

Emergency Preparedness

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Statewide Tornado Drill on Tuesday, March 17; 9:45 a.m.

Each year, tornadoes cost millions of dollars in damage and can take many lives. While rare for many areas, Fairfax County has had over 13 major tornadoes in the past several years, totaling over \$21 million in damages and many injuries. If one strikes your area, will you be prepared?



Know the Signs

Did you know not every tornado has a funnel cloud? Heavy rains can obscure your view making them difficult to spot or invisible to the naked eye until debris and dust kick up.

Know the Difference Between a Tornado Watch and a Warning

A **tornado watch** signifies that a tornado is possible due to the weather conditions. You should monitor local weather and radio for updates in case a tornado warning is issued.

A **tornado warning** means a tornado has been spotted or that one has been indicated by the National Weather Service. If your area is under a tornado warning, move to a safe location immediately such as a basement or a ground-level interior room with no windows.

Test Your Plan

Participate in the Virginia Statewide Tornado Drill on

Tuesday, March 17, at 9:45 a.m. Check out www.ReadyVirginia.gov for more tips on preparation, information on the drill and how to register. And be sure to sign up for Fairfax Alerts for up-to-date information including severe weather alerts and warnings at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts.

In This Issue

Statewide Tornado Drill
Page 1

America's PrepareAthon! | OEM Interns
Page 2

Outreach Events | Apps
Page 3

April Showers Bring May Flowers ... and
Page 4

FEMA Region III
Page 5

Spring Forward
Page 6

Mitigation Video | Tools for a Disaster Prepared Business
Page 7

Girl Scout Visit | Worship Watch
Page 8

America's PrepareAthon!

Twice a year, April 30 and Sept. 30, the America's PrepareAthon! campaign promotes national days of action. National PrepareAthon! Days bring attention to our progress toward creating a more resilient nation.

Remember to register your activities on the America's PrepareAthon! website, which now features a more streamlined look and registration process.

www.community.fema.gov/connect.ti/AmericasPrepareathon

There are a few simple steps you can do to become better prepared. They include:

- Plan with neighbors to help each other and share resources.
- Sign up for local alerts and warnings, download apps, and/or check access for wireless emergency alerts.
- Develop and test emergency communications plans.
- Assemble or update emergency supplies.

More information on the prepareathon is available online at <http://1.usa.gov/1tGLdtj>.



The Fairfax County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) recently held a summit, "Rising to the Challenge: Building Resilient Communities One Volunteer at a Time." MRC volunteers were recognized for 1, 3, 5 and 10 years of service, as well as beyond the call, and serving in the 2014 measles and 2014 ebola responses. Additionally, three distinguished awardees were recognized for outstanding service to the Health Department and Fairfax County: the Fairfax MRC Champion (Debbie Minutolo), Fairfax MRC Service Award (Margaret Cotroneo) and Fairfax MRC Volunteer of the Year (Margaret Cotroneo). Above, Health Director Dr. Gloria Addo Ayensu (far right) with members of the MRC.

OEM Interns

The Office of Emergency Management is hosting three interns for the spring semester. They are working on researching best practices for engaging the business community before a disaster and projects for exercise and training and community outreach.

Kayla Slater graduated from University of Maryland at College Park in 2013 and started full time at a D.C. law firm due to her interests in the policy and legal system before realizing she did not want to pursue a career as a lawyer. She is due to complete her Master of Professional Studies in emergency and disaster management from Georgetown University in August.

John Shymansky, the new training and exercises intern, comes to the office as a recent graduate of UMUC with a degree in emergency management and certification as a continuity practitioner through FEMA's Emergency Management Institute. He hopes to use the experience and tutelage gained from working with OEM staff to begin a career working in training and exercises as a full-fledged emergency manager.

Katharine Smith is a senior at George Mason University and is excited to be graduating this May. She's eager to learn about community preparedness and recovery on a larger scale such as in Fairfax County.

For more information about the OEM internship program, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem/internship.

See Page 3 for a picture of the interns.



Contact us to request a booth, presentation or attendance at a festival. Call 571-530-1000 or email oem@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Download American Red Cross Disaster Apps

March is American Red Cross Month. Now is a good time to familiarize yourself with some of the disaster preparedness tools the Red Cross offers, including a variety of mobile applications (apps). The free apps provide alerts for weather hazards, first aid, shelter, pet first-aid and more.



As the winter weather hazards come to an end, you can use the weather-related apps to prepare for spring hazards, such as tornadoes and hurricanes.

Red Cross apps: www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps



OEM Interns (left to right) Kayla Slater, Katharine Smith and John Shymansky checked out the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Center during their orientation.

