety service providers on an incident scene or the director of your organization providing shelter and mass feeding support, there are various levels of training to ensure you and your organization interface seamlessly with other volunteer and governmental agencies working together to "organize the chaos."

For more information on ICS training and incident/event management, contact Joel Hendelman, program manager, NIMS Compliance, Office of Emergency Management at 571-350-1021, or by e-mail at *Joel.Hendelman@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

Ian Sterne, disaster relief coordinator - Fairfax County, American Red Cross of the National Capital Region, gives OEM staff a tour of one of the Red Cross emergency response vehicles during a recent OEM weekly staff training.

Marcelo's Minute

New Newsletter Distribution Method

Marcelo Ferreira

Thank you for reading the emergency preparedness newsletter!

Due to high demand and to distribute it more efficiently, the newsletter is being moved to a Fairfax County listserv.

If you want to continue to receive the Emergency Preparedness Newsletter sign up at *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/outreach/newsletter.htm*.

Benefits to the listserv include:

• Additional Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) protection for those registered. Individuals that register for the newsletter via the listserv are able to withhold their personal information from responses to FOIA requests seeking personal information of electronic mail subscribers.

• Facilitates the distribution and maintenance of the newsletter. Registered individuals can sign up and drop off the distribution list at their convenience via *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/outreach/newsletter.htm*.

During the next two months, the emergency preparedness newsletter will be transitioned to the listserv distribution method. If you have not signed up for the newsletter via the listserv, you will no longer receive it. To view additional listserves that Fairfax County Government offers, visit: *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/email/lists/*.

We appreciate your interest and support for increasing the awareness of disaster preparedness in our community. Please forward the newsletter to anyone who may be interested.

If you or your organization need a presentation about emergency preparedness or other emergency-related topics, let me know at 571-350-1013, TTY 711, or by e-mail at *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

Everyone, including people with disabilities, should take time before a disaster to plan for survival. Contact Bruce McFarlane in OEM at 571-350-1000 for details.

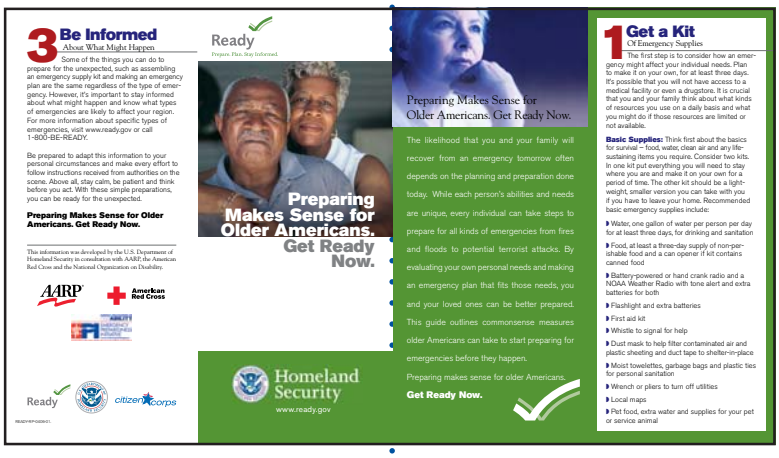
Special Needs Require Special Preparation

Do you or a family member have a disability? Are you responsible for the care of a senior citizen? Do you have small children who require special attention and supplies?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you should consider now what extra steps are needed in your family's disaster plan. Everyone, including people with disabilities, should take time before a disaster to plan for survival at home, in a shelter, or elsewhere in the event of an actual emergency.

Considerations for People Responsible for Individuals with Disabilities

• For those on respirators or other electric-powered medical equipment, make prior arrangements with your physician or check with your oxygen supplier about emergency plans, and be sure to have electrical backup for any medical equipment.
• Maintain a two-week supply of items such as dressings, nasal cannulas and suction catheters.
• Maintain a two-week supply of prescription and non-prescription medications.
• Keep copies of your medical records.
• Keep copies of prescriptions for medical equipment, supplies and medications.
• Keep extra contact lenses and supplies, extra eyeglasses and extra batteries for hearing aids.
• Make plans now to have accessible transportation in case of evacuation.
• Shelters may be limited in accommodations to meet some of the needs of those with disabilities. Prepare ahead of time to ensure you will have what you need.



