



Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department & EMS Inc.

Community Guide to

Emergency Preparedness

[Plan for Emergency Events](#)

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Create a Family Emergency Plan

An emergency can strike quickly and without warning, causing you to evacuate your home or forcing you to take shelter in your home. If an emergency strikes, basic services may be cut off. By developing a Family Emergency Plan, getting through the emergency can be much easier.

Learn about warning signals, like the Emergency Alert System. Find out about evacuation plans at your workplace, your child's school or day care center. Find out about pet care before and after a disaster, because health regulations may not permit them inside a shelter.

It's important to meet with your family and prepare your Family Emergency Plan before an emergency occurs. Children need to be told about the potential dangers of fire, severe weather, and other hazards, such as chemical spills.

Pick two places to meet in the event of an emergency, one right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire, and a second outside your neighborhood in case you can't go home. Ask an out-of-state friend or relative to be a contact. After an emergency, all family members should call the contact person and tell that person where they are. **Note: if telephones are not working, try email. Sometimes email gets through when calls cannot. Be aware that cell phones are often overloaded during and immediately after an emergency.** In forming your Plan, consider how to care for family members with special needs, such as the disabled or elderly.

Complete this checklist:

- Post emergency numbers by telephones.
- Teach children to dial 911.
- Stock emergency supplies and prepare an emergency supplies kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR course.
- Find the safe spots in your home that could be a refuge during an emergency.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home.

Prepare Your Residents for an Emergency

Planning for any emergency requires considering all likely scenarios that could result when things that you rely on daily, like electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service, and transportation, are disrupted or lost for a considerable amount of time. Consequently, you should plan on having food, water, and other essentials to get you through the emergency. Most emergency management planners suggest having enough supplies to last you and your family for three to five days. However, many things may impact your decision, including storage space, special needs, and number of people in the household and available resources. Conduct a home hazard hunt to remove, repair, or brace anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire.

Your Emergency Preparedness Kit

The basic items that should be stored in your home are water, food, first-aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools, emergency supplies, and specialty items. Keep the items that you would most likely need at home in one easy-to-carry container such as a trash can, camping backpack, or duffel bag. Store it in a convenient place and put a smaller version in your car. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Remember to change the stored water every three months and rotate the food supplies every six months (place dates on containers). Check the supplies and re-think your needs every year. Consult your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications, and maintain a list of your prescription needs.

Water

Store water in plastic containers or purchase bottled water, avoiding containers that will decompose or break, such as glass bottles. Plan for one gallon of water per person per day. Water should be stored in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container.

Food

Store a supply of three to five days of non-perishable food per person. Foods should require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Examples include: ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables; canned or boxed juices, milk, and soup; condiments such as sugar, salt, and pepper; high-energy food like peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars, and trail mix; vitamins; foods for infants or persons on special diets; comfort/stress foods like cookies, hard candy, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags, and sweetened cereals. Bulk food items such as wheat, powdered milk, corn, and soybeans can be stored for long periods of time.

First-aid Kit

Assemble a first-aid kit for your home and each vehicle. Items should include sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, triangular bandages, sterile gauze roll bandages, scissors, tweezers, needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic, thermometer, tongue depressors, tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant, safety pins, cleansing soap, latex gloves, and sunscreen. Also include aspirin or other pain medication, anti-diarrhea medication, Syrup of Ipecac, activated charcoal (in case of poisoning) and laxatives.

Tools and Supplies

Keep the following items handy for all-around use: extra batteries of assorted sizes (check shelf life before purchasing), mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, battery-operated radio, flashlight, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, cash (include change) and/or traveler's checks, non-electric can opener and utility knife, small ABC fire extinguisher, small shovel, tube tent, pliers, compass, waterproof matches, plastic storage containers, duct tape and thread, medicine dropper, shut-off wrench for house gas and water, whistle, plastic sheeting and local map.

