

# Emergency Preparedness

Published by the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management  
January 2015



*Emergency Management Coordinator Dave McKernan joined host Anne Hall on the “Mature Living” television program on Channel 16 to discuss the importance of emergency preparedness, especially for older adults. Also featured on the program were Bruce McFarlane, coordinator of community outreach, and Whitney Kazragis, outreach liaison with the Office of Emergency Management.*

## “Mature Living”

**F**ind out what you need to know about preparing for emergencies in the current “Mature Living” episode on Channel 16. The show focuses on the special concerns of older adults, caregivers and people with disabilities.

The program begins with Dave McKernan, coordinator of Emergency Management, discussing how emergency preparedness has become a huge priority for the county. Then Bruce McFarlane, coordinator of community outreach, discusses what should be included in an emergency kit and the county’s Special Needs Registry.

The role family caregivers and neighbors can play in preparedness is discussed by Sharon Lynn, director of the Fairfax Area

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Fairfax County  
Office of  
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Management



# Preparedness Myths Debunked

Disasters can happen at any time and with little to no warning; that's why being prepared is so important! Some people may rely on old preparedness myths in response to certain disasters, which can prove dangerous.

When it comes to disaster preparedness, can you separate fact from fiction? Test your knowledge about a few popular myths.

• *Standing inside a doorway is the best way to stay safe during an earthquake.* According to FEMA, the current protective action to take during an earthquake is to drop, cover and hold on. Download the America's PrepareAthon! "How to Prepare for an Earthquake Guide" to learn earthquake basics and how to protect yourself during tremors. <http://1.usa.gov/14pQBbQ>. Also, watch the video, "When The Earth Shakes," to see how to stay safe. <http://youtu.be/YXxPTAhMGLI>

• *Duct taping your windows is a quick, easy way to protect them before a hurricane.* Tape does not prevent windows from breaking. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection against storm winds. Window coverings can help prevent debris from blowing into your home. Flying debris from strong winds causes most fatalities and injuries.

• *First responders will be able to help everyone during disasters.* Emergency responders do a great job keeping people safe, but they can't do it alone. It may also be several days before they can reach your area. As such,

On Monday, Jan. 19, Volunteer Fairfax presents the sixth annual Give Together, a family volunteer event on Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service. Volunteer Fairfax invites families with school-age children to come together to perform service projects. These projects are fun, hands-on activities especially designed for young people and small hands. This year families will learn about preparedness as they pack emergency backpacks for themselves and the community. Included in the packs will be useful items like blankets, water bottles and information about Fairfax Alerts, the new alert system for Fairfax County. More information is online at [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org).

we must all embrace our personal responsibility to be prepared.

Remember, being prepared for disasters is a shared responsibility. It takes the whole community working together to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and other emergencies. In September 2013, we debunked preparedness myths during the first America's PrepareAthon! TweetChat. Search #PrepareAthon to find more disaster preparedness fact vs. fiction.

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief" e-newsletter, Dec. 18, 2014.*

## It's Simple to Do 1 Thing

Do 1 Thing is a Web-based, 12-month preparedness program that focuses on a different area of emergency preparedness each month. Emergency preparedness doesn't have to be hard or expensive.

It's as easy as this:

1. Click on the current month's topic.
2. Select one of the easy "things to do."
3. Do that one thing!

If you follow along for an entire year, you will be better prepared to handle most disasters and emergencies. You can jump in anytime and you don't have to do things in any order. (All 12 things are in the little yellow box on the left). You can choose whatever topic you like.



<http://do1thing.com/>

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](mailto:oem@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## Winter Driving Safety

If you need to use your car in winter weather, preparation is critical to ensure your safety as driving during these conditions can be hazardous.

Before hitting the road, be sure to winterize your vehicle and update the emergency supply kit with the following items:

- Shovel.
- Ice scraper and small broom.
- Blanket.
- Emergency flares.

Once your car is ready, follow The "Three P's of Safe Winter Driving" provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration for safe driving in winter storms:

- Prepare for the trip.
- Protect yourself.
- Prevent crashes on the road.

» **PREPARE** for the trip; » **PROTECT** yourself; and » **PREVENT** crashes on the road.

Here are some tips to remember:

- Familiarize yourself with directions before you go and let others know your route and anticipated arrival time.
- Maintain a full tank of gas to prevent fuel lines from freezing.
- Slow down for winter driving conditions, regardless of the type of vehicle you drive.
- Leave plenty of room between your vehicle and others as it takes more time and distance to stop your vehicle on wet roads.
- Do not use cruise control.

Learn more about safe winter driving from the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Health and Safety Administration at <http://l.usa.gov/lwsJMr>.

