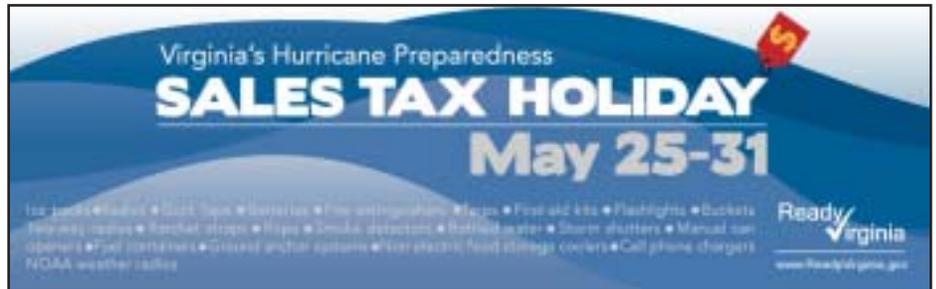


# Emergency Preparedness

Published by the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management  
May 2015

## Two Hurricane Preparedness Sales Tax Holidays This Year

Legislation enacted by the 2015 General Assembly (SB 1319) combines three existing sales tax holidays into one. This includes the hurricane and emergency preparedness sales tax holiday. However, the Virginia Department of Taxation has confirmed this year's hurricane and emergency preparedness sales holiday for May 25-31 and Aug. 7-9 respectively.



In subsequent years, there will be just one hurricane and emergency preparedness sales tax holiday in August.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has updated sales tax holiday outreach materials to reflect the upcoming campaign online at [www.vaemergency.gov](http://www.vaemergency.gov). You can also visit VDEM's sales tax page [www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stay-informed/hurricanes/sales-tax-holiday](http://www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/stay-informed/hurricanes/sales-tax-holiday). (Note: Since this link is multiple lines it may not be working properly; if not, copy and paste the link into your Web browser.)

Information from the Department of Taxation regarding this event is online at [www.tax.virginia.gov/content/hurricane-preparedness-equipment-holiday](http://www.tax.virginia.gov/content/hurricane-preparedness-equipment-holiday).

Link to the legislation:  
<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?151+sum+SB1319>

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This newsletter is published by the  
Fairfax County  
Office of  
Emergency  
Management



## FEMA Launches New Feature in Mobile App Empowering Users to Follow Weather Alerts

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has launched a new feature to its free app that will enable users to receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations across the nation.

This new feature allows users to receive alerts on severe weather happening anywhere they select in the country, even if the phone is not located in the area, making it easy to follow severe weather that may be threatening family and friends. According to a recent survey by Pew Research, 40 percent of Americans have used their smartphone to look up government services or information.

Additionally, a majority of smartphone owners use their devices to keep up to date with breaking news and to be informed about what is happening in their community. The new weather alert feature adds to the app's existing features to help users through emergencies. In addition to this upgrade, the app also provides a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and Disaster Recovery Centers, and tips on how to survive natural and manmade disasters. The FEMA app also offers a "Disaster Reporter" feature, where users can upload and share photos of disaster damage.

Some other key features of the app include:

- **Safety Tips:** Tips on how to stay safe before, during, and after over 20 types of hazards, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes
- **Disaster Reporter:** Users can upload and share photos of damage and recovery efforts
- **Maps of Disaster Resources:** Users can locate and receive driving directions to open shelters and disaster recovery centers
- **Apply for Assistance:** The app provides easy access to apply for federal disaster assistance
- **Information in Spanish:** The app defaults to Spanish-

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-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:oem-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov).



language content for smartphones that have Spanish set as their default language

The latest version of the FEMA app is available for free in the App Store for Apple devices and Google Play for Android devices. Users who already have the app downloaded on their device should download the latest update for the weather alerts feature to take effect. The new weather alerts feature in the FEMA app does not replace Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) function available on many new smartphones. WEAs have a special tone and vibration and are sent for emergencies such as extreme weather, AMBER alerts or Presidential alerts.

