

# Emergency Preparedness

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## Flood Insurance 101

Taking action to prepare for flood hazards is important no matter where you live but especially if you are in low-lying areas or near water.

Since floods are one of the most common hazards in the U.S., preparing for this hazard is critical. One way to prepare is with flood insurance.

Keep your head above water by learning the basics about this special coverage available for homes and businesses.

Here's what you should know:

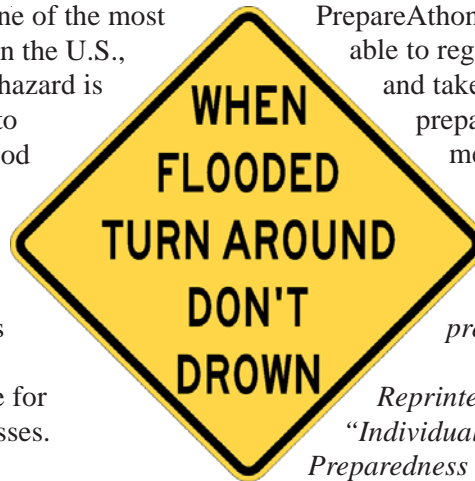
- Flood losses are not typically covered under renter and homeowners insurance policies.
- Flood insurance is available in most communities through insurance agents.
- There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance goes into effect.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a valuable resource to learn more about your flood risk, how to find an agent and the flood recovery process.

NFIP also offers interactive ways to understand floods. You can calculate the cost of flooding, watch real flood testimonials and launch a levee simulator to take your flood knowledge to the next level.

Floods are also one of the spring hazards featured in America's

Find the National Flood Insurance Program online at:  
[www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart](http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart).  
Fairfax County flooding info:  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/floodinformation.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater/floodinformation.htm).



PrepareAthon! Soon you'll be able to register to participate and take action for flood preparedness; in the meantime, learn more about this grassroots campaign at [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare).

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief," March 21 edition.*

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## Keep Your Pets Safe Year-Round

By Laura Southard

**H**urricane and flooding season is coming. You've probably already stocked up on bottled water and extra packaged food, just in case. You've got a flashlight and plenty of batteries. Your battery-powered/hand-crank radio is standing by so you can get local emergency information if the power goes out.

But what about your pet?

Pets can't take care of themselves. During major disasters, pets often become separated from their owners. Avoid that heartbreak by making an emergency plan for your pet.

- Prepare a pet disaster supply kit. Include at least three day's food and water; food and water bowls; an extra leash and collar with identification tag; a few days' worth of medication; current photos of you with your pet; blankets or towels for bedding and warmth; cat litter/pan; your vet's name and phone number; treats. Store items in a sturdy container that can be carried easily.

- Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and up-to-date identification tags. Consider permanent identification for your pet such as a microchip or tattoo.



- Purchase a pet carrier and label it with emergency contact information.

- Don't leave your pet behind. If you have to evacuate, where will you go that accepts pets? Ask friends or relatives outside your area whether they could shelter you and your pet in an emergency. Find a hotel or motel outside your area that

accepts pets.

For more about making an emergency plan for your pet, go to [www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/getakit/pets](http://www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/getakit/pets).

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



*Fairfax County Emergency Management Coordinator Dave McKernan (third from right) was one of the presenters at the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington's (AOBA) Emergency Preparedness panel and discussion. It featured a timely, interactive discussion with local public safety officials on public/private partnerships and a discussion of real-life emergency scenarios that affect property managers. Paul Norton, Fairfax County Police Department, also presented (back row, center).*



## Neighborhood Day: May 17

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Volunteer Fairfax will continue the regional emergency preparedness canvassing project with Arlington County for Neighborhood Day on Saturday, May 17. The RSVP-Northern Virginia program and OEM reached over 150 residences in Fairfax County while canvassing on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and plan to reach at least 200 Fairfax County residences on Neighborhood Day.

If you're interested in volunteering at this event, please register at [www.volunteerfairfax.org/individuals/rsvp.php](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org/individuals/rsvp.php). Contact Courtney Kurzweil at Volunteer Fairfax at 703-403-5360, TTY 711, or by email at [CKurzweil@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:CKurzweil@volunteerfairfax.org) for more information.

