

# Emergency Preparedness

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June 2014

## Fairfax Alerts ... Be In the Know, On the Go

Get emergency alerts by email, as well as by text or pager from Fairfax Alerts, the new emergency alert system from Fairfax County, which goes live on June 19.

Fairfax Alerts replaces CEAN, the Community Emergency Alert Network, and offers users enhanced alert features – as well as “behind-the-scenes” functionality to ease the sending and management of alerts by the Office of Emergency Management.

### You Choose the Type of Alerts

- Pick the types of weather alerts you wish to receive, along with traffic and public safety alerts.
- Create a “do not disturb” timeframe when you don’t want to receive weather alerts.
- Learn about county government non-emergency notices such as tax and election deadlines.

### Alerts for Many Different Devices

- Choose up to 10 delivery methods like home phone, cell-phone, email, text messaging and more.
- Manage your Fairfax Alerts profile from your phone by downloading the Everbridge Mobile Memberapp for iPhone or Android.
- Mobile app allows for two-way conversations with emergency managers and does not use text messaging service.

### Alerts for Your Locations

- Customize your Fairfax Alerts with up to five addresses, i.e.,

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

*[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts)*

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This newsletter is published by the  
Fairfax County  
Office of  
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Management



## Do You Know the 30/30 Lightning Safety Rule?

National Lightning Awareness Week is June 22-28. Summer is on the way, and that means summer storms are, too. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur in the summer months when people are caught outdoors during the afternoons and evenings.

Remember the 30/30 lightning safety rule – go indoors if after seeing lightning you can't count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.



Reduce your risk for lightning injury:

- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter – a substantial building or a metal-topped vehicle with windows up.
- If you feel your hair stand on end, then squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target, and minimize your contact with the ground.
- Avoid contact with anything metal – tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts and golf clubs, and bicycles.
- If you are in an open area or on open water, then get to land and find shelter immediately.

Lightning is one of the top three storm-related killers. It



Emergency management staff were a part of Celebrate Fairfax this month and attendees were able to pre-register for the new Fairfax Alerts system.

often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall. Stay informed about changing weather conditions during the summer by tuning in to local media weather reports and monitoring NOAA Weather Radio.

National Lightning Awareness Week is June 22-28. For more information about lightning safety, go online to [www.ReadyVirginia.gov](http://www.ReadyVirginia.gov) or the NOAA Web page [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov).

### Volunteers with Pets Needed for Emergency Exercise on June 26

The Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management seeks volunteers with dogs or cats (pets and/or service animals) to participate in the county's shelter exercise on Thursday, June 26, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Snacks and lunch will be provided. For more on the exercise visit <http://bit.ly/1laHT2X>; to register call 571-350-1000, TTY 711.

### Stay Connected to Emergency Information



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



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)



Fairfax County, Va., publication.

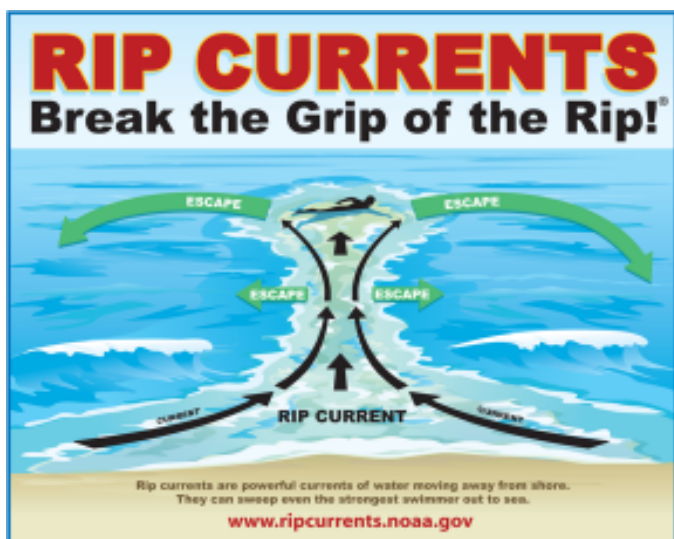
To request this information in an alternate format, call 571-350-1000, TTY 711.

## Break The Grip of The Rip

Each year NOAA designates the first full week of June as national Rip Current Awareness Week, coinciding with the traditional start of the summer vacation season. This year, Rip Current Awareness Week is June 1-7.

Rip currents are strong narrow currents moving away from shore. The strongest rip currents can attain speeds reaching 8 feet per second; this is faster than an Olympic swimmer can sprint! On average, more people die every year from rip currents than from shark attacks or lightning. According to the United States Lifesaving Association, 80 percent of surf beach rescues are attributed to rip currents, and more than 100 people die annually from drowning in rip currents.

Learn more at [www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov](http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov).



