



THE DISASTER DISPATCH

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM
THE ANNE ARUNDEL OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Preeti Emrick, JD, CHEC



With the start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season, it's crucial to be prepared. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts an above-average hurricane season, with the highest forecast for named storms, hurricanes, and major hurricanes ever issued for May. While this newsletter offers hurricane preparedness tips, long-term strategies are essential to protect our County and residents. As part of that effort, OEM is updating the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan and needs your input! This plan intends to reduce loss of life and property by minimizing disaster impacts, addressing major hazards, and outlining actions to reduce long-term risks. Updating the plan every five years, as mandated by FEMA, ensures it meets our current needs. Community input is vital to minimize disaster impacts. This summer and fall, you'll have opportunities to share your thoughts. Your participation can make a meaningful impact on your community now and for future generations.

HURRICANE SEASON PREPAREDNESS TIPS

1. **Be Informed:** Know Your Zone before a storm strikes to help you avoid unnecessary evacuation travel, reduce traffic, and ease overcrowding at emergency shelters. Sign up to receive emergency alerts directly to your phone or email.
2. **Make a Plan:** Your plan should include any special needs your family may have, including those for young children, older adults, those with access or functional needs, and pets.
3. **Build a Kit:** Assemble an emergency go-kit with extra non-perishable food and water in case you have to evacuate or shelter in place for an extended period of time.
4. **Get Involved:** Get involved in emergency preparedness by helping your community and volunteering! Request a presentation or outreach booth for us to come speak about emergency preparedness at your next event. Check us out on social media and help us spread the word by sharing our posts! For more tips, visit our website.

ANNE ARUNDEL OEM SUPPORTS KEY BRIDGE RESPONSE



The Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) played a role in the coordinated response to the Key Bridge incident, ensuring swift and efficient support for affected residents. Following the disaster, OEM was deeply involved in organizing crucial recovery efforts, demonstrating our commitment to the community's resilience and safety.

One of the key initiatives led by OEM was the establishment of a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) at the Arundel Christian Church in Glen Burnie and a Small Business Administration (SBA) Business Recovery Center at the Glen Burnie Public Library. These centers served as vital hubs for providing necessary resources and support to our residents impacted by the incident. At the centers, residents received help applying for financial aid, workforce assistance, and mental health services. The comprehensive support provided by these centers played an essential role in helping individuals and businesses navigate the challenges posed by the disaster.

Additionally, our Public Information Officer (PIO), Kasey Thomas played a critical role in supporting Joint Information Center (JIC) activities for months following the event. Kasey worked as the Assistant PIO overseeing the Community Relations Branch of the JIC to ensure accurate and timely information was disseminated to the public, media, and other stakeholders. This involved managing press releases, social media updates, and community briefings to keep everyone informed about the ongoing response and recovery efforts. Effective communication was key to maintaining public trust and ensuring that residents were aware of available resources and safety measures.

Furthermore, OEM facilitated regular coordination calls with county partners to address any potential unmet needs and streamline the response efforts. These calls brought together various agencies, organizations, and stakeholders to share updates, discuss challenges, and collaborate on solutions. By fostering a spirit of cooperation and ensuring open lines of communication, the OEM helped to create a unified and efficient response framework.

The Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management's proactive and coordinated approach during the Key Bridge response highlights its dedication to safeguarding the community and enhancing resilience in the face of adversity. Through the establishment of Disaster Recovery Centers, effective public communication, and strategic coordination with county partners, the OEM exemplified its crucial role in managing and mitigating the impacts of emergencies and disasters.

CONSOLIDATED 9-1-1 EOC

Anne Arundel County is planning and designing a new Joint 911 Public Safety Center on Generals Highway, in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management, Fire Department, Police Department, Office of Information Technology, and Department of Public Works. This center will enhance 911 call-taking and dispatch operations and serve as a unified coordination hub for special events and large-scale disaster response. It will be located alongside the new Fire Training Academy. Manns Woodward Studios and Mission Critical Partners are working with stakeholders to create a functional facility that meets the needs of public sector and community partners. The County also prioritizes the well-being of call-takers, dispatchers, and emergency personnel, incorporating mental health and well-being initiatives into the new facility.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD TRAINING



On April 4th and 5th, our Training and Exercise Unit hosted a Family Assistance Operations workshop with the National Transportation Safety Board. Representatives from 30 agencies learned to address the reunification and notification needs of family and friends of mass casualty or fatality incidents. The workshop covered structuring family assistance centers, available services, accounting for victims, managing personal effects, and conducting family briefings. It concluded with a self-care unit to prevent psychological trauma. This training was part of a continued effort to bring high-quality trainings to Anne Arundel County first responders.

