



THE DISASTER DISPATCH

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM
THE ANNE ARUNDEL OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Preeti Emrick, JD, CHEC



Some disasters such as house fires are preventable, but other disasters like snow storms are not. So what do we do if we can't prevent a disaster? We can mitigate or reduce the impacts of these hazards on life and property. For example, installing flood gauges and informing residents about how to prepare for floods can help minimize flood-related injuries, deaths, and damage to homes. Mitigation measures can also save individuals, communities, and businesses money as they reduce the amount of damage and cost of repairs after disasters. Anne Arundel County's [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) creates a long-term strategy to reduce the costs and damages caused by disasters and helps create more resilient communities. As we work to update the plan we will reach out for community input in the Spring of 2024. We also encourage residents, businesses, and community groups to visit [our website](#) to learn more about mitigating the effects of natural disasters and other emergencies.

WARMING RELIEF

Anne Arundel County has made several facilities available for warming relief this winter. If you need temporary relief from the cold weather, stop in and use the designated facilities during their normal business hours. Anyone who needs sheltering should contact the Crisis Warmline at 410-768-5522. Visit aacounty.org/warm for more info.

When temperatures drop we encourage residents and visitors to do the following:

- Dress in layers to stay warmer for longer. This also gives you more flexibility to remove layers while still staying warm.
- Prepare for the unexpected. Most hypothermia cases occur due to an unexpected change in the weather or temperature, so keep extra gloves, hats, and a coat in your car.
- Wear a warm hat when going outside.
- Avoid getting wet when the temperatures drop.
- Wear waterproof boots or shoes to keep your feet dry.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol which can cause dehydration.

2023 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EXPO



We celebrated National Preparedness Month by hosting our annual Emergency Preparedness Expo! Expo is a free, family-friendly event with hands-on displays, games, and activities to provide a fun-filled way to learn about preparing for emergencies. This helps increase both individual and community preparedness in our County. This year we had a great turnout of vendors, visitors, County employees, and elected officials. It was amazing to see how many people came out to support the event and learn more about emergency preparedness through games, demonstrations, and informational booths. If you missed the event this year, follow us on [social media](#) so you don't miss out on future events.

DISASTER AVERTED

In September, a concerned resident reported potentially threatening activity against a church in Virginia to the Anne Arundel County Police, who then alerted their counterparts in Virginia. Local police spotted the suspect's car, as the church's security team was also responding to the suspicious behavior. The armed suspect was arrested without further incident. Thanks to quick reporting and the church's preparedness, a potential disaster was averted. This highlights the importance of SEE SOMETHING...SAY SOMETHING, which encourages people to report suspicious behavior to authorities. This also shows how having a well-practiced emergency plan and a vigilant security team can help prevent disasters.

AAACERT



The Anne Arundel - Annapolis Community Emergency Response Team (AAACERT) is a non-profit organization that vets, trains, and certifies volunteers to prepare for hazards and cope with emergencies. AAACERT courses and drills cover basic disaster prevention, preparation, and response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, communications, and emergency medical procedures. AAACERT members also support training, exercises, and emergency operations for Anne Arundel County and the City of Annapolis' Offices of Emergency Management. To learn about, join, or support AAACERT visit www.aaacert.org. To apply to become a member, email membership@aaacert.org.

VACCINE UPDATE

The Anne Arundel County Department of Health will no longer hold COVID-19 vaccination clinics. COVID-19 vaccines are available at pharmacies, from your healthcare provider, and federally qualified health centers. Visit www.vaccines.gov to find a COVID-19 vaccine location near you.



A flu vaccine doesn't always prevent flu, but it can reduce the symptoms. Ask your healthcare provider about getting a flu vaccine and visit the [CDC website](#) for more info.

OUTREACH INITIATIVES



Fall is one of the busiest outreach seasons with tons of different community events. Our staff supported each Police District and the Sheriff's Office in 10 Trunk-or-Treat events. We also supported the Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival, Hispanic Health Festival, Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Festival, and Disability Awareness Day. We also provided preparedness presentations, First Aid, CPR/AED, Stop the Bleed, and Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) training in both English and Spanish to Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, Scout Troops, senior communities, schools, and faith-based organizations. To request a presentation, training, or a booth at your event, visit our [website](#).

TRAINING AND EXERCISE



We hosted a bunch of workshops to help review and update the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) within the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). We held one in October to develop a new ESF focusing on External Affairs and in November we covered multiple ESFs including Firefighting, Search and Rescue, and Hazardous Materials. We also hosted a Special Event Tabletop Exercise to discuss what plans, policies, and procedures are in place to respond to incidents at large events such as parades and festivals. Additionally, we supported other local and regional exercises to help better prepare our Central Maryland region.

LEPC MEETINGS

The Anne Arundel County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) serves as a community venue to discuss and plan for chemical emergencies and other disaster plans, training, communications, and outreach. The committee meets virtually every 3 months on the first Monday to provide updates and discuss different emergency operations efforts. Each LEPC meeting also features speakers who present on topics of interest to the preparedness community. If you are interested in joining the committee as an organization or as a member of the public, you can access the Zoom information for upcoming meetings on [our website](#).

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: KASEY THOMAS



In September, our Public Information Officer, Kasey Thomas, was awarded her Master Public Information Officer designation! At 24 years old, she is now the youngest person to complete the FEMA Master PIO program. There are only 156 FEMA Master PIOs in the Country and we are proud to have one of them serving Anne Arundel County. In November, Kasey was also awarded her Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) designation while attending the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) conference. Earning the CEM acknowledges that Kasey has demonstrated an advanced understanding of core emergency management principles and has contributed to improving the emergency management field.

**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**

**7480 BALTIMORE ANNAPOLIS BLVD
GLEN BURNIE, MD 21061**

PHONE: 410-222-0600

EMAIL: OEM@AACOUNTY.ORG

VISIT THE [OEM WEBSITE](#)



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alertannearundel.civicready.com/



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Office of Emergency Management](#)



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