**IF CAUGHT IN A RIP CURRENT**

- ◆ Don't fight the current
- ◆ Swim out of the current, then to shore
- ◆ If you can't escape, float or tread water
- ◆ If you need help, call or wave for assistance

**SAFETY**

- ◆ Know how to swim
- ◆ Never Swim alone
- ◆ If in doubt, don't go out

More information about rip currents can be found at the following web sites:

[www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov](http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov)  
[www.usla.org](http://www.usla.org)



## Outreach Events

- Tuesday and Wednesday, **June 10-11** – Herbert & Burke and Virginia 1st Tabletop Exercise
- Friday, **June 13** – Burke Centre Movie Night
- Saturday, **June 14** – Taste of Reston
- Thursday, **June 19** – Faith Communities in Action meeting
- Friday, **June 20** – Command and Control Communications Rally
- Thursday, **June 26** – VERTEX Shelter 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).

## Fairfax Alerts

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school, work and home.

- Get geo-targeted weather alerts based on the addresses you define.
- Receive weather advisories for you, your family, home, business, school, child care and more.

If we can't reach you, we can't alert you. Sign up for free emergency alerts from Fairfax Alerts – beginning June 19 – at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts).

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

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).

## An Unpredictable Spring

From the CDC Blog

**D**uring spring, temperatures can swing back and forth between balmy and frigid. Sunny days may be followed by a week of stormy weather; sometimes extreme weather changes can occur even within the same day.

Below are the most common types of severe spring weather:

- **Thunderstorms** cause most of the severe spring weather. They can bring lightning, tornadoes and flooding. Whenever warm, moist air collides with cool, dry air, thunderstorms can occur. For much of the world, this happens in spring and summer.
- **Tornadoes**, often called twisters, are rapidly rotating columns of air that are connected to both the ground and the cloud. Tornado Alley – the Great Plains region of the United States – is most active this time of year. To date in 2014, there have been more than 30 deaths due to tornadoes.
- **Flooding** is most common in and near mountainous areas due to snow melt. Mudslides, like the one in Oso, Washington and locally in Prince George's County, can happen when heavy rainfall, snowmelt or high amounts of ground water cause soil to be uprooted.

Because spring weather can be so unpredictable, you may be unprepared when severe weather hits – especially if you live in a region that does not often experience these types of events. And when severe weather hits unexpectedly, the risk of injury and death increases. Planning ahead makes sense; prepare for storms, floods and tornadoes as if you know in advance they are coming.

Advance planning for thunderstorms, lightning, tornadoes and floods requires specific safety precautions.

You can follow many of the same steps for all extreme weather events. You should have on hand:

- A battery-operated flashlight, a battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio, and extra batteries for both.



- An emergency evacuation plan, including a map of your home and, for every type of severe weather emergency, routes to safety from each room.
- A list of important personal information, including telephone numbers of neighbors, family and friends; insurance and property information; telephone numbers of utility companies; and medical information.
- A first-aid kit may include non-latex gloves; an assortment of adhesive bandages; antibiotic ointment; sterile gauze pads in assorted sizes; absorbent compress dressings; tweezers and scissors; adhesive cloth tape; aspirin packets; first-aid instruction booklet, etc.
- A 3-5 day supply of bottled water and nonperishable food.
- Personal hygiene items.
- Blankets or sleeping bags.
- An emergency kit in your car.

Remember to help prepare your family members and neighbors for the possibility of severe weather. Tell them where they can find appropriate shelter as soon as they are aware of an approaching storm. Make sure to run through your emergency plans for every type of severe weather. Show family members where emergency supplies are stored and make sure they know how to turn off the water, gas and electricity in your home.

Unfortunately, few of us get much advance notice of a severe weather event. Often times when we become aware of an approaching storm, we have little time to prepare for it.

Being prepared can help you at any time of the year.

*Reprinted from the blog of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <http://blogs.cdc.gov>*



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

## Hurricanes and Insurance

Virginians are no strangers to hurricanes and the devastation they can bring. The State Corporation Commission's Bureau of Insurance encourages residents to develop a plan to protect themselves physically and financially before the winds and rains arrive. This includes making sure you have the insurance coverage you need.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30 each year. No matter where you live in Virginia, hurricanes and their resulting flooding can threaten lives and property. Once a hurricane develops in the Atlantic, it will be difficult to find an insurance company willing to write related coverage until the storm threat passes.

Review your existing insurance policy carefully so you know what it does and does not cover. Contact your insurance agent or company or the Bureau of Insurance if you have any questions.

Some homeowners policies contain a special deductible for wind or hurricane losses. Some insurance companies automatically include a wind or hurricane deductible, while others offer this deductible at the policyholder's option. The deductible is the amount that you are responsible for paying before the insurance company pays its portion of the claim.

Wind or hurricane deductibles may be written as a flat amount, such as \$1,000. Or, they may be applied to the loss as a percentage of the insurance coverage on the dwelling. For example: assume a hurricane causes damage amounting to \$3,000 and the dwelling is insured for \$100,000. If the policy has a two-percent hurricane deductible, the insured would pay \$2,000 and the insurance company would pay \$1,000. The amounts of these deductibles may vary depending upon where you live, so the Bureau suggests that you shop around and compare prices and terms.

