

Emergency Preparedness

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There Is Still Time to Participate In Annual Earthquake Drill

More than 1 million Virginians now signed up

With the Great SouthEast ShakeOut fast approaching – Thursday, Oct. 17, at 10:17 a.m. – Virginia recently became only the second state ever to pass the 1 million mark of people registered to participate in the multistate earthquake drill. California, where the original ShakeOut premiered in 2008, leads all states in registrations.

“Our own major earthquake in August 2011 reminded us that Virginia is vulnerable,” said Michael Cline, state coordinator of emergency management. “It’s not too late to sign up so you can learn what to do when an earthquake hits, which is to ‘Drop, Cover, and Hold On.’”

The drill is open to all. Families, individuals, businesses, government agencies, organizations and schools and colleges can sign up at www.shakeout.org/southeast. Once registered, you will receive details on how to plan your drill.

The ShakeOut, a rolling multistate drill that will happen at 10:17 a.m. on Oct. 17 regardless of time zone, provides an opportunity to practice the safe response to an earthquake:

- **Drop** to the ground, before the shaking drops you.
- Take **Cover** under a sturdy table or desk if possible, protecting your head and neck.
- **Hold On** until the shaking stops.

Learn more about the ShakeOut at www.vaemergency.gov.

As of Oct. 9, more than 1,051,000 Virginians have signed up to practice “Drop, Cover, and Hold On.” More than 1.6 million have signed up so far from the southeastern states of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina,

West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Washington, D.C., and Virginia.

In addition to the participating states, coordinating partners for the Great SouthEast ShakeOut include the Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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Get Tech Ready

When most people prepare for an emergency, they assume they won't be able to use technology as a resource; the power will probably be out, so technology won't be able to help.

With effective planning, it's possible to take advantage of technology before, during and after a crisis to communicate with loved ones, manage your financial affairs and get important information. Getting tech ready means not only preparing your devices to be easy access resources for you and your family, but also planning for ways to keep your devices powered.

- Get a solar-powered or hand-crank charger and a car charger for your phone to keep it powered throughout the emergency.
- Follow important officials and organizations on social media channels, doing so will help you receive important information if you can't access television or radio. By identifying these accounts now, you won't have to search for them in the middle of an emergency or drain your battery during the search. Key accounts include emergency management agencies, governors, local officials and local media.
- Another good way to keep in touch with officials is to see if they offer text message updates. FEMA has a text message program that includes preparedness tips and other resources, get more information by texting INFO to 43362 (4FEMA) or visiting www.fema.gov/text-messages.
- Synchronize your contacts across all your devices and all your channels so you have many ways to get ahold of people. By having access phone numbers, social media accounts and email addresses, you can get in touch with your loved ones even if one system or channel is down. Often when phone calls are difficult to make, you can send text messages, social media messages or emails to pass along important information.



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



- Make sure you program "In Case of Emergency" (ICE) contacts into your cellphone so emergency personnel can contact those people for you if you're unable to use your phone. Let your ICE contacts know that they're programmed into your phone and inform them of any medical issues or other special needs you may have. If something should happen to you that action will help you receive the care you need and let your loved ones know where you are.
- Download resource apps for your smartphone, they often have important information like phone numbers, first-aid tips and other resources. The FEMA app (www.fema.gov/smartphone-app) contains disaster safety tips, an interactive emergency kit list, emergency meeting location information and a map with open shelters and open FEMA disaster recovery centers (DRCs). There may be other apps available from your state or local emergency management agency, ask them to see what resources you can access.

While these are just a few examples of how you can turn technology into a valuable resource during an emergency, visit www.ready.gov/get-tech-ready to get more tips.

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management is available to deliver emergency preparedness presentations to community organizations and homeowners associations. If interested, contact OEM at 571-350-1000, TTY 711, or via email at oem@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Can Carbon Monoxide Be In Your Home?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless, tasteless, toxic gas. It causes about 300 accidental fatalities in homes each year; thousands more are treated in hospitals for CO poisoning.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning exposure include headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness and confused thinking (victims do not think clearly enough to get assistance). Without treatment, the victim will lose consciousness and possibly their life. Carbon monoxide is produced by the incomplete combustion of fuels.

Common carbon monoxide causes include:

- Faulty gas or oil furnaces and water heaters.
- Using a generator inside or too close to windows.
- Cracked chimney flues.
- Indoor use of charcoal grills.
- Using a gas oven or range to warm a room.
- Running a car in an enclosed area.
- Closing the fireplace damper before the fire is completely out.

