Emergency Preparedness

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Fairfax County Coordinator of Emergency Management David McKernan holds the proclamation recognizing September as Emergency Preparedness Month in Fairfax County along with members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, emergency management staff, volunteers and representatives from partner organizations during the presentation. September was also National Preparedness Month. Read about some of the month's activities in "Marcelo's Minute" on Page 3.

Photo by Lisa Connors, Office of Public Affairs

Halloween Safety Tips

Halloween and trick-or-treat season is here. Some safety tips can make this a safe Halloween season.

🎃Make sure all costumes are flame retardant. Most commercial costumes are made of flame-retardant material and you should ask your fabric shop for flame-retardant material if you make your own costume.

🎃Make sure your children can see and be seen. Expand the eye holes in commercial masks to improve peripheral vision. Add reflective tape to costumes to make them more visible to motorists.

🎃Ensure that each trick-or-treater has a working flashlight.

🎃Tell the children to remove their masks and look both ways before they cross a street.

🎃Never let a group of children

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FEMA has released the National Disaster Recovery Framework, which outlines how community recovery is supported and organized on a national level. For more information, visit www.fema.gov/recoveryframework.

New Digital Communications Recommendations to Help Prepare in Advance of an Emergency

Recent weather events such as Hurricane Irene, the earthquake on the East Coast and other natural disasters highlight the need to prepare for emergencies.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, the Ad Council and Google Crisis Response have collaborated to launch a new preparedness Web resource, Get Tech Ready (*www.ready.gov/america/getakit/tech.html*).

Released just before the start of National Preparedness Month in September, this new resource educates individuals and families about how using modern-day technology can help them prepare, adapt and recover from disruptions brought on by emergencies or disasters.

Get Tech Ready provides tips on how to use technological resources before, during and after a crisis to communicate with loved ones and manage your financial affairs. Preparedness tips on the website include:

• Learn how to send updates via text and Internet from your mobile phone to your contacts and social channels in case voice communications are not available.
• Store your important documents such as personal and financial records in the cloud or on a secure and remote area or flash or jump drive that you can keep readily available so they can be accessed from anywhere.
• Create an emergency information document using the Ready.gov Family Emergency Plan template in Google Docs (*http://bit.ly/po7LgN*) or by downloading the Ready Family Emergency Plan to record your emergency plans, found at *www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/*.

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

FEMA and FCC Communications Tip Sheet

Before a Disaster: How to Prepare Your Home and Mobile Device

• Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers in your cellphone and in or near your home phone.
• Keep charged batteries and car-phone chargers. available for back-up power for your cellphone.
• If you have a traditional land line (non-broadband or VOIP) phone, keep at least one non-cordless phone in your home because it will work even if you lose power.
• Prepare a family contact sheet. This should include at least one out-of-town contact that may be better able to reach family members in an emergency.
• Program “In Case of Emergency” (ICE) contacts into your cell phone so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you are unable to use your phone. Let your ICE contacts know that they are programmed into your phone and inform them of any medical issues or other special needs you may have.
• If you are evacuated and have call-forwarding on your home phone, forward your home phone number to your cellphone number.
• If you do not have a cellphone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster.
• Have a battery-powered radio or television available (with spare batteries).
• Subscribe to text alert services from local or state governments to receive alerts in the event of a disaster. Parents should sign up for their school district emergency alert system.

During and After a Disaster: How to Reach Friends, Loved Ones & Emergency Services

• If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1. Remember that you cannot currently text 9-1-1. If you are not experiencing an emergency, do not call 9-1-1. In Fairfax County, call 703-691-2131 for non-emergencies.
• For non-emergency communications to friends or family, use text messaging, email or social media instead of making voice calls on your cellphone to avoid tying up voice networks. Data-based services like texts and emails are less likely to experience network

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Tropical Storm Lee

Fairfax County suffered serious rain and flooding Sept. 8-9, from the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee. The storm dumped more than six inches of rain across many areas of the county, but especially in the southern part, including the Huntington community.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) monitored the storm's progress and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated on Thursday afternoon, Sept. 8, in advance of the storm. Three 12-hour EOC shifts were staffed with representatives from emergency managent and numerous county agencies and partner agencies. Public safety and Department of Public Works and Environmental Services personnel, among others, responded in the field to the rain and flood conditions.