For sanitation, pack toilet paper, soap and liquid detergent, feminine supplies, plastic garbage bags with ties, a plastic bucket and lid, disinfectant, and household chlorine bleach.

Clothing and Bedding

Assemble one or two complete changes of clothing per person, sturdy shoes or work boots, rain gear, blankets or sleeping bags, hat and gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses.

Specialty Items

- Babies: formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk, and medications
- Adults: medications, prescriptions, denture needs, eye glasses and/or contact lenses, and related supplies
- Entertainment: games, books, and several quiet toys for children
- Important Family Documents: wills, insurance policies, contacts, deeds, passports, stocks and bonds, immunization records, important phone numbers, credit card accounts, Social Security cards, and other personal family records.

Once you've developed a family emergency plan, practice it regularly. Conduct fire and evacuation drills, test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions, and don't forget to test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries in your smoke detector at least twice a year.

What to Do for Pets in Emergencies

Emergency planning should include all members of the family, including pets. If you must evacuate do not leave your animals behind.

Evacuate them to a prearranged safe location if they cannot stay with you during the evacuation period. If you have not pre-planned an evacuation location for your pet, take them with you to the Red Cross shelter.

An animal services representative will be available (or on call) at that location to take the animal to an approved animal sheltering facility. (**Remember, pets may not be allowed in shelters due to health regulations.**) It may be difficult, if not impossible, to find shelter for your animals in the midst of a disaster, so plan ahead.

You should:

- Ask friends or relatives outside the affected area if they can shelter your animals (and you) should you have to evacuate. If you have more than one pet, they will be more comfortable if they are kept together, but be prepared to house them separately.

- Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check policies on accepting pets and their restrictions on number, size and species. Ask if “NO PET” policies could be waived in an emergency.

- Keep lists of these pet friendly locations including phone numbers with your portable pet disaster supplies kit?

- If you evacuate with your pet, don't forget to prepare your pet and to bring your portable pet disaster supplies kit (see below).

- Make sure your dogs and cats are wearing collars that are securely fastened and include up-to-date information. Attach the phone number and location of your temporary shelter (cell phone number too), or a phone number of a friend or relative outside of the disaster area who can be contacted if your pet(s) become lost.

Prepare portable pet disaster supplies kit with the following

- Medications and medical/vaccination records stored in a waterproof container.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses and carriers for each of your pets. Life gets very strange and stressful for your pets during this time, and they will react differently, so please transport them in an airline-type carrier at all times for their safety and to ensure that they can't escape and be left behind.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost. A member of the "human" family along with the pet in the photo is always a plus in establishing ownership if the animal gets lost.
- Food (especially if your pet is on a special diet), bottled water, disposable bowls, cat litter/pan (disposable cooking pans work great for this) and a can opener.
- Pet beds and toys, if easily transportable. It is always good for your pets to have a familiar toy to take with them to a shelter as a reminder of home.
- Written information on feeding schedules/amounts, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name/address and phone number of your veterinarian.

Check On Relatives and Neighbors

During emergencies, check to see how your relatives are coping, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

If possible, consider helping them plan or locate resources where they can obtain assistance.

Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Know your neighbors skills (i.e. medical, technical) and consider how you can help neighbors with special needs, such as disabled or elderly persons.

Make plans for child care in case parents can't get home.

Preparing for Evacuation from Your Residents

Evacuation, as a protective action, is more common than you think. Hundreds of times each year, transportation or industrial accidents release harmful chemicals that force nearby residents to leave their homes.

Fires and floods force people from their homes even more often, and almost every year residents along some areas of the Gulf and Atlantic coasts must evacuate for approaching hurricanes. Evacuation planning has been ongoing for many years across the country.

If an evacuation is called for our community or neighborhood, you will be given specific information through the Emergency Alert System, radio, television, and local officials (first responders, i.e. law enforcement and fire/rescue). Charles County Government, among others, will provide emergency shelter if necessary.