Returning home after a disaster can be challenging because dangers still exist. Be safe by entering your home carefully to check for damage. In addition to loose boards and slippery areas, there are items inside your home that may need special attention, including natural gas, water, sewage and electrical systems.

- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound, open a window and leave immediately. Turn off the main gas valve from outside the house if possible and call 9-1-1 and then the gas company from a neighbor's home.
- Contact authorities before using any water – it could be contaminated. Do not flush toilets until you know sewage lines are intact.
- Check the electrical system unless you are wet, standing in water or unsure of your safety. Do not turn on the lights until you're sure they are safe to use.

Another risk that exists after a disaster is wildlife. As you return, be wary of animals that may have taken refuge in your home. To protect yourself and family, do not approach animals or attempt to remove a dead animal. Call animal control or a wildlife resource office instead.

Learn more online at [www.ready.gov/returning-home](http://www.ready.gov/returning-home).

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief," March 21 edition*



The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) was invited to partner with Sustainable Reston to provide information to attendees of the NoVa Mini Maker Faire which was held at the South Lakes High School and Hughes Middle School on Sunday, March 16. OEM provided displays and information on emergency preparedness and Sustainable Reston had displays on using alternative energy sources for power and cooking. An estimated 4,000 people attended the event.

## Outreach Events

- **April 10** – Tabletop exercise with CGI Federal.
- **April 16** – Tabletop exercise with SunTrust.
- **April 18** – Alarm.com emergency preparedness business presentation.
- **April 23** – Business Education Workshop: "Be Ready to Continue Operations During and After an Emergency" with the Reston Chamber of Commerce ([www.restonchamber.org/wcevents/eventdetail.aspx?eventid=1966](http://www.restonchamber.org/wcevents/eventdetail.aspx?eventid=1966)).
- **April 30** – National Capital Region School Preparedness Seminar, George Mason University – Fairfax Campus.
- **May 17** – Emergency preparedness booth, McLean Day.

To learn more about emergency preparedness or having an OEM representative attend your event or give a presentation at your homeowners or civic association meeting, call 571-350-1000, TTY 711; email [oem@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:oem@fairfaxcounty.gov).



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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



## Disaster Ready Finances

Being ready for severe weather is more than storing water and supplies. You also need to be financially ready. Starting early and having a plan to pay your bills and access your important records and accounts help you get back on your feet faster and avoid problems with your credit when you need it most.

These steps can you get started:

- Identify your important documents and place them in a safe space. Use the "Safeguarding Your Valuables" (PDF) activity ([http://emilms.fema.gov/IS909/assets/11\\_SafeguardingValuables.pdf](http://emilms.fema.gov/IS909/assets/11_SafeguardingValuables.pdf)) and the "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit" ([www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1858-25045-8753/p\\_532.pdf\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1858-25045-8753/p_532.pdf_1_.pdf)) as a guide.
- Download phone applications that can help during emergencies. Use the FEMA phone application ([www.fema.gov/mobile-resources](http://www.fema.gov/mobile-resources)) to access disaster preparedness, response and recovery resources including disaster assistance.
- Enroll in Go Direct ([www.godirect.org](http://www.godirect.org)) to minimize disruptions for any federal benefits you may receive.
- Plan ahead of time to recover. Our partners at USDA have created great resources to help get you started. "Recovery After Disaster: The Family Financial Toolkit" ([www.extension.umn.edu/family/tough-times/disaster-recovery/family-financial-toolkit](http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/tough-times/disaster-recovery/family-financial-toolkit)) and the Disaster Recovery Log ([www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/apps/disaster-recovery-log](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/apps/disaster-recovery-log)) are two such online resources.

Pre-disaster financial planning is essential for individuals and families to complete because disasters leave many Americans without access to finances or with expensive damages.

Safeguarding your finances and important records is easy if you start today.

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief," Feb. 27 edition*



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571-350-1000, TTY 711



### Emergency Financial First Aid Kit

FEMA P-532 / June 2008



The "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit" is available online as a PDF at [http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1858-25045-8753/p\\_532.pdf\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1858-25045-8753/p_532.pdf_1_.pdf).