The Bureau reminds residents that most hurricane damage comes from flooding, not high winds. Homeowners insurance policies issued in Virginia generally do not provide coverage for damage to your home and belongings due to floods. However, the federal government does sell insurance for direct flood and flood-related damage to residents of eligible communities through its National Flood Insurance

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### 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)



# Business Preparedness Corner

## Small Business Preparedness

By Whitney Kazragis

Fairfax County's new emergency alert system, Fairfax Alerts, goes live on June 19, and will replace the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN).

Any business accounts from CEAN will be deleted on Oct. 1; employees should create new accounts in Fairfax Alerts.

Please share Fairfax Alerts with your employees so they can be informed during emergencies and receive severe weather and traffic updates. If your employees are not prepared, they may have to stay home, which could hinder your business from staying in business!

Fairfax Alerts allows employees to receive alerts for up to five locations like home, work and school on up to 10 delivery devices like email, text message, cellphone and home phone.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) provides free workplace preparedness presentations to educate



Whitney Kazragis

employees regarding personal and family preparedness at home and work. Please contact OEM at 571-350-1000, TTY 711 if you want a presentation or Fairfax Alerts information for your employees.

Learn more at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts) and [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency).

**Open for Business<sup>SM</sup>**

**INSTITUTE FOR Business & Home Safety**

**PUBLIC ENTITY RISK INSTITUTE PERI**

*A Disaster Planning Toolkit for the Small to Mid-Sized Business Owner*

Tools and tips for small or medium sized business recovery after disasters: <http://1.usa.gov/1kAT9sn>.

**CapitalRegionUpdates.Gov**

**News & Info - Around the Region**

**BE SMART. TAKE PART. PREPARE.**

**AMERICA'S PrepareAthon!**

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT**

[www.community.fema.gov/connect.ti/AmericasPrepareathon](http://www.community.fema.gov/connect.ti/AmericasPrepareathon)

## Insurance

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Program (NFIP). There is a waiting period for flood insurance policies to take effect. To learn more, contact your insurance agent or the NFIP at 1-888-379-9531 or visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov). Find out whether your flood policy provides coverage for your contents.

Policyholders may also want to consider the following:

- Does your insurance pay replacement costs, or actual cash value for a covered loss?
- Are contents of your home covered in the event of a hurricane? Homeowners policies generally cover contents up to specified limits, but additional coverage may be purchased.
- Are automobiles and other vehicles covered in the event of a hurricane or other windstorm?
- Are you covered in the event your sewer backs up?

Ask your insurance agent or company how you can reduce the severity of a loss, should a hurricane strike.

If you must evacuate, know the name of your insurance company and take your homeowners, auto and other insurance policies with you. They will contain your policy number and phone number of your insurance company in case you have questions or need to file a claim.

Prepare a complete inventory of your personal property ahead of time including serial numbers, photographs and videotapes. Keep your home inventory in a safe place, and take it with you if you evacuate. If your property is damaged by a hurricane, make any necessary emergency repairs and take reasonable steps to protect your property from further damage. Make a list of all damage to the house and its contents and include photographs, notes, and repair-related receipts.

The Bureau of Insurance offers free consumer guides for homeowners and commercial property owners with information about what to do when a disaster strikes. These and many other consumer insurance guides are available at [www.scc.virginia.gov/boi](http://www.scc.virginia.gov/boi).

For more information, contact the Bureau of Insurance Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 1-877-310-6560, TDD at 804-371-9206.

## Prepare to Protect Your Identity

American's PrepareAthon! has been building the momentum to prepare for natural disaster by urging Americans to take action. You might have joined the campaign by restocking your emergency kit, participating in a drill or signing up for local weather alerts and warnings. Congratulations! Let's keep moving forward with preparedness.

After preparing for your family's physical safety during a natural disaster, it's critical to prepare to protect your family's finances and identity in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Unfortunately, after a disaster, there are criminals who will prey on vulnerable disaster survivors. These scam artists will pretend to be legitimate organizations trying to help survivors recover from disaster and will ask for personally identifiable information (PII).

Never release your PII. If you feel that an illegitimate organization has contacted you after a disaster call FEMA's help line at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

To protect your identity after a disaster it is vital to prepare ahead of time and have a protection plan for your family's critical documents and valuables. The following steps will get you on the right critical document preparedness path:

- Inventory critical documents, contacts and valuables.
- Safeguard in the information.
- Store electronic copies in a password-protected format.

For more information, get the America's PrepareAthon resource, "Be Smart. Protect Critical Documents and Valuables" at <http://1.usa.gov/1nNGmC0>. The checklist helps you to take an inventory of your household documents (e.g., financial and medical records), contacts and valuables.

*Reprinted from FEMA's "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief," May 22*



**FOCUS**  
ON FIRE SAFETY

## Prevent Home Electrical Fires

Share these electrical fire safety tips in your community:

- Electrical work should only be done by a qualified electrician.
- Check your electrical cords. If they are cracked or damaged, replace them. Don't try to repair them.
- Don't overload extension cords or wall outlets.
- Never use extension cords with appliances. Plug them directly into wall outlets.

*Electrical  
malfunction is  
a leading cause  
of home fires  
year after  
year.*

For more information and free resources, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).



**FEMA**