CIVFD has identified critical areas

The Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department and EMS has identified areas of concern when a possible storm surge is expected with a hurricane or a tropical storm. These areas are Cobb Island, Chigger City, Hill Road Subdivision, Swann Point, Woodland Point, Cuckolds Creek, and River Road off of Wicomoco Beach Road. These areas in the past have been impassible because of high water associated with the storm surge. Evacuation of these areas may be a reality based on the projected storm surge. **Be prepared**

Mandatory/Ordered: An ordered evacuation of the population from the forecasted impact zones subject to storm surge or rainfall-induced flooding. Mandatory shelters will be opened whenever a mandatory evacuation order is issued. Shelter locations have previously been Piccowaxen Middle School in the past however it will be up to Charles County Emergency Services to decide on an appropriate shelter.

Voluntary Evacuation: An emergency protective recommendation by local officials that advises those citizens, who are uncomfortable with the approaching storm conditions, to leave the forecasted impact area. Voluntary shelters will be opened whenever a voluntary evacuation advisory is issued. Shelter locations have previously been Piccowaxen Middle School in the past however it will be up to Charles County Emergency Services to decide on an appropriate shelter.

Length of Evacuation

The anticipated length of evacuation will be determined by the extent of the damage to that particular community. Factors that will play a role in the decision will be, road damage, tree debris, electrical wires and poles down, storm surge, hazardous conditions, structural stability to structures, all these factors and more will play a role in the process of how long the evacuation will take place.

Limited: Circumstances making an evacuation necessary are expected to improve to the extent that the evacuated citizens can return to their community within a short timeframe.

Extended: Circumstances are not expected to immediately improve to permit citizens to return to their community within a reasonable timeframe.

Long Term Evacuation: Circumstances are not expected to improve to permit citizens to return to their community. Major damage and destruction has taken place and citizens of that community should plan for a long term designated location to reside. In this situation assistance will come from the local, state, and federal government.

In-place Sheltering

Many emergency situations occur without warning, but still require emergency protective actions to take place. Chemical accidents are good examples of incidents that happen without warning. In the event of a chemical incident, you may be asked to take shelter within your home.

There are precautions you must take in making your home safe. To reduce the possibility of chemical vapors entering your home you should take the following precautions:

- Close and lock all windows.
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels or duct tape, or similar thick tape.
- Seal any gaps around window air conditioning units, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fan grills, and stove and dryer vents with tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper, or aluminum wrap.
- Close all fireplace dampers.
- Close as many doors as possible.
- Turn off all ventilation systems, including furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans.
- Have building superintendents set all ventilation systems at 100% recirculation so that no outside air is drawn into the structure.
- Close all drapes, curtains, and shades, if local authorities warn of potential explosions.
- Stay away from windows to prevent injury.

Remain in protected interior areas of your home and stay tuned to radio or television so that you will be informed of when it is safe to leave your home.

Put your Family Emergency Plan into effect

- All family members should wear protective clothing.
- Listen to the radio for official information and instructions regarding evacuation routes and emergency shelter locations.
- Before leaving your home:
 - Lock the doors and windows.
 - If there is time, unplug appliances; turn off natural gas, propane, water, and electricity.
- Let your out-of-state contact know where you are going.
- Always follow specific evacuation routes. DO NOT take short cuts. They may be blocked.
- Before returning home, continue to listen to the radio or television (if available) for information and instructions.
- DO NOT return home until officials say it is safe.
- DO NOT take any kind of flame productive devices into a damaged building. There may be leaking gas or other flammable materials present.
- DO NOT turn on lights because they can produce sparks that will ignite the gas.
- Leave the house immediately and notify the gas company. Never turn the gas back on, call your gas company and have its technician turn it on.
- Notify the power company of downed power lines. If appliances are wet, turn off the main electrical power switch.
- Follow health department instructions on using food items after an emergency.
- After the emergency has passed, call family, friends, and employer to let them know you are safe.