Mike Guditus, incident commander, gets an update from DPWES inspectors.

Community partner the American Red Cross provided meals for residents.

Even after the EOC was deactivated and the rains and floodwaters subsided, numerous county agencies and OEM staff continued the recovery operations in the Huntington area, near Alexandria, shere there was a similar flood in 2006.

The Office of Emergency Management assumed incident command of the Huntington community flooding event from the Fire and Rescue Department on Monday, Sept. 12, and coordinated the county's response at the Huntington Community Center until the resource center closed on Sunday, Sept. 18.

Marcelo's Minute

An Exciting National Preparedness Month

Marcelo Ferreira

In a month encompassing an earthquake, a hurricane and local flooding, the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) conducted and participated in many events to promote emergency preparedness. Community resilience is increased when everyone in the county is ready for a disaster. For this reason, outreach efforts were specifically geared toward residents, businesses, nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

On Sept. 10, a collaborative "Get Ready Fairfax!" fair was conducted by the Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council in partnership with the Tysons Corner Center. Eleven agencies and organizations participated, promoting family preparedness and community involvement.

"OEM Live" on Channel 16 invited residents to ask questions of OEM personnel.

The Fairfax County Office for Children held a "Childcare Preparedness Conference" on Sept. 17, which included public safety personnel (including fire and rescue, police, health and OEM) workshops aimed at increasing awareness of public safety issues surrounding childcare providers. Other successful events were conducted with local area chambers of commerce, civic associations and employees of Fairfax County.

OEM encourages every business, organization and family to get involved in emergency preparedness efforts. If you or your organization would like a presentation about emergency preparedness or other emergency-related topics, let me know at 571-350-1013, TTY 711 or by email at *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

Marcelo Ferriera, OEM community liaison, holds the Associate Emergency Manager (AEM) credential from the Virginia Emergency Management Association (VEMA).

Stay informed with the latest emergency news and information. Check out Fairfax County's new emergency inforrmation blog at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog.

Fairfax County CERT Makes Program Changes

Fairfax County officials announced the establishment of a CERT steering committee and the formation of localized CERT teams. The boundaries of operation as set for each team will be based upon major highway divisions within Fairfax County, i.e. North Team (North of Dulles Toll Road to Beltway).

Fairfax County CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) was formed in 2003 and is sponsored and overseen by the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. CERT, a national program implemented in Fairfax County, is completely funded by FEMA and state grants.

CERT trains Fairfax County volunteers to help themselves, their families and local communities in times of widespread disaster when professional first responders will be significantly delayed in providing assistance. Currently there are over 600 trained CERT members within Fairfax County.

The CERT steering committee was formed due to increased demand for outreach venues and operational requests. Additionally, Fairfax County CERT has grown exponentially in the past four years, resulting in the need for more operational structure. The committee is organized to align with the federally mandated National Incident Management System or NIMS. The committee allows the CERT members to take a greater role in the operations of the program. However, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department retains the functional oversight of the CERT program.

Under the existing system, CERT members may not know if there are other CERT trained citizens in their neighborhood. These localized CERT teams will be able to familiarize with the particular circumstances in their neighborhood and train together. These communities will become familiar and aware of CERT resources *before* a major disaster impacts this region.

People who have taken CERT training are better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster whether natural or manmade. Trained individuals and teams are ready to:
1. Help themselves, family and friends with immediate assistance in their neighborhoods
2. Organize spontaneous, untrained volunteers to provide needed services.
3. Collect disaster intelligence to assist professional responders who are trying to allocate limited resources.