Video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxBdhLtNuxM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxBdhLtNuxM)

Reprinted from FEMA

## #Petpared Challenge

Through May 8, FEMA Region III (Va., Pa., West Va., Del., D.C. and Md.) is holding the #Petpared Challenge.

In support of the America's PrepareAthon! campaign, the #Petpared Challenge encourages pet owners to take action and prepare their pets for an emergency.

The action – or actions – can be as simple as:

- Downloading a pet preparedness app.
- Building a pet emergency supply kit.
- Identifying your pet with a collar and tag or consider micro chipping.
- Practicing evacuating in the car or determine where you would shelter-in-place with your pet.
- Creating a buddy-system with a relative or friend to help each other's pets if one of you is away from home during an emergency.

The next step of the #Petpared Challenge is for pet owners to take a picture (or a selfie) of their #petpared pet and post the photo to Twitter or Instagram with the hashtag #Petpared to help spread the word.



Watch this quick instructional video from FEMA containing information for pet owners and suggestions for proactive pet emergency preparedness. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-N0fmfCe700>



## Outreach Events

- **May 7:** Bag packing at MPSTOC for future community canvassing events
- **May 9:** STEP program packing event at MPSTOC, packing 2,700 backpacks
- **May 11:** Disability Services Board Meeting, 7 p.m. Fairfax County Government Center
- **May 16:** Canvassing event with volunteers, Vienna
- **May 17:** Emergency preparedness outreach at Vale United Methodist Church, Oakton
- **May 20:** Holmes Run Acres Civic Association emergency preparedness presentation, Falls Church
- **May 21:** Faith Communities in Action Meeting at MPSTOC
- **May 28:** Citizen Corp Council meeting, Fairfax County Government Center
- **May 30:** Springfield Days Pet Preparedness
- **May 31:** Emergency Preparedness outreach at LDS Church, Fairfax (West Ox)

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](mailto:oem-outreach@fairfaxcounty.gov).



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

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

## 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)



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)

## FEMA Supports Building Safety Month in May

For the fifth consecutive year, President Obama proclaimed May as National Building Safety Month to highlight the essential role that safe building codes and standards play in decreasing the damaging effects of disasters.

In keeping with Presidential Policy Directive-8, (National Preparedness), and Presidential Policy Directive-21 (Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience) building safety, fire prevention, and energy codes and standards better enable disaster resilience for our nation.

This year's theme is "Resilient Communities Start with Building Codes." Each week in May has an individual theme.

Building Safety Month is a public outreach and education campaign coordinated by the International Code Council (ICC) and their thousands of members worldwide. Building Safety Month aims to increase awareness of the need for overall safety and sustainability of buildings through the adoption of model building codes and promotion of code

*"From skyscrapers and schools to hospitals and homes, America's buildings are the foundations of our communities. When disasters strike, we rely on the structural integrity of our buildings to keep us safe. This month, we pay tribute to the innovative professionals who implement our safety standards, and we redouble our efforts to make our buildings as resilient as our people."*

*President Barack Obama*  
*National Building Safety Month proclamation*  
<http://1.usa.gov/1KK6LMp>

enforcement. The campaign includes an array of community events, safety demonstrations and educational outreach activities which are designed to promote awareness of the need for safe and sustainable structures where people live, work and play.



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

## Beta Version of FEMA.gov

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has launched a new Beta version of [www.FEMA.gov](http://www.FEMA.gov).

As part of the redesign, the following changes were made:

- Focused on getting the content in front of the reader without any distractions.
- Added mobile compatibility so the content can be read on any screen size.
- Increased the font size.
- Made it easier to identify the sections of content on each page.
- Limited the duplication of navigation links on each page.

FEMA is continuing to work on the Beta site.

Comments and feedback are welcome on the FEMA

Find out more about FEMA's new website and blog with this post about the site redesign.