### Stay Connected to Emergency Information



Fairfax County Emergency Alerts  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean)



Emergency Information Blog  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog)



Fairfax County Government Radio  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio)



Fairfax County on Twitter  
[www.twitter.com/fairfaxcounty](http://www.twitter.com/fairfaxcounty)



Fairfax County on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty](http://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty)



Fairfax County on YouTube  
[www.youtube.com/fairfaxcountygov](http://www.youtube.com/fairfaxcountygov)



## America's PrepareAthon!

In support of Presidential Policy Directive (PPD-8), National Preparedness, America's PrepareAthon! is launching its first national day of action this year on April 30.

The focus of the first national day of action will be preparedness for four specific hazards – tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and wildfires.

Targeting the grass-roots level, America's PrepareAthon! is a nationwide campaign to encourage the public to practice specific preparedness actions. It is an opportunity for individuals, organizations and communities to prepare for specific hazards through drills, group discussions and exercises.

The goal is to increase the number of individuals who:

- Understand which disasters could happen in their community.
- Know what to do to be safe and mitigate damage.
- Take action to increase their preparedness.
- Participate in community resilience planning.

You can:

- Plan your own local community or organizational preparedness event.
- Participate in discussion forums online with like-minded community members.
- Learn the actions to take for disaster preparedness and practice them.

Events and activities will be held twice yearly to encourage individuals to discuss, practice and train for relevant hazards.

Additional information on these four hazards is available online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency) as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency website at [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare).

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/citizencorps/firecorps.htm)

## Business Preparedness Corner

### Small Business Preparedness

By Whitney Kazragis

An Ad Council survey reported that nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of respondents said they do not have an emergency plan in place for their business.

According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses:


- Represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms.
- Employ about half of all private sector employees.
- Have generated 65 percent of net new jobs over the past 17 years.

All businesses should have an emergency plan, including small businesses! A successful business emergency plan includes emergency contact information, essential business functions, an alternate location and probable delegations of authority in the event of a disaster.

Here are some great resources to create your business emergency plan:

[www.ReadyNOVA.org](http://www.ReadyNOVA.org) – ReadyNOVA provides a free template to create a business emergency plan and will guide you step-by-step through the process.

[www.ReadyRating.org](http://www.ReadyRating.org) – The American Red Cross Ready Rating program is a free, self-guided program designed to help businesses, organizations and schools become better prepared for emergencies. Members complete a 123 point self-assessment of their level of preparedness and have access to tools, tips and best practices to help improve their level of preparedness. The 123 point assessment has been aligned with the



Fairfax County and Northern Virginia residents can use the family and business emergency planners at [www.ReadyNOVA.org](http://www.ReadyNOVA.org).



Whitney Kazragis

federal government's Private Sector Preparedness standards (PS-Prep).

[www.Ready.gov/business-continuity-planning-suite](http://www.Ready.gov/business-continuity-planning-suite) – This free software provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is scalable for any organization to create a business continuity plan. It can be used to maintain normal operations and provide resilience during a disruption.

Have questions or want a business presentation? Contact the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management for more info at 571-350-1000, TTY 711; email [oem@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:oem@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Whitney Kazragis is the community outreach liaison with OEM and holds a master's degree in mass communication and a disaster management certificate from the University of Georgia.



Twenty-seven members of the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) took time out of their busy schedules to spend an evening at the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (MPSTOC) on March 13. The CERT members were given an overview of the 9-1-1 Center as well as a tour of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). CERT members had completed their training, had received information on incident management and were provided with the opportunity to get answers to numerous questions regarding this aspect of public safety.



## Floods Happen Everywhere; NOAA & FEMA: "Be Prepared"

During Flood Safety Awareness Week, March 16-22, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) called on individuals across the country to "Be a Force of Nature" by preparing for floods.

Floods are the most common – and costliest – natural disaster in the nation affecting every state and territory. A flood occurs somewhere in the U.S. or its territories nearly every day of the year.

"Many people needlessly pass away each year because they underestimate the risk of driving through a flooded roadway," said Louis Uccellini, Ph.D., director of NOAA's National Weather Service. "Survive the storm: 'Turn Around, Don't Drown' at flooded roadways."

"Floods can happen anytime and anywhere," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "Take steps now to make sure your family is prepared, including financial protection for your home or business through flood insurance. Find out how your community can take action with drills, group discussions and community exercises at [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare)."



The flood safety awareness message is simple: know your risk, take action and be an example. The best way to stay safe during a flood and recover quickly once the water recedes is to prepare for a variety of situations long before the water starts to rise.