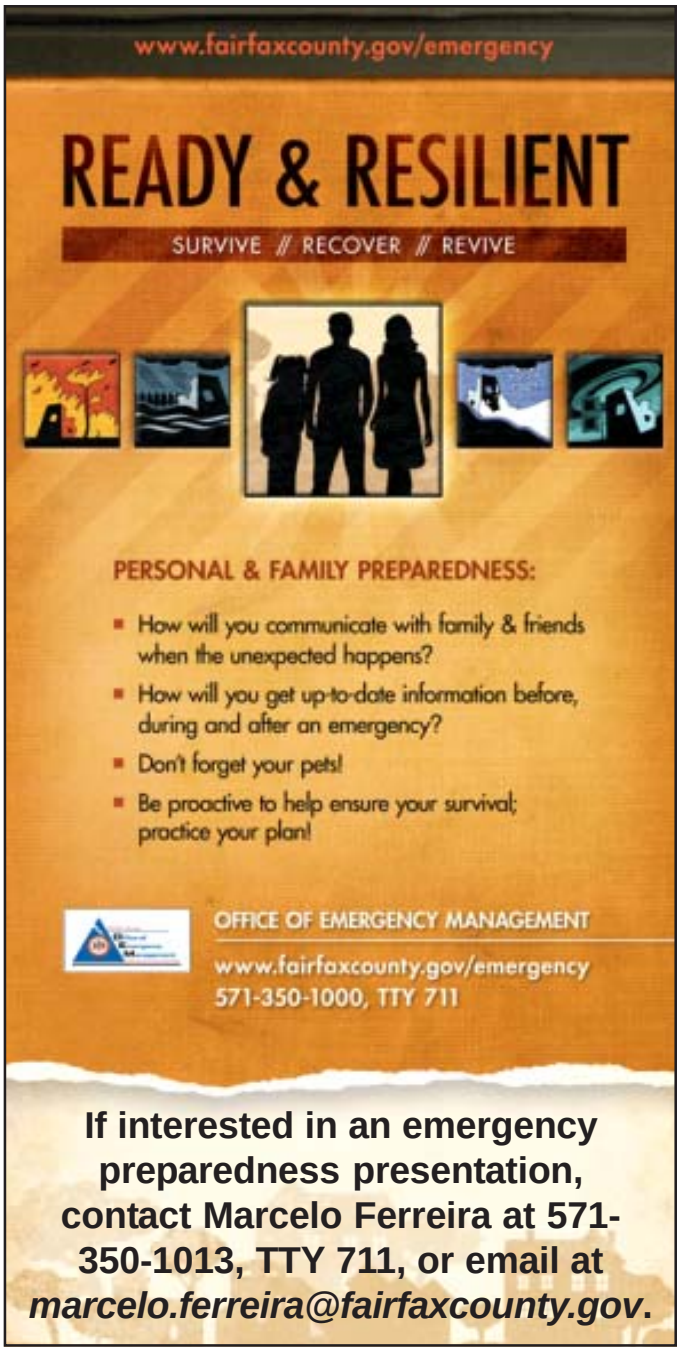
CERT teams do not replace first responders; they are a resource until first responders arrive.

Fairfax County CERT continues to prepare citizens through training. For information on scheduling classes for your community, training and more, visit *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/cert.htm* or *www.fairfaxcert.com*, or contact the Fire and Rescue Department Volunteer Liaison's Office at 703-246-4683, TTY 711.

According to FEMA, deciding whether to repair or replace gas and electrical appliances damaged by dirty floodwaters can be difficult. The decision will be influenced by the length of time in the water, the level of the flooding and the amount of coverage allowed by the insurance and flood-relief programs.

- Check your warranty, because repairing the equipment or appliance may void the warranty.
- Dirty floodwater can cause parts to corrode, causing breakdowns.
- If the equipment is more than 10 years old, new equipment/appliances offer better energy efficiency, thus saving money on monthly energy costs.
- Your insurance company may offer you an adjusted replacement cost for your major appliances.
- Corrosion or clogged parts not replaced can cause fire, explosion or electrical shock.
- Cost — Extensive repairs for parts and labor may cost more than buying new.
- Refrigerators and freezers with wet insulation are not salvageable, but if there were only a few inches of water in the house, refrigerators and freezers are probably fine. Ovens and ranges are usually salvageable. Wet controls should be replaced.
- Have an appliance technician check and replace the pilot flame opening and any valves on gas ranges that were in contact with floodwaters.

Have an appliance technician electrician check all electrical contacts and connections on the washer and dryer and replace the contacts or controls if wet.



If interested in an emergency preparedness presentation, contact Marcelo Ferreira at 571-350-1013, TTY 711, or email at *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

Halloween

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trick-or-treat alone. Adult supervision is a safety "must" during Halloween.