<http://beta.fema.gov/blog/2015-04-07/less-more-reimagining-femagov>



# Sixty Percent of Americans Not Practicing for Disaster

A recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) survey found that nearly 60 percent of American adults have not practiced what to do in a disaster by participating in a disaster drill or preparedness exercise at work, school or home in the past year.

Further, only 39 percent of respondents have developed an emergency plan and discussed it with their household. This is despite the fact that 80 percent of Americans live in counties that have been hit with a weather-related disaster since 2007, as reported by the Washington Post.

With the number and severity of weather-related disasters on the rise, individuals, organizations and communities are encouraged to take action to prepare for specific hazards through group discussions, drills and exercises. There are several simple actions to stay safe before, during and after emergencies, such as:

- Sign up for Fairfax Alerts text messages for your phone ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts)) and download weather apps to your smartphone.
- Develop an emergency communication plan for your family. This will help you be in touch if a disaster strikes and family members are in different locations.
- Collect important documents and keep them in a safe place. This will help you evacuate without delay and get back on track after the disaster passes.
- Gather emergency supplies. Pack a “go bag” to evacuate quickly and have supplies in the home to be safe without water or power.

Visit [www.ready.gov/prepare](http://www.ready.gov/prepare) for more information, and [www.ReadyNOVA.org](http://www.ReadyNOVA.org) to complete a family emergency preparedness plan or a business emergency preparedness plan.



## 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)

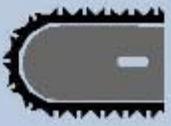
### Fire Corps



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)

# Virginia's Hurricane Preparedness SALES TAX HOLIDAY May 25-31

## Sales tax-exempt products for \$60 or less:

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  <b>Ice packs</b><br>artificial ice, blue ice,<br>reusable ice                      |  <b>Radios</b><br>battery-powered,<br>hand-crank,<br>electric                        |  <b>Duct tape</b>   |
|  <b>Batteries</b><br>AAA, AA, C & D<br>6-volt, 9-volt, cell<br>(Excludes auto/bost) |  <b>Fire Extinguishers</b>   |  <b>Tarps</b><br>waterproof plastic<br>sheeting & drop cloths   |
|  <b>First-aid kits</b>   |  <b>Flashlights</b><br>lanterns,<br>glow sticks<br>(Excludes candles)               |  <b>Buckets</b><br>barrels, canteens,  |
|  <b>Two-way radios</b>  |  <b>Ratchet straps</b>   |  <b>Rope &amp; bungee cords</b>   |
|  <b>Smoke &amp; carbon monoxide detectors</b>                                     |  <b>Bottled water,</b><br>any size & number,<br>including flavored<br>& carbonated |  <b>Storm shutters</b><br>specific for storms<br>(Excludes plywood)   |
|  <b>Manual can openers</b>  |  <b>Fuel containers</b><br>gas, propane or<br>diesel                               |  <b>Portable generators, generator power cords, inverters &amp; inverter power cables for \$1,000 or less are also tax free.</b><br><br> <b>Gas-powered chainsaws for \$340 or less and chainsaw accessories for \$60 or less also qualify.</b> |
|  <b>Ground anchor systems</b> or tie down kits                                    |  <b>Non-electric food storage coolers</b>  |   |
|  <b>Cell phone chargers</b>   |  <b>NOAA weather radios &amp; weather band radios</b>                              |   |

Ready  
Virginia  
[www.ReadyVirginia.gov](http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov)



The Virginia Department of Taxation's Hurricane Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday Guidelines and Rules are available online at [go.usa.gov/TmCR](http://go.usa.gov/TmCR).