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief" e-newsletter, Dec. 18, 2014.*



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

## Outreach Events

- **Jan. 6** – St. Andrew the Apostle School Parent/Teacher Organization emergency preparedness presentation.
- **Jan. 7** – Annandale National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE).
- **Jan. 12** – Disability Services Board meeting.
- **Jan. 15** – Faith Communities in Action meeting.
- **Jan. 20** – Springfield District Senior Safety Summit.
- **Jan. 22** – Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council meeting.
- **Jan. 13** – Health and Human Services EOC Tour.
- **Jan. 31** – Mt. Vernon District Supervisor Gerald Hyland's Town Hall meeting.
- **Feb. 5** – HHS Health & Wellness Expo.
- **Feb. 6** – Dranesville District Senior Safety Seminar.
- **Feb. 7** – Tysons Corner Center Camp Fair.
- **Feb. 11** – GMU Job Fair.
- **Feb. 19** – Faith Communities in Action meeting.
- **Feb. 20** – Fairfax County Chaplain tabletop exercise.

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

## Stay Connected to Emergency Information



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



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)



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

## Heating Fire Safety and Carbon Monoxide

**H**ome fires occur more in winter than in any other season. Many of these home fires are caused by space heaters, as well as fireplaces and wood stoves.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) advises the following heating and carbon monoxide tips to stay safe this winter season.

### Portable Heaters

- Only use portable heaters from a recognized testing laboratory.
- Make sure the heater has an automatic shut-off so if it tips over, it shuts off.
- Keep anything that can burn such as bedding, clothing and curtains at least 3 feet away from the heater.
- Plug portable heaters directly into outlets. Never plug a portable heater into an extension cord or power strip.
- Turn heaters off when going to bed or leaving the room.

### Fireplaces

- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers or sparks jumping out.
- Do not burn paper in the fireplace.
- Put the fire out before going to sleep or leaving the home.
- Put ashes in a metal container with a lid, outside, at least 3 feet from the home.

### Wood Stoves

- Have the chimney inspected and cleaned each year by a professional.
- Make sure the wood stove is 3 feet away from anything that can burn.
- Do not burn paper in the wood stove.
- Put the fire out before going to sleep or leaving the home.

### New Disaster Assistance Resource

*DisasterAssistance.gov* is a website maintained by FEMA's Disaster Assistance Improvement Program (DAIP) to help survivors by shortening the time required to apply for assistance and reducing the number of forms that need to be completed. Survivors can also upload documents and check the status of their application, all through the website.

DAIP is an e-Government initiative, managed by FEMA with the support of 16 other federal agencies to simplify the disaster assistance process. The site also provides news, information and resources to help individuals, families and businesses prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Survivors can:

- Find more than 70 forms of assistance from 17 federal agencies.
- Get the latest information on declared disasters such as wildfires, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes.
- Find information about evacuating; accessing shelter, food, water and medical services; and assistance locating loved ones and pets.
- Locate local resources in and around the whole community.
- Share resources via social media.

[www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov)

### Carbon Monoxide

- When using heaters that require fuel, install a carbon monoxide detector.

*Reprinted from FEMA's "External Affairs Bulletin," week of Dec. 29, 2014, edition*



<http://bit.ly/JO7lyb>



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

# Herndon Senior Center Safety Summit

By Dean Sherick

Staff from the Office of Emergency Management joined other agencies to provide tips and information to approximately 75 attendees at the Herndon Senior Safety Summit on Friday, Dec. 5.

The two-hour event was held at the Herndon Senior Center and coordinated through the offices of Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust and Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins.

Similar to the Mason District event conducted earlier this year, the informal information-sharing session addressed topics and issues that impact senior residents of the area. Topics included in-home and personal safety, the File of Life program, scams and other frauds, Project Lifesaver, individual disaster preparedness and managing chronic disease and diabetes.

Participating agencies included the Town of Herndon Police; Fairfax County Departments of Health, Fire and Rescue and Cable and Consumer Services; the Office of Emergency Management; and the Sheriff's Office.

OEM Coordinator Dave McKernan and Dean Sherick, community liaison assistant, discussed the importance of each resident having a plan, preparing a kit and staying informed. These actions help residents remain independent and improve their capabilities in times of emergencies. Information on assistance provided through the Medical Needs Registry was also shared.

Future events are planned for the Braddock and Springfield districts in January.

*Dean Sherick is community liaison assistant with OEM with nearly 40 years of public safety experience.*



## 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/fr/cert](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/cert)



### 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)





Did you know that the World Police & Fire Games is coming to Fairfax County (and the National Capital Region) this summer (June 26-July 5)? The World Police & Fire Games is an international sporting event, offering police officers, firefighters, customs and correction officers from around the world an opportunity to showcase their athletic excellence in over 65 sporting events. 12,000 professional, public safety athletes from 70 countries will be competing in 60-plus sports to qualify for over 1,600 medal events. Learn more about the games online at <http://fairfax2015.com>.

## Braddock District Community Resiliency Meeting

By Dean Sherick

Volunteer Fairfax, with assistance from various Fairfax County agencies, conducted a disaster preparedness seminar in the Braddock District on Monday, Dec. 22.

The event was part of a pilot project that involves an educational seminar and practice exercise as an opportunity for local community partners to meet and better understand how groups can work together in response to a disaster.

Braddock District Supervisor John C. Cook spoke with the leaders and decision-makers from area community-based organizations, local nonprofits, faith-based groups, homeowners associations and first responders.