🎃Trick-or-treat only at homes of people you know.

🎃Instruct children never to eat candy or treats until they return home. When your child gets home, inspect all the candies and fruits. Slice open the fruit to look for strange odors or any signs that the fruit has been altered or tampered with. Dispose of any treat that appears to have been tampered with or is unwrapped.

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

Emergency Preparedness Quiz for Kids

What Should You Do to Be Ready?

1. What is NOT one of the four steps you can take to help your family be prepared for emergencies?
a. Eat your vegetables
b. Get a kit
c. Make a plan
d. Be informed
e. Get involved

2. What should a family communications plan include?
a. Information about how we would get in touch with each other during an emergency
b. Where we would meet
c. How we would stay in touch with each other
d. All of the above

Free Phone Service to Call for NOAA Weather Radio Broadcasts

AudioNow has developed a service that allows any mobile or fixed line caller to access the latest NWS forecast. Using AudioNow "HD" voice technology, any phone can access the NOAA Weather Radio broadcast without any downloads.

The AudioNow service is available in selected areas to evaluate use for eventual nation-wide distribution. The service in this area can be accessed through the numbers below.

AudioNow's approach is to provide this service at no cost, and eventually roll this out nationally.

Here are the phone numbers:
- Washington, D.C., area – 202-349-0185
- Manassas, Va., area – 703-652-1210
- Baltimore, Md. – 410-500-4450
- Fredericksburg, Va., area – 540-322-4035

Again, this service is free. Learn more at *www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/nwr/nwr_phone.php*.

Answers: 1. A; 2. D; 3. C; 4. D; 5. B; 6. A; 7. A

3. How much water should you have in your emergency kit?
a. One small water bottle for each person
b. One gallon for the whole family
c. One gallon of water per person per day
d. One gallon of water for the family per day

4. Which of the following is NOT an important part of a Kid's Emergency Supply Kit?
a. Flashlight
b. Batteries
c. Water
d. Video games

5. How quickly can fire spread through a house?
a. 10 minutes
b. As little as five minutes
c. 30 minutes
d. 45 minutes

6. In an emergency, what number should you call to contact the police and fire departments?
a. 9-1-1
b. 2-2-2
c. 7-1-1
d. 3-1-1

7. In an emergency, what should you have to hear news and official reports about what is happening?
a. A hand-crank/battery-powered radio
b. A CD player
c. A board game
d. DVD player

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management is available to deliver emergency preparedness presentations to community organizations and homeowners associations. If you are interested, contact Marcelo Ferreira at 571-350-1013, TTY 711, or email *marcelo.ferreira@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

Back-to-School Safety: Make it a Priority

As parents and children settle in the new school year, teaching children how to be safer needs to be at the top of the list of things to do. An analysis by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children of attempted abductions during the past five years found that children are at most risk when going to and from school or school-related activities.

Parents and other adults can help keep children safe by following these tips:

• Teach your children to always **TAKE A FRIEND** with them when walking or biking, and stay with a group while standing at the bus stop. Make sure they know which bus to ride.

• Walk the route to and from school with your children pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Teach your children they should **NEVER TAKE SHORTCUTS** and always stay in well-lit areas.

• It is not safe for young children to walk to and from school, even in a group. Parents should always provide supervision for young children to help ensure their safe arrival to and from school. If your children wait for a bus, wait with them or make arrangements for supervision at the bus stop.

• Teach your children that if anyone bothers them, makes them feel scared or uncomfortable to trust their feelings and immediately get away from that person. Teach them it is ok not to be polite and **IT IS OK TO SAY NO**.

• Teach your children if anyone tries to take them somewhere they should **RESIST** by kicking and screaming, try to run away and **DRAW ATTENTION** by kicking and screaming, "This person is trying to take me away" or "This person is not my father/mother."

• Teach your children **NOT TO ACCEPT A RIDE** from anyone unless you have said it is ok in that instance. If anyone follows them in a vehicle they should turn around, go in the other direction, and run to a trusted adult to help them.

• Teach your children that grownups should **NOT ASK CHILDREN FOR DIRECTIONS**, they should ask other adults.

• Teach your children to **NEVER ACCEPT MONEY OR GIFTS** from anyone unless you have told them it is ok to accept in each instance.