Carbon monoxide accidents are preventable. Actions you should take to protect your family include:

- Have a qualified technician inspect your gas furnace and appliances.
- Never allow your car to run in an enclosed area, especially if it is attached to your house.
- Make sure your fireplace is in good repair and do not close the damper before the fire is out.
- Install CO alarms to give your family a warning if CO is building up in your house.

Carbon monoxide alarms can be purchased at many local hardware stores. Ensure the alarm that you purchase has an Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label. Carbon monoxide alarms should be located on every floor and mounted according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the alarm goes off, everyone should get out of the house at once and call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house. Do not ventilate your house by opening doors and windows. When first responders arrive, they will obtain CO readings in different areas of your home to determine the source of the leak.

If you have questions about your gas furnace or appliances, contact your gas company. If your CO alarm

gives a warning signal, get out of the house and call 9-1-1 immediately

Learn more from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/educate/co.htm.



The Office of Emergency Management, in conjunction with Channel 16, produced one video per week highlighting National Preparedness Month last month and what residents, businesses and employees can do to be better prepared. Dave McKernan, emergency management coordinator, was featured on three of the videos stressing the importance of making a plan, building a kit and staying informed. Bruce McFarlane was featured on a video highlighting special populations, like children, elderly and pets, to remember when considering your emergency plans. Check out the videos on the Fairfax County Government YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/fairfaxcountygov. Remember... it's never to late to prepare!

New Grassroots Campaign to Increase Community Preparedness

National campaign encourages public to practice specific preparedness actions

The growing impact of disasters underscores the need for a new approach to preparing our communities. Recently the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) unveiled America's PrepareAthon!, a nationwide, community-based campaign for action to increase emergency preparedness and resilience.

The strategy and structure for America's PrepareAthon! is based on new social science research conducted by FEMA and presented in "Preparedness in America: Research Insights to Increase Individual, Organizational, and Community Action."

"The Preparedness in America study is an extensive analysis of national household data on preparedness," stated FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "Motivating families to prepare is an ongoing challenge. The study highlights the benefit of whole community collaboration to increase preparedness."

Findings from the report include:

- The simple act of talking about preparedness with others has a very strong positive relationship with preparedness behaviors such as having a plan, knowing about alerts and warnings and participating in trainings or drills, yet less than half of the respondents report talking about preparedness in the previous two years.
- The survey data indicated that the workplace, schools, and volunteering are effective channels for preparedness outreach. People who were encouraged by their employer to have a plan or to participate in training were 76 percent and 86 percent more likely to take these actions, respectively.
- The data identified show clear differences in how people think about different hazards: respondents believed preparing for a natural hazard is helpful, but believed terrorist acts, hazardous materials accidents, and disease outbreaks were less likely and that preparedness would not be as helpful.

America's PrepareAthon! provides a national focus for millions of individuals, organizations and communities to take action to improve their level of preparedness. Twice a year – in the spring and fall – schools and

universities, faith-based organizations, businesses and civic organizations across the country will organize community days of action to discuss, practice and train for relevant hazards.

The campaign will feature preparedness materials on hazards such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, extreme heat, earthquakes, wildfires, hazardous materials and severe winter weather.

The goal of the campaign is to increase the number of people who: understand the hazards most relevant to their community; know the corresponding protective actions, mitigation measures and community plans; practice actions that increase their preparedness; and contribute to whole community preparedness planning.

America's PrepareAthon! provides a consistent and coordinated communication and outreach strategy around the national vision for resilience for the general public while establishing a platform for interagency and public-private partner coordination for preparedness and resilience metrics.

Like most great American successes, building a more resilient nation will depend on the whole community working together to increase resilience by household, by community and through partnerships among communities, businesses and state, local, tribal, territorial and federal agencies.

For more information about America's PrepareAthon!, visit www.fema.gov/prepareathon or email FEMA-Prepareathon@fema.dhs.gov. Join the Twitter discussion @PrepareAthon.

FEMA conducted four national household surveys to assess the public's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors on preparing for a range of hazards since 2007. The most recent survey was conducted in 2012, with a survey sample of 2,013 U.S. households. The combined landline and cellphone sample represents 98 percent of U.S. households, providing overall results at +/-3.02 sampling error (at a 95 percent confidence level). The report of the 2012 findings can be found in "Personal Preparedness in America: Findings From the 2012 FEMA National Survey."

