STAYING INFORMED IN TROUBLING TIMES

Between the global pandemic, more intense severe weather, political turmoil, and cyber attacks, it seems that there are new hazards and breaking news emerging every minute of the day. You don’t have to keep your eyes glued to cable news to stay up to date.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) makes it easy for officials to send important messages through multiple pathways using their Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a national public warning system that requires radio and TV broadcasters, cable TV, wireless cable systems, satellite and wireline operators to provide the President with capability to address the American people within 10 minutes during a national emergency. FEMA, in partnership with the Federal Communications Commission and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is responsible for implementing, maintaining and operating the EAS at the federal level. This includes local weather alerts from the National Weather Service. Broadcast, cable, and satellite operators are the stewards of this important public service in close partnership with state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities.

All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) is a nationwide network of radio stations broadcasting continuous weather information directly from the nearest National Weather Service office. NWR also broadcasts EAS messages. NWR broadcasts official Weather Service warnings, watches, forecasts and other hazard information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Receivers are not expensive and some have features that trigger alerts only for Anne Arundel County and can be set for specific weather events.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are 90-character texts that local authorities can send to mobile devices within range of any cell towers in an affected area. You don’t have to sign up to receive WEAs, but you should check to make sure your phone is able to receive them. Typically WEA messages send “Amber Alerts” to alert the public of an endangered missing or abducted child. “Silver Alerts” broadcast information about missing persons – especially senior citizens with Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, or other mental disabilities – in order to aid in locating them.

Most larger jurisdictions no longer use warning sirens for local alerts because they do not convey useful information. Anne Arundel County utilizes an emergency notification system, Alert Anne Arundel, powered by CivicReady™, capable of contacting citizens and businesses quickly in case of an emergency. The notifications alert the public of emergencies and disasters, safety measures to be taken, and information pertaining to government operations. Citizens can subscribe to this free service to receive voice, text, or email with multiple options in several languages. The system can be used by anyone with a cell phone or landline, and keeps you connected to emergency warning or guidance so you’re always up-to-date and prepared as long as you have your phone. To subscribe, visit the Office of Emergency Management website here, or call 410-222-0600.

COVID-19 Health Line:
410-222-7256

Mon-Fri 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Sat 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM  Sunday CLOSED
Email: COVID19info@aacounty.org
This continues to be a very challenging period for our community and especially for emergency management. In the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic, we are almost through one of the busiest Atlantic Hurricane seasons in history. And shortly, winter weather will be upon us.

The County was very fortunate that Tropical Storm Isaias moved through the region quickly, minimizing damage and resulting in no loss of life. The County Emergency Operations Center concurrently managed two teams to provide public information, multiagency coordination, resource support, and situational awareness for the both the ongoing pandemic and the passage of the tropical storm. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff and our interagency partners adapted smoothly to the situation with no significant interruptions to ongoing citizen services.

Part of the mission of emergency management is to plan for the unthinkable. As we leave hurricane season, the OEM is planning for complex emergencies that in a worst case may involve the potential of a COVID-19 resurgence, a parallel influenza epidemic, severe winter weather, ongoing social unrest, and continued economic difficulty for large numbers of people.

While most people think of emergency management as preparing for disaster and responding to emergencies, in reality the most difficult task is implementing effective long-term recovery, especially during this extraordinary extended pandemic. OEM is working across agencies and with other stakeholders to make County Executive Pittman’s Road to Recovery a reality. The team is coordinating a framework for important work such as revitalizing the County’s economy, safely addressing our children’s educational needs, and restoring full government services, while continuing to provide vital health and human services. This requires government, business, industry, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and our individual citizens to work together in a “whole community” team approach. Rapid recovery will require flexibility, fresh ideas, novel procedures, and new partnerships.

As an individual you can take steps to better prepare yourself and your family by simply staying informed, carefully planning ahead, and gathering emergency supplies. Now is the time to get involved by requesting preparedness instruction, taking emergency training, volunteering in your community, and safely keeping a watchful eye on your neighbors. By setting a good example through being prepared as an individual, you will have enhanced the resilience of our entire community.

Sincerely,

Preeti Emrick
Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others during the pandemic. If you must travel, be aware of the risks involved.

If you will be hosting a holiday celebration, keep it small with family members and trusted friends, preferably held outdoors, and follow CDC tips for hosting gatherings.

Consider holiday gift shopping safely and securely online. If you do go out, wear a mask, stay at least six feet apart, wash your hands frequently, avoid contact with anyone sick.

Giving or getting a new tablet or smartphone? Download emergency preparedness apps and set up the emergency contact feature on your phone. Subscribe to Alert Anne Arundel to receive emergency notifications wherever you are.

Stay tuned to radio or television for quickly changing Fall weather conditions.

Make a family communications plan while visiting together for the holidays. Designate an out-of-area family member as your “family switchboard” for emergency status.

If cell voice circuits are overloaded, use Text. Send your name, location, and status.

During the holidays or while virtually schooling, teach kids what to do before, during, and after a disaster. Practice your home fire evacuation plan. Agree on safe meeting places.

Have fun while learning with Office of Emergency Management online children’s activities.

Build (or check) a family emergency kit, or individual “Go Bag” as a family holiday activity.

Be aware of your surroundings. If you see something...say something. Call 9-1-1.

Stay off the roads during and after late Fall / early Winter storms.

Have a winter emergency kit for your car or truck.

Do not drink and drive. Choose a designated driver or better yet, celebrate safely at home.

Be fire smart as you deck the halls this season!

Get your chimney checked by a professional before lighting the fireplace.

Unattended cooking is the leading cause of house fires, especially during the holidays.

Whether a Christmas candelabra, Hanukkah menorah, or Kwanzaa kinara, never leave candles unattended when celebrating the holidays. Use battery powered flameless bulbs.

Do not overload extension cords during the holidays, or any other time of year.

Keep space heaters on a single electrical cord, at least three feet from flammable objects.

Always turn off holiday lights at bed time or when you leave the house.

Check the water and unplug lights on your live holiday tree before you go to bed.
CONTACT US

Please give us a call or send an email if you have questions or need more information.

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Email: oem@aacounty.org

Visit the OEM Website

Facebook: Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management
Twitter: aaco_oem
Instagram: annearundel_oem
Nextdoor: Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management

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- Email
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ALERT ANNE ARUNDEL MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

- Free emergency notifications, weather data, or County information
- Notifications via voice message, text message, and email
- Multiple options and languages for cell phone or landline
- AlertMe - Regroup Mobile App - registration code 6a2377784f