• Make sure the school has current and accurate emergency contact information on file for your children and confirm names of those authorized.

• Always know where your children will be. Teach your children to always **CHECK FIRST** before changing their plans before or after school. Teach your children to never leave school, with anyone unless they **CHECK FIRST** with you or another trusted adult, even if someone tells them it is an emergency.

• Children should be taught to trust their feelings. They need to know that if someone makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused, they should tell a parent, guardian or trusted adult.

Learn more at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children website, *www.missingkids.com*.

Fire Prevention Week

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) annual public awareness campaign, Fire Prevention Week (FPW), was Oct. 9-15. This year's theme focused on educating families about what causes home fires, how to prevent them and what to do in an emergency situation.

The Fire Prevention Week website (*www.nfpa.org/*) offers helpful tools and resources for anyone wanting to run a community campaign or people simply trying to educate themselves or family members. Some features on the site include the Fire Prevention Week quiz, public service announcement videos, fire safety resources for families and safety tip sheets covering a broad range of topics.

Text PREPARE to 43362 (4FEMA) to sign up to receive monthly disaster safety tips on your mobile phone.

Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities

All individuals, including people with disabilities, should plan for survival for at least 72 hours whether at home, in a shelter or elsewhere in the event of an actual emergency.

Consider all the strategies, services, devices, tools and techniques you use to live with a disability on a daily basis. Remember that you may need medications, durable medical equipment, consumable medical supplies, service animal, assistive technology, communications tools, disability service providers, accessible housing, transportation and health-related items.

To plan, think through the details of your everyday life. If there are people who assist you on a daily basis, list who they are and how you will contact them in an emergency. Create your own personal support network by identifying who will help you in an emergency.

Depending on your needs, items for your go kit, besides the basic food, water, first-aid kit and battery-powered flashlight, may include extra eyeglasses, hearing aids if you have them, battery chargers and extra batteries for hearing aids, motorized wheelchairs, or other battery-operated medical or assistive technology devices and copies of medical prescriptions, doctors orders and the style and serial numbers of the support devices you use.

There should be backup plans for personal assistance services, hospice or other forms of in-home assistance. In addition, wearing medical alert tags or bracelets that identify your disability can be a crucial aid.

If you receive federal disability benefits, register your bank account information in advance with the U.S. Department of the Treasury online at *www.GoDirect.org* so you can continue to access your money during an emergency. A disaster can disrupt mail service for days or weeks. For those who depend on the mail for their Social Security benefits, a difficult situation can become worse if you are evacuated or lose your mail service.

For more information, visit *www.Ready.gov* and *www.Listo.gov* or call 1-800-BE-READY, TTY 1-800-462-7585 and 1-888-SE-LISTO. For information on the Fairfax County Medical Needs Registry, contact Bruce McFarlane at 571-350-1016, TTY-711.

Tip Sheet

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congestion. You can also use social media to post your status to let family and friends know you are okay. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, you can use resources such as the American Red Cross's Safe and Well program (*www.redcross.org/safeandwell*).

• Keep all phone calls brief. If you need to use a phone, try to convey only vital information to emergency personnel and/or family.

• If you are unsuccessful in completing a call using your cellphone, wait 10 seconds before redialing to help reduce network congestion.

• Conserve your cellphone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in airplane mode and closing apps you are not using that draw power, unless you need to use the phone.

• If you lose power, you can charge your cellphone in your car. Just be sure your car is in a well-ventilated place (remove it from the garage) and do not go to your car until any danger has passed. You can also listen to your car radio for important news alerts.

• Tune into broadcast television and radio for important news alerts. If applicable, be sure that you know how to activate the closed captioning or video description on your television.

• If you do not have a hands-free device in your car, stop driving or pull over to the side of the road before making a call. Do not text on a cellphone, talk or "tweet" without a hands-free device while driving.

• Immediately following a disaster, resist using your mobile device to watch streaming videos, download music or videos, or play video games, all of which can add to network congestion. Limiting use of these services can help potentially lifesaving emergency calls get through to 9-1-1.

• Check *www.ready.gov* regularly to find other helpful tips for preparing for disasters and other emergencies.

www.ready.gov/america/getakit/tech.html