As outdoor temperatures drop and people take measures to keep themselves warm this winter, fire incidents involving fireplaces may increase.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department reminds you of some important safety tips:

- Have your chimney inspected annually and cleaned as necessary.
- When cleaning the fireplace, store ashes in a non-combustible container with a tight fitting lid and place the container away from the house.
- Never leave a fireplace fire unattended.
- Make sure the fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container (sometimes it takes four days for ashes to cool down).
- Call 9-1-1 immediately when a fire occurs. Residents should not attempt to extinguish the fire themselves.

For more seasonal fire and life safety information, visit the Fire and Rescue Department online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr.

Halloween Safety

- Make sure all costumes are flame retardant.
- Make sure your children can see and be seen. Expand eye holes in commercial masks to improve peripheral vision. Add reflective tape to costumes to make them more visible to motorists.
- Ensure each trick-or-treater has a working flashlight.
- Tell children to remove their masks and look both ways before they cross a street.
- Never let a group of children trick-or-treat alone. Adult supervision is a safety must during Halloween.
- Tell children to stay away from candles and jack-o'-lanterns that may be on steps and porches. Their costumes could catch fire if they get too close.
- Never carry candles when trick-or-treating. Always use a flashlight, flameless candle or light stick.



The Fairfax County Citizen Corps

harnesses the power of individuals through education, training and volunteer service to make communities safe, stronger and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues and disasters of all kinds. There are five core programs:



Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)

Provides support for the police department by incorporating volunteers so that law enforcement professionals have more time for frontline duty. VIPS includes auxiliary police officers, administrative volunteers, and the Citizen's Police Academy. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/getinvolved/120711volunteers.htm



Neighborhood Watch

Brings private citizens and law enforcement together to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. It brings to life the simple concept of neighbors watching out for neighbors. Volunteers may join an existing group or establish one in their neighborhood. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/nw.htm



Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

The Medical Reserve Corps is composed of medical and non-medical volunteers of the Fairfax County Health Department that could support the Health Department if called upon to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and man-made disasters and emergencies. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/MRC



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Trains people in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools in basic disaster response skills, such as fire suppression and search and rescue, and helps them take a more active role in emergency preparedness. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/cert.htm



Fire Corps

Volunteers are trained to perform non-operational administrative duties at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Headquarters and at volunteer fire stations. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/firecorps.htm



Preparing and Engaging Youths

Emergencies can be scary for people of every age; they can be especially scary for youths because they generally have little control over how their family or community has prepared and how they will respond.

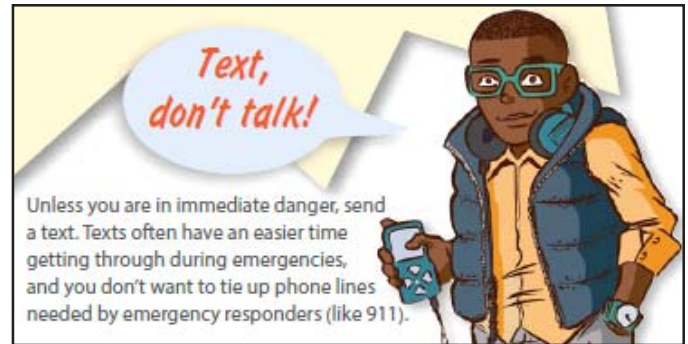
Too often youths are viewed as a liability rather than an asset, when instead they have so much to offer their families and their communities if only they were better prepared and better engaged.

“Involving youth in the preparedness process teaches them about what to do, who to contact and what the plan is,” said FEMA Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney. “It also reduces some of the fear associated with an emergency, but most importantly, youth have excellent ideas that can help everyone prepare for a disaster.”

Young people are capable of playing an important role in emergency preparedness and have the unique potential to help their communities be safe, stronger and more resilient before, during and after a disaster. As such, we all have a vested interest in engaging and empowering youths to become active participants in individual, family and community preparedness.

You can engage the youths in your family and your community by teaching them about what hazards are common in your area, explaining to them what the warning signs are and what to do if a certain hazard should strike. When you develop your family emergency plan, make sure to have your children at the table with you so they understand the plan, can ask questions and can provide ideas for what to do in a disaster.