Outreach Events March & April

- **March 6** – Chaplain Corps Tabletop Exercise
- **March 7** – Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Summit
- **March 7** – Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Special Education Conference
- **March 9** – Disability Services Board Meeting
- **March 14** – Emergency Preparedness Canvassing Volunteer Opportunity
- **March 17** – Statewide Tornado Drill
- **March 19** – Faith Communities in Action Meeting
- **March 21** – Fairfax County Community and Neighborhood Leaders Conference
- **March 24** – Senior Preparedness and the Medical Needs Registry Presentation
- **March 26** – Citizen Corps Council Meeting
- **April 1** – Vienna Optimist Club Meeting
- **April 11** – Vienna Health and Wellness Fair
- **April 16** – Faith Communities in Action Meeting
- **April 20** – Emergency Preparedness Childcare Training Workshop
- **April 23** – King of Kings Lutheran Church Presentation
- **April 24** – Reston Community Center Senior Health and Safety Fair

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-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

April Showers Bring May Flowers ... and Possibly Severe Weather Too

By Katharine Smith

While April showers bring May flowers, this time also brings the risk for severe weather. For Fairfax County, this could mean anything from severe thunderstorms to flooding.

Do you know what to do if your home is impacted by severe weather?

During April, be ready and take actions to prepare for weather that could affect you and your home.

Plan to be Prepared

In case of severe weather, would you shelter in place or evacuate? If staying put, make sure your home is prepared ahead of the storm with clear gutters and secure anything that could blow away. Know where to go in case you need to evacuate by establishing a meeting place with your family. Go online to www.ReadyNOVA.org to customize your own emergency plan.

Build a Kit

Prepare an emergency kit for you and your family, pets or service animals! Include food and water for at least three days and don't forget any medications you may need. Place copies of important documents, like your insurance policies, in waterproof containers to protect them from potential water or storm damage. Visit www.Ready.gov/build-a-kit for a complete list of recommended items.

Stay Informed

Visit the Fairfax County Emergency Information Blog at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog for changes in government services, such as the closure of FastTran shuttles or county facilities.

Sign up for Fairfax Alerts at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/

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 OEM at 571-350-1000, TTY 711, or via email at oem-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov.

alerts to send up-to-date weather, traffic and emergency alerts straight to your personal email or phone. Remember to follow local weather stations and emergency broadcasts as well.

Severe weather can impact us at any time. Take the extra step and have an emergency kit in your car, complete with water and snacks. Preparation can be the difference between an emergency and a disaster. Be ready and resilient for any kind of emergency this April.

For more information on preparing for an emergency, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency.

If your group would like a presentation on emergency preparedness, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 571-350-1000, TTY 711 or email oem@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Katharine Smith, an intern with OEM, is a senior at George Mason University.



Don't Forget to Test Your Smoke Alarm

A smoke alarm with a dead or missing battery is the same as having no smoke alarm at all. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) recommends you test your smoke alarms each month, replace the batteries at least once every year, and replace the entire smoke alarm every 10 years. For more information, visit USFA's website, www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/smoke_alarms.html

FEMA Region III

FEMA Region III serves Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Virginia and West Virginia.

Located in Philadelphia, Pa., Region III is close to historically rich symbols of early America, such as Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. Led by Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney, Region III's 185 employees provide critical preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery support to the region every day.

Region III is in the unique position of working with two of the four commonwealth states (Pennsylvania and Virginia) in the U.S., as well as with the National Capital Region and Washington, D.C. Serving close to 31 million people, Region III is made up of multiple major metropolitan areas as well as thousands of smaller communities.

Region III borders the Atlantic Ocean through Delaware, Maryland and Virginia and Lake Erie in Pennsylvania. FEMA Region III most commonly experiences severe storms, but disasters such as flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes and winter storms have also resulted in declarations.

One of the many unique elements of Region III is its role in the presidential inauguration and State of the Union Address. As National Special Security Events (NSSEs) take place in Washington, D.C., the regional office works with other members of the federal family to ensure these events run smoothly.

Region III will also perform a pivotal role in the upcoming World Meeting of Families and the first official visit to the U.S. by Pope Francis.

Reprinted from FEMA's "External Affairs Bulletin," March 2, 2015, edition



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/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

Spring Forward

Daylight Saving Time began on Sunday, March 8. As you sprang forward for the time change, did you remember to take a few minutes to also change the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors? Batteries should be replaced at least once a year to make sure the alarms operate properly.

By maintaining the alarms in your home, you can increase your chances of surviving a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning. When fire breaks out, you only have seconds to escape its heat, black smoke and deadly gases.



Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that fuel-burning heating and cooking devices often produce. It is often called the silent killer because it is odorless and colorless.

The National Fire Protection Association offers tips for making your home safer:

- Place smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home and outside each bedroom. If you keep your bedroom doors closed, place a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- Test alarms once a month.
- Never disable a smoke alarm when cooking.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years old.

Learn more life safety tips from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr.

Plan to be Prepared

Ready NOVA

Preparedness Planners

Plan to be Prepared

Use the family and business emergency planners at www.ReadyNOVA.org.