Considerations for Small Children

• Assemble extra items in your disaster supply kit such as diapers, baby formula, medications, favorite books, crayons and paper, puzzles, favorite toys, a favorite blanket or pillow, pictures of family and pets, and any other items that might comfort your children.
• Remember that children's fears often stem from their imagination – fears they may be separated from family, someone will be injured or killed, or that they will be left alone. Communication is important in helping maintain your children's mental well-being in times of crisis.
• Also, keep a copy of your children's immunization records, including the date of their last tetanus-diphtheria shot.

Considerations for Those Responsible for the Care of Senior Citizens

• Remember to help older adults who live alone. They may need help evacuating from their home, preparing for a storm and dealing with the aftermath of a disaster.
• If someone you are responsible for lives in an assisted living facility or nursing home, you should contact the administrator to learn about the disaster plan for that facility.

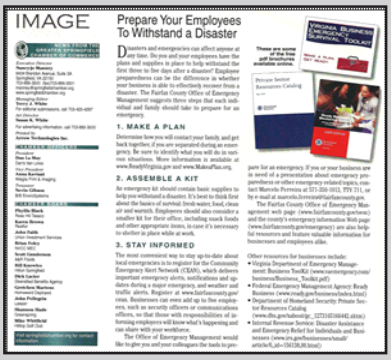
Other Considerations

• Hearing impaired – make special arrangements to receive warnings.
• Mobility impaired – plan for assistance getting to a shelter.
• Single working parents – may need help planning for a disaster or emergency.
• Non-English speaking – may need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies.
• People without vehicles – make arrangements for accessible transportation.
• Special dietary needs – take steps to ensure you maintain an adequate emergency food supply.

Additionally, people with special needs should create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers to aid them in an emergency. Discuss needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.

For more, contact Bruce McFarlane in OEM at 571-350-1000, TTY 711; *bruce.mcfarlane@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

The Office of Emergency Management has begun offering articles for area businesses to use in publications and online, as well as presentations specifically designed for area businesses – small and large. For details, contact Marcelo Ferreira at 571-350-1013. Above, an article as printed in the Springfield Chamber of Commerce newsletter.



IMAGE

Prepare Your Employees To Withstand a Disaster

1. MAKE A PLAN

2. ASSEMBLE A KIT

3. STAY INFORMED

Flu Season Is Here

Flu season typically runs October through April. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend an annual flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against the flu.

Flu vaccine is available in some local pharmacies. The cost for vaccine may vary by location. The Fairfax County Health Department will also have flu vaccine available by the end of October in its five district offices.

Although the World Health Organization has officially declared an end to the H1N1 pandemic, this does not mean that the H1N1 virus has gone away. Flu is a serious illness that can make even healthy children and adults sick. This year, a new universal vaccination recommendation was issued. Everyone over six months old should get a flu vaccine, especially people who are at high risk such as young children; pregnant women; people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease; and people 65 years and older.

People who received the 2009 H1N1 vaccine should get another flu vaccine this season. In addition to a flu vaccine, follow these steps year-round to prevent the spread of germs:

• Wash your hands with soap and water often throughout the day.
• Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands.
• Stay home from work or school when sick to avoid infecting others.

To learn more about the flu and vaccination locations, visit *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/flu*.

FAIRFAX COUNTY citizen corps

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

"There's no way government can solve the challenges of a disaster with a government-centric approach. It takes the whole team. And the private sector provides the bulk of the services every day in the community."
- FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate

Ready for Kids

Sometimes, things happen that a family doesn't expect. That's why it's important for mom and dad to get ready for any emergency. But kids shouldn't feel left out – they can help, too!

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a great website, FEMA Ready Kids, that parents and children can use to prepare for disasters and other kinds of emergencies.