By teaching young people about how to communicate if your family is separated in a disaster you can build the resiliency and capability of your entire family. Other



A good tip from the kid’s version of the family communication plan: “text, don’t talk” during an emergency. Get a copy of the plan template at www.fema.gov/media-library-data/a260e5fb242216dc62ae380946806677/FEMA_plan_child_508_071513.pdf.

skills like teaching youths safety skills such as first aid, CPR and how to safely use a fire extinguisher gets them involved in the process and makes everyone better prepared. Talk to youths that you know about what programs they would like to be involved in and encourage them to explore options like Teen CERT teams.

Youths of any age can be involved in the emergency preparedness process; figure out what’s right for your children and invite them into the process. You could be very surprised by the ideas they have and how much they can help your family and your community in an emergency.





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ReadyNOVA
Family & Business Preparedness Planners

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

Family Communication Plan

The family communication plan template (below) is designed for parents to organize emergency contact phone numbers and identify an emergency meeting place. Grab your copy online at:
www.fema.gov/media-library-data/0e3ef555f66e22ab832e284f826c2e9e/FEMA_plan_parent_508_071513.pdf



Family Communication Plan

Let them know you're OK!
Pick the same person for each family member to contact. It might be easier to reach someone who's out of town.


Emergencies can happen at any time. Does your family know how to get in touch with each other if you are not all together?

Before an emergency happens, have a family discussion to determine who would be your out-of-state point of contact, and where you would meet away from your home — both in the neighborhood and within your town.

Important Information

Fill in this information and keep a copy in a safe place, such as your purse or briefcase, your car, your office, and your disaster kit. Be sure to look it over every year and keep it up to date.

<h4>Out-of-Town Contact</h4> <p>Name: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____ Facebook: _____ Twitter: _____</p>	<h4>Neighborhood Meeting Place:</h4> <p>_____</p> <h4>Regional Meeting Place:</h4> <p>_____</p>
<h4>Work Information</h4> <p>Workplace: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Facebook: _____ Twitter: _____ Evacuation Location: _____</p>	<h4>School Information</h4> <p>School: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Facebook: _____ Twitter: _____ Evacuation Location: _____</p>
<h4>Work Information</h4> <p>Workplace: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Facebook: _____ Twitter: _____ Evacuation Location: _____</p>	<h4>School Information</h4> <p>School: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Facebook: _____ Twitter: _____ Evacuation Location: _____</p>



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>

HHS Launches New Challenge to Aid People with Durable Medical Equipment

In disasters power outages threaten lives of those relying on electrical life-sustaining devices

A nationwide challenge seeks ideas on a system that, in emergencies, can determine the location and status of life-sustaining durable medical equipment (DME) such as oxygen concentrators and portable ventilators, and get help to users. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) recently launched the challenge.

"For most Americans, losing power during a storm is an inconvenience, but for some, electricity is a matter of life or death," said Dr. Nicole Lurie, assistant secretary for preparedness and response and a rear admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service.

"With access to real-time information about the locations and remaining battery life during emergencies, communities can meet the needs and possibly save lives of people who rely on durable medical equipment."

Thousands of people in the United States rely on electrically powered DMEs to meet their medical needs at home. In prolonged power outages, they often must seek help in shelters or emergency rooms to power the equipment or recharge the battery.

A system that automatically monitors and electronically communicates the status and location of a device could assist these individuals, their caregivers and first responders in planning and responding, such as sending a charged replacement battery or prioritizing power restoration.

Through the challenge, ASPR seeks ideas for a system that can capture essential data from DME, including loss of power, power level, GPS location, time and date, battery life and privacy-protected user identifying



Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN)

Get emergency alerts by email, as well as by text or pager. Sign up at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean. Businesses can also register up to five people in their organizations – such as security officers – who can receive alerts and then share that information with their workforce.

information. The system should be accessible to all patients who use DME in their homes and must securely send data to other secure information systems.

The challenge may help spur innovative ideas that can be developed into tools to help communities support DME users during emergencies.

Ideas will be evaluated by experts and judged by Lurie. Experts will include leaders from the design, device, venture and government sectors. The person or team with the best idea could receive up to \$5,000 from ASPR and may be invited to present the idea publicly.

For details and to register to participate in the Ideation Challenge, visit www.challenge.gov and search for this ASPR challenge.

HHS is the principal federal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. ASPR leads HHS in preparing the nation to respond to and recover from adverse health effects of emergencies, supporting communities' ability to withstand adversity, strengthening health and response systems and enhancing national health security.

Visit www.phe.gov to learn more about ASPR and public health and medical emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

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