Team members from the North Central Region, Pine 4 team of Americorps NCCC FEMA Corps and Volunteer Fairfax's Volunteer Emergency Team (VET) volunteered to pack information bags for upcoming emergency preparedness canvassing opportunities. In less than two hours, they packed over 500 bags! If you're interested in future volunteer opportunities, visit <http://bit.ly/1nNV0Ju>.



St. Patrick's Day is a time to wear green, but it's also a great opportunity to save some "green" while preparing for emergencies. Whitney Kazragis with the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management offers several easy ways you can become better prepared without having to find a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Watch at www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzXxrE9D-y4



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

New Mitigation Video

The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH) and FEMA have supported the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's (VDEM) public outreach efforts by creating a new video for homeowners with information on how well-built homes can withstand both earthquakes and high winds.

Virginia is one of many states in the U.S. with an earthquake hazard that is not widely known, even though the 2011 earthquake in Mineral is, to date, known as the most widely felt in U.S. history.

The video reminds homeowners that building with a continuous load path will help protect them and their home from more common wind events as well as earthquakes that can and do happen in Virginia.



In the video, Louisa County School Superintendent Dr. Deborah Pettit describes her experience during the 2011 Mineral earthquake that destroyed the county high school. VDEM Hazard Mitigation Program Manager Matthew Wall describes the mitigation options.

The video can be viewed online on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx4fTT5wITw.

Tools for a Disaster Prepared Business

According to FEMA's "Preparedness in America Report," the workplace is one of the most effective environments for educating and encouraging people to take steps to be ready for disasters.

In fact, when employers encourage employees to prepare for disasters, employees are 75 percent more likely to take action.

The American Red Cross and America's PrepareAthon! offer free tools and resources to increase disaster preparedness in the workplace.

Employers can participate in the Red Cross Ready Rating Program (www.readyrating.org) to help their organization successfully withstand disasters and other

emergencies. To join the program and become a Ready Rating member, employers complete a 123-point assessment of the preparedness level of their business. After the assessment, employers must take action to improve preparedness within the office and among employees.

As a member, business owners can access an emergency response planner to create a tailored disaster plan and progress reports to track improvements.

Employers can also find valuable information in the prepare your organization playbooks from America's PrepareAthon! (<http://1.usa.gov/17DI9Xn>). These playbooks are step-by-step guides to help business owners hold preparedness discussions and table-top exercises in the workplace.

Emergency News

by email

Subscribe

Receive emergency preparedness information and emergency news by email

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

Girl Scout Visit

Recently, 12 members and two leaders from Girl Scout Troop 6829 visited the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (MPSTOC). The troop members, from the West Springfield Elementary School, are working on their emergency preparedness badge. They were interested in learning about the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management.

The facility tour was conducted by Sulayman Brown, emergency operations center (EOC) manager, who provided an overview of the facility's occupants and their interactions, the 9-1-1 Call Center and the EOC.

Following the tour, a discussion on emergency preparedness was conducted by Dean Sherick, community outreach liaison assistant, who provided each scout with an information packet and reviewed basic measures for being prepared for all types of disaster events.

The Girl Scouts participated in an exercise assembling their "Emergency Preparedness Kit" and provided explanations for why they selected items that would be helpful during a shelter-in-place or evacuation event. They will be completing the additional requirements for the badge at future troop meetings.

If your group would like a tour of the EOC or have a presentation on emergency preparedness, contact the Office of Emergency Management at 571-350-1000, TTY 711.



Dean Sherick (far right) and Sulayman Brown (not pictured) welcomed members of Girl Scout Troop 6829 for a tour of MPSTOC and emergency management.

Worship Watch

On Saturday, Feb. 28, the Office of Emergency Management's outreach team attended the kickoff workshop of the Worship Watch program sponsored by the Fairfax County Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit.

The four-plus hour training workshop was held at the Government Center with close to 60 attendees representing about 25 houses of worship.

Worship Watch is designed to be a sister program to the Neighborhood Watch program.

The crime prevention officers will work with faith-based officials to implement increased security features, train staff on observation and reporting skills and coordinate security assessment for their facility. Worship Watch will hold another workshop at the South County Center later this year.

Keep an eye on this newsletter for additional information on this new program. If you'd like more information about participating in Worship Watch, contact Reston Crime Prevention Officer Katy Defoe at 703-478-0799 or katy.defoe@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Getting It Right Workshop

Staff from the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) attended the "Getting It Right" workshop hosted by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and Portlight Strategies Inc. in Newport News, Va. on Feb. 24-25.

The workshop shared tools to facilitate full integration and whole community inclusion in all aspects of emergency planning, response and recovery. Speakers included representatives from FEMA, the American Red Cross, disability stakeholder organizations and those involved in the recent litigation of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled v. City of New York.