The pilot project has conducted sessions in the Mason District and will hold meetings in the Sully District later this month.

The program is funded through an Urban Area Security Initiative grant as a means to prepare for and recover from disaster incidents.

The preparedness seminar provides a background on the interaction between first responders, emergency



Braddock District Supervisor John C. Cook at the Braddock District community resiliency meeting.

management and the community during disaster events and how the various community representatives can assist.

The exercise part of the meetings provides an opportunity for the community members to see how their organization's personnel and resources can assist during the recovery phase of a disaster.

Dean Sherick is community liaison assistant with OEM with nearly 40 years of public safety experience.

**If we can't reach you, we can't alert you!**

**FAIRFAX ALERTS**

Fairfax County's FREE alert system sends you important information during an emergency

**In the know, on the go.** [fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts)

## FEMA Creates Flood Insurance Advocate

FEMA has announced that the Interim Office of the Flood Insurance Advocate will begin work on specialized assistance to citizens and policyholders on National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) issues, as well as regional mapping outreach and education support.

The office will operate until a permanent Office of the Flood Insurance Advocate is established pursuant to Section 24 of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 (subject to budget resources).

To best carry out its mission, duties and responsibilities, the interim office will be an independent office within FEMA with direct alignment to the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) associate administrator and the FEMA administrator.

Until funding is available to establish the permanent office, a number of FEMA employees will be detailed to the interim office. FEMA spent several months developing options to implement this new provision. It met with a number of advocate and ombudsman offices at other federal agencies and identified areas of greatest policyholder and property owner needs. These findings were leveraged to build the interim office.

FEMA recommends that policyholders also continue to work with their insurance agents to resolve any questions or concerns that they have related to flood insurance or contact Floodsmart at 1-888-379-9531.

[www.fema.gov/news-release/2014/12/19/fema-announces-launch-interim-office-flood-insurance-advocate](http://www.fema.gov/news-release/2014/12/19/fema-announces-launch-interim-office-flood-insurance-advocate)



## Mature Living

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Agency on Aging, and Whitney Kazragis, community outreach liaison for the Office of Emergency Management.

“Mature Living” begins airing in February on Channel 16 on these days/times:

- Sundays at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- Mondays at 5 p.m.
- Wednesdays at noon.
- Fridays at 9 p.m.

The program also can be seen on your computer at the above days and times with live video streaming (<http://1.usa.gov/1tMd6TP>) or anytime with video on demand (<http://1.usa.gov/1xA5H9R>).

“Mature Living” can also be viewed on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7l8o7zk\\_I4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7l8o7zk_I4).

For more information on preparing for emergencies or to request a community speaker, go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem) or call 571-350-1000, TTY 711.

To find services for older adults, call 703-324-7948, TTY 711, or go online to the county website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults).

# Emergency News

## by email

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

## Amateur Radio and CERT

By Dean Sherick

In December, members of the Fairfax County Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) gathered in the Alternate Emergency Operations Center to discuss shared interests for emergency preparedness.

The ARES group provides its talents as licensed amateur radio operators and their equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

CERT provides disaster preparedness training to assist residents to safely help themselves, their families and their communities during major emergencies.

The purpose of the evening meeting was to share common interests in radio communications and how the amateur radio systems can be utilized to enhance disaster response.

A number of ARES members regularly participate with the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management to conduct checks of emergency communications systems that provide alternative communication methods should normal telephone systems be unavailable.

CERT members are looking to connect individuals with others in their neighborhoods or magisterial districts through obtaining amateur radio licenses and expanding their training to include this valuable communications tool.

The two organizations are planning future gatherings to team experienced licensed amateur radio operators with those CERT members interested in the technology and obtaining their own licenses. This joint effort will enhance the emergency preparedness of both organizations and assist Fairfax County to become a more resilient community.



*ARES and CERT members gathered recently to discuss shared interests and ways the two volunteer organizations can work together to enhance disaster response efforts.*

Learn more about the Fairfax County ARES online at <http://ffxares.org> and the Fairfax County CERT at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/cert/cert.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/cert/cert.htm).

*Dean Sherick is community liaison assistant with OEM with nearly 40 years of public safety experience.*

Here's a New Year's resolution that won't cost a lot of money and one you can keep: Resolve to get yourself and your family ready for emergencies in 2015.

Disasters can happen at any time – families may not be together, power could be out for days, cellphones may not work. Take these actions as you “Resolve to Get Ready” in 2015.

- Write down important contact information and phone numbers and put copies in wallets and kids' backpacks. Memorize the name and phone number of your family emergency contact.
- Discuss with your family how you will meet up with each other if you are separated during an emergency.
- Ask your child's school about their emergency plans.
- Set aside three days' of emergency food and water (one gallon per person per day).
- Consider getting a portable power pack for recharging cellphones and mobile devices.

Visit [www.ReadyVirginia.gov](http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov) or [www.ReadyNoVa.org](http://www.ReadyNoVa.org) for free planning tools and worksheets, emergency contact wallet cards and emergency supply checklists.