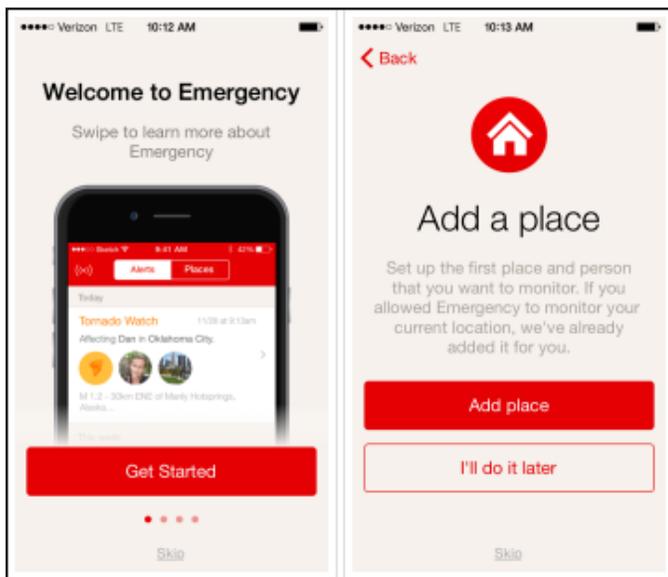
For detailed information about how to prepare your family for hurricanes and other emergencies, visit [www.ReadyVirginia.gov](http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov).

## How to Set Emergency Alerts on the New Red Cross App

**E**mergencies are stressful. We lose sleep when dangerous thunderstorms, tornadoes, earthquakes or wildfires hit close to home, but also when they threaten areas of the country where our loved ones live.

Luckily, a new app, Emergency by the American Red Cross, includes a helpful tool to monitor multiple locations for watches and warnings of all kinds.

The app can alert you with an alarm when hazards or potential emergencies may impact where you live as well as regions of the country where your loved ones call home. Here's a quick step-by-step guide to setting up alerts on your phone.



Reprinted from the American Red Cross blog  
<http://redcrosschat.org/2015/04/23/set-emergency-alerts-new-app/>

Plan to be Prepared

# Ready NOVA

Preparedness Planners

**Plan to be Prepared**

Use the family and business emergency planners at [www.ReadyNOVA.org](http://www.ReadyNOVA.org).



Never drive or walk into flood waters – there's no telling how deep the water may be, especially at night. Watch this short video from the U.S. National Weather Service YouTube channel for more details.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI6mIIHKrVY>

## Never Drive or Walk into Flood Waters – Turn Around, Don't Drown!

**F**looding is one of the leading causes of weather related fatalities in the U.S. On average, flooding claims nearly 90 lives each year. More than half of these deaths occur in motor vehicles when people attempt to drive through flooded roadways. This happens because people underestimate the force and power of water, especially when it is moving.

Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock over and carry off an adult. Twelve inches of water can float a small car. If that water is moving, it can carry that car away. Eighteen to twenty-four inches of flowing water can carry away most vehicles, including large SUVs.

It is impossible to tell the exact depth of water covering a roadway or the condition of the road below the water. This is especially true at night when your vision is more limited. It is never safe to drive or walk through flood waters.

Any time you come to a flooded road, walkway or path, follow this simple rule: Turn Around. Don't Drown.

For more information and flood safety tips, visit [www.floodsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov).



## Happy Birthday Volunteer Fairfax

**F**or 40 years Volunteer Fairfax has been involved in the Fairfax community, including work with the county's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the Emergency Operations Center, emergency planning and in the recruiting and training of volunteers for service during times of emergency.

OEM says thanks to the Volunteer Fairfax organization for reaching this milestone – 40 years of operation – and wishes the staff, board members and volunteers a happy birthday!

Thanks to Volunteer Fairfax for all you have meant to emergency preparedness in the past, and here's to many more years of partnership with Fairfax County in making our residents ready and prepared for any emergency.

### Wish Volunteer Fairfax a Happy Birthday!

Sign the virtual birthday card by posting on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/855686857840740/>

or on Twitter using #VFcheers40years  
<https://twitter.com/VolunteerFFX>

May 6, 1975 is the official date of incorporation for Volunteer Fairfax.

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