On the site – *www.ready.gov/kids* – youngsters discover that disasters come in many shapes and sizes. Some, like a hurricane, are predictable. Others, like tornadoes are not. Finding out about different kinds of disasters helps everyone become better prepared.

Each step of the process includes games and other activities designed to give kids a fun way to learn how to create a disaster kit, what they might feel during and after an incident, and how to keep themselves and their families safe.

The website also includes resources for parents and teachers, including curriculum or safety information that can be used in the classroom or at home.

Disasters aren't fun, but learning about them on FEMA Ready Kids can be. Underneath it all is a lot of good information that gives children and their families tools they need to help them handle a disaster.

To learn more about preparing for disaster, go to *www.ready.gov*.

Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

October Is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

In 2009, the Fairfax County Police Department responded to 7,937 calls for service related to domestic violence. Help raise awareness of this important issue by walking in the 4th annual K-9 Krawl 5K; a dog walk to increase awareness of domestic violence and the link to animal cruelty.

The K-9 Krawl 5K is Saturday, Oct. 16. Check in is at 8:30 a.m.; the walk begins at 9 a.m. in parking lot C of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

Learn more at *http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/topics/pdf/k-9_krawl_flyer_2010-final.pdf.* Call 703-814-7009 to register or for questions.

Oct. 3-9 Is Fire Prevention Week

The theme for Fire Prevention Week is, "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!" It stresses the importance of smoke alarms and encourages everyone to take the steps necessary to update and maintain their home smoke alarm.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department will host Fire Prevention Week Open House, Saturday, Oct. 9, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at all Fairfax County fire stations.

Firefighters and paramedics will have displays and activities emphasizing fire safety, including preventing fires and fire injuries, especially in the home. Residents are encouraged to visit a nearby fire and rescue station to participate in the activities and learn more about fire safety.

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 fire that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, nearly 3,000 people die in home fires each year. About two-thirds of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working alarms. In 23 percent of home fire deaths, smoke alarms were present but did not sound.

To learn more about fire prevention, visit *www.fire preventionweek.org* or *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr*.

Fire and Drought in Virginia…What Should You Do?

by Laura Southard

Summer in Virginia was unusually hot and dry this year, and most of the state is suffering from moderate to severe drought. Many areas now have water restrictions. As these conditions continue, there is increased risk of significant wildfires during the fall fire season.

What can you do to help?

Reduce the Risk of Fire

• **Most important:** Observe area outdoor burn bans.
• Remove vines from house walls, and remove tree limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
• Prune branches and shrubs within 15 feet of chimneys and stovepipes.
• Keep the gas grill and propane tank at least 15 feet from any structure. Try not to use gas grills during high-risk times.
• Clear leaves and trash from underneath decks and porches.
• Cover attic, soffit and louver house vents with ¼ inch or smaller corrosion-resistant wire mesh to help keep embers and flaming debris from entering.
• Stack firewood 100 feet away and uphill from any structure.
• Use fire-resistant materials when building or renovating. Use non-combustible materials for roofs, which are especially vulnerable in a wildfire.
• Keep matches and lighters up high and in a locked cabinet if possible.
• Ask your local fire department to inspect your residence for fire safety and prevention.
• Ask the power company to clear branches from power lines.

Easy Ways to Conserve Water at Home

• **Most important:** Follow any water restrictions that are issued by your local government.
• Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it, such as watering indoor plants or your garden.
• Turn faucets off completely to avoid drips and slow leaks.
• Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year.
• Take short showers, not baths. Limit showers to five minutes or less.
• Turn the valves under sinks to reduce the rate of water flow.
• As you wait for shower water to heat up, collect the water in a bucket for watering plants.
• Cook food in as little water as possible.
• Use washing machines and dishwashers only when fully loaded.
• Use a pan to wash vegetables and dishes instead of letting water run continuously.
• Don't let water run while brushing teeth, washing hands or shaving. If you turn off the faucet while you brush your teeth, you can save as much as 14 gallons of water a day.