HERRICANE CAMP



In coordination with the Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), the City of Annapolis OEM, and the Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management (I-DIEM), we will be hosting a free summer camp program called HERricane. The HERricane camp is a week-long program designed to encourage young women in high school and college to explore careers in emergency management. The HERricane camp will take place from July 15-19, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland, located at 101 College Pkwy, Arnold, MD 21012. This unique program offers participants the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities, interactive workshops, and field trips led by industry professionals. Learn more and apply at aacounty.org/oem.

DAM SAFETY

Anne Arundel has multiple dams that are crucial for recreation, water flow control, and generating power. Dams in the County can have a significant hazard potential, which residents should be aware of. To enhance safety around dams, it's important for individuals to stay informed and exercise caution. Always observe posted warning signs and barriers, and never venture into restricted areas. Be aware of changing water levels, which can rise rapidly without warning due to dam operations. If boating or swimming near a dam, maintain a safe distance from the structure and adhere to posted regulations. In case of an emergency, follow the instructions of local authorities and familiarize yourself with evacuation routes.

OEM HOSTS SHADOW DAY CONTEST WINNERS



This April, OEM hosted the winners of our 3rd Annual Shadow Day Contest. Our Shadow Day contest is an opportunity for Anne Arundel County high school students to use their creativity and submit public service announcement videos informing people about the importance of emergency preparedness. Winners of this year's contest were from Crofton High School and spent the morning at our Emergency Operations Center interacting with our staff to learn more about emergency management, tour the facility, and test their disaster mitigation skills.

PROTECTING HOUSES OF WORSHIP SEMINAR SERIES



The 2024 Protecting Our Houses of Worship Seminar series concluded on May 23, 2024, with a Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) in-person training from our County Police. The afternoon tabletop exercise used an evolving active assailant scenario to allow houses of worship to assess their emergency action plans. FEMA has recognized the seminar series as a best practice that effectively increased faith-based organizations' awareness of available resources, hazard mitigation, resilience, and opportunities to collaborate.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: ASHLEY ABATE



Ashley Abate joined our office in 2022 as our Office Support Specialist. We are excited to announce that in May she moved into our Agency Grants Lead position to support our office and partners in expanding grant-funded opportunities. In her new role, Ashley is responsible for leading grant management efforts, including the grant application process, coordinating with various stakeholders, and ensuring compliance with grant requirements such as routine reporting, budget tracking, and evaluation.

WELCOME SASHA PEEDEN



Join us in welcoming our new Training and Exercise Planner, Sasha Peeden. Sasha's experience in law enforcement makes her the perfect addition to our team. In her role, she will be responsible for assisting in designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating countywide emergency management training and exercises, including discussion-based and operations-based exercises. Sasha will also assist in the development and review of county After-Action Reports (AARs) to identify areas of improvement.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

ALL EMERGENCIES: CALL 9-1-1

POLICE (NON-EMERGENCY)
410-222-8050

FIRE (NON-EMERGENCY)
410-222-8300

BGE POWER OUTAGES
877-778-2222

AGING & DISABILITIES
410-222-4257

ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL
410-222-8900

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
& CONSTITUENT SERVICES**
410-222-1785

CRISIS WARM LINE
410-768-5522

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
410-222-7095

HEALTH/FOOD WARM LINE
410-222-FOOD (3663)

INSPECTIONS & PERMITS
410-222-7790

OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION
410-222-0022

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
410-222-5000

PUBLIC WORKS (UTILITIES)
410-222-8400

PUBLIC WORKS (ROADS)
410-222-6120

SHERIFF'S OFFICE
410-222-1571

SOCIAL SERVICES
410-269-8400

Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management



Sign up for emergency notifications at:
<https://alertannearundel.civicready.com/>

A graphic for CivicReady notifications. It features a smartphone displaying "CIVICREADY" on a wooden surface. Text on the left says "Receive notifications by" followed by a list: "Call", "Email", "Text", and "And more". A "SIGN UP NOW" button is below the list. On the right, it says "For one-step notifications SIGN UP TODAY. Get local news and alerts instantly." and the "CIVICREADY" logo.



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