- **Know Your Risk:** The first step to becoming weather-ready is to understand that flooding can happen anywhere and affect where you live and work. Think about how the weather could impact you and your family. Sign up for weather alerts and check the weather



AmeriCorps NCCC discussing the Medical Needs Registry with Whitney Kazragis, OEM (second from left) at the 9th Annual Special Education Conference in Fairfax County on Saturday, March 1, at Woodson High School.

forecast regularly at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov). Now is the time to be prepared by ensuring you have real-time access to flood warnings via mobile devices, weather radio and local media, so you can avoid areas that are under these warnings. Visit [www.ready.gov/alerts](http://www.ready.gov/alerts) to learn about public safety alerts and [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) to learn about your flood risk and available flood insurance.

- **Take Action:** Make sure you and your family members are prepared for floods. You may not be together when weather strikes, so plan how you will contact one another by developing your family communication plan. Flood insurance is also an important consideration: just a few inches of water inside a home can cost tens of thousands of dollars in damage that typically will not be covered by a standard homeowner's insurance policy. Visit [www.Ready.gov/prepare](http://www.Ready.gov/prepare) and NOAA to learn more actions you can take to be better prepared and for important safety and weather information.

- **Be an Example:** Once you have taken action, tell family, friends and co-workers to do the same. Technology today makes it easier than ever to be a good example and to share the steps you took to become weather-ready.

Congratulations to the new Fairfax County CERTs who completed their graduation final exercise on Saturday, March 22. Visit the Fairfax County CERT blog (<http://fairfaxcountycert.blogspot.com/2014/03/being-prepared-is-practically-cheating.html>) for a recap, and visit and "like" the Fairfax County CERT Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/pages/Fairfax-County-CERT-Volunteers/104461585572](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fairfax-County-CERT-Volunteers/104461585572)) for photos.

## Spring the Alarm

**Y**ou changed your clocks for daylight saving time, but what about your smoke alarm? As you prepare for spring, don't forget to "spring" the alarm by replacing its batteries. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year to make sure your alarm operates properly when you need it the most.

When fire breaks out, you only have seconds to escape its heat, black smoke and deadly gases. Increase your chances of survival by maintaining the smoke alarms in your home.

Here are more tips for making your home safer:

- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside each bedroom. If you keep your bedroom doors closed, place a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- Check smoke alarms monthly by pushing the test button.
- Never disable a smoke alarm when cooking.
- Smoke alarms wear out over time. Replace yours if it's more than 10 years old.

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief," March 13 edition*



*Fairfax County Emergency Management Coordinator Dave McKernan at the "Shaping the Future of Healthcare: Readiness, Change and Innovation" conference on the George Mason University campus. The conference was coordinated by AcademyHealth and the Department of Health Administration and Policy at GMU. McKernan's panel was titled "Cohesive Emergency Response in the Community." To have someone from the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management present at your event, call OEM at 571-350-1000, TTY 711; email [oem@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:oem@fairfaxcounty.gov).*

## Honoring a Preparedness Hero Through a Fellowship in New York City Government

**T**he John D. Solomon Fellowship for Public Service is the first fellowship in New York City government devoted to emergency management.

This nine-month paid fellowship will allow nine graduate students (up from six last year) to be mentored by senior staff at various New York city government agencies, including the NY Office of Emergency Management and the American Red Cross in Greater New York.

The program was established by family and friends of the late John D. Solomon, an accomplished journalist on homeland security and a devoted public servant. He was an active member of his local NYC Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). In addition, in 2012, to recognize his contributions to emergency preparedness, the Federal Emergency Management

Agency (FEMA) established the national John D. Solomon Preparedness Award.

Interested in applying? Applications and resumes must be received by 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Monday, April 7. Completed applications include both a Web application and a resume. Only completed applications will be reviewed.

To learn more about the application process and eligibility criteria, visit the John D. Solomon Fellowship Program Web page at [www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/applying\\_johndsolomonfellowship.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/about/applying_johndsolomonfellowship.shtml).

Applications can be found online at <https://www.research.net/s/JDSFellowshipApplication> and resumes must be emailed to [JDSolomonFellowship@oem.nyc.gov](mailto:JDSolomonFellowship@oem.nyc.gov).