For more on wildfires and droughts, go to *www.ReadyVirginia.gov* and click on "stay informed."

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

September was National Preparedness Month, the best time to begin the process or revisit the steps you may have already taken to be ready for any disaster. When preparing your home, remember these three key steps:
1. Get an emergency kit.
2. Make a family emergency plan.
3. Be informed about the risks in your area and their appropriate responses.

To prepare at home, you should:
• Have a sufficient quantity of food, water and other supplies to last you and your family for at least three days. Your kit should also include a first-aid kit, flashlight and unique family needs.
• Practice home escape routes and communications plan with attention to elderly or disabled family members and pets.
• Identify a point of contact who can communicate among separated family members. During an emergency, it may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than across town, so an out-of-town contact may be best.
• Learn what the common disasters and action plans are for where you live.

Learn more at *Ready.gov*.

Lock your computer when you are away from it and backup all of your data. Learn more cyber security tips online at www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/index.html.

Cyber Security and Good Security Habits

There are some simple habits you can adopt that, if performed consistently, may dramatically reduce the chances that the information on your computer will be lost or corrupted.

How can you minimize the access other people have to your information?

You may be able to easily identify people who could, legitimately or not, gain physical access to your computer – family members, roommates, co-workers, members of a cleaning crew and maybe others. Identifying the people who could gain remote access to your computer becomes much more difficult. As long as you have a computer and connect it to a network, you are vulnerable to someone or something else accessing or corrupting your information; however, you can develop habits that make it more difficult.

• **Lock your computer when you are away from it.** Even if you only step away from your computer for a few minutes, it's enough time for someone else to destroy or corrupt your information. Locking your computer prevents another person from being able to simply sit down at your computer and access all of your information.

• **Disconnect your computer from the Internet when you aren't using it.** The development of technologies such as DSL and cable modems have made it possible for users to be online all the time, but this convenience comes with risks. The likelihood that attackers or viruses scanning the network for available computers will target your computer becomes much higher if your computer is always connected. Depending on what method you use to connect to the Internet, disconnecting may mean disabling a wireless connection, turning off your computer or modem, or disconnecting cables. When you are connected, make sure that you have a firewall enabled.

• **Evaluate your security settings.** Most software, including browsers and e-mail programs, offers a variety of features that you can tailor to meet your needs and requirements. Enabling certain features to increase convenience or functionality may leave you more vulnerable to being attacked. It is important to examine the settings, particularly the security settings, and select options that meet your needs without putting you at increased risk. If you install a patch or a new version of the software, or if you hear of something that might affect your settings, reevaluate your settings to make sure they are still appropriate.

What other steps can you take?

Sometimes the threats to your information aren't from other people but from natural or technological causes. Although there is no way to control or prevent these problems, you can prepare for them and try to minimize the damage.

• **Protect your computer against power surges and brief outages.** Aside from providing outlets to plug in your computer and all of its peripherals, some power strips protect your computer against power surges. Many power strips now advertise compensation if they do not effectively protect your computer. Power strips alone will not protect you from power outages, but there are products that do offer an uninterruptible power supply when there are power surges or outages. During a lightning storm or construction work, which increase the odds of power surges, consider shutting your computer down and unplugging it from all power sources.

• **Back up all of your data.** Whether or not you take steps to protect yourself, there will always be a possibility that something will happen to destroy your data. You have probably already experienced this at least once – losing one or more files due to an accident, a virus or worm, a natural event, or a problem with your equipment. Regularly backing up your data on a CD or network reduces the stress and other negative consequences that result from losing important information. Determining how often to back up your data is a personal decision. If you are constantly adding or changing data, you may find weekly backups to be the best alternative; if your content rarely changes, you may decide that your backups do not need to be as frequent. You don't need to back up software that you own on CD-ROM or DVD-ROM – you can reinstall the software from the original media if necessary.

More information about cyber security can be found at *www.us-cert.gov*.

Both the National Cyber Security Alliance and the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) have identified good security habits as one of the top tips for home users.