Preparedness for Those with Special Needs

If you have special needs or are caring for someone with special needs, you need to prepare for an emergency well in advance.

- What do we mean by special needs?
- Do you or someone you take care of require special medication?
- Do you need oxygen, tube feeding, dialysis, or other life-sustaining equipment?
- Will you need a wheelchair, walker, a special bed, or special toilet items?
- If you have to evacuate, will you need special transportation?
- Establish a personal support network. This can consist of friends, relatives, personal attendants, co-works, and neighbors. Make arrangements for those in your support network to assist you well before an emergency occurs. Do not depend on any one person. Remember that they also may face disruptions because of an emergency.
- Build a special needs emergency supply kit. In addition to the items everyone should include in an emergency supply kit, seniors and persons with disabilities should gather specific items to manage their condition. This might include special medications, batteries for medical devices, respiratory supplies, mobility aids, and supplies for service animals.

Persons with special needs living in the areas identified by the Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department and EMS that need assistance with evacuation in case of an emergency need to notify The **Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department and EMS (301-259-4258)** or Charles County Emergency Services (301-609-3400) especially if they have a medical condition that requires specialized sheltering not available in an emergency shelter.

Important Phone Numbers

Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department & EMS: (301-259-4258)

Charles County Emergency Center: (911) Fire, Medical, Police

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Maryland State Police: 301-392-1200 or 301-753-1200

Maryland Transportation Authority Police:
301-259-4444 (Southern Region, Nice Bridge)

Natural Resources Police: 800-628-9944

Charles County Department of Emergency Services:
301-609-3400

Charles County 24-Hour Information: 301-645-0600

Charles County Emergency Operations Center/Citizen Information Line:
(during an emergency) 301-609-3435

Maryland Relay Service TTY/TDD: 711 or 800-735-2258

Charles County Public Schools 24-Hour Information:
301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656

Poison Control: 800-222-1222

Make Financial Preparations

Whether you own your home or rent, there are many things you can do to protect your home and possessions.

You can increase your safety and reduce your insurance costs by:

- Installing safety equipment such as smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to alert you to potential deadly conditions.

- Securing large or heavy items that could fall and cause damage during storms.

- Covering windows, turning off utilities, or moving possessions to a safer location if you have adequate warning of something like a hurricane or flood.

- Having your house inspected by a building inspector or architect to find out what structural improvements could prevent or reduce major damage from disasters.

- Conducting an inventory of your household possessions to help you prove the value of what you own for insurance purposes if those possessions are damaged or destroyed and to provide documentation for tax deductions you claim for your losses. Make a visual or written record of your possessions. Include photographs of cars, boats, and recreational vehicles. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork or other items that are difficult to value. Update the appraisals every two to three years.

- Keeping the originals of all important financial and family documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, wills, deeds, tax returns, insurance policies, and stock and bond certificates in a safe place. Store copies elsewhere. You'll need accessible records for tax and insurance purposes.

- Photographing the exterior of your home. Include the landscaping -- that big tree in the front yard may not be insurable, but it does increase the value of your property for tax purposes.

- Making copies of receipts and canceled checks for more valuable items.

- Updating your inventory list annually and putting a copy in a safe place.

- Buying insurance to protect against the perils you may face.

What to Do When Electrical Power Is Lost

Disruption of electrical service can occur as a result of many things, including lightning, high winds, ice and heavy snow, and equipment failure. For the most part, service is normally restored within a short period. However, major power outages can happen for extended periods from time to time.

When power is lost, you should:

- ❑ Check to see if your neighbors have power. It may only be in your home, a blown fuse, or a tripped circuit.
 - If your neighbors are also without service, call your local power company. **(1-877-74-SMECO)**
 - If you must go outside to assess the situation, take a flashlight and watch for downed power lines that may still be energized.
 - If downed lines are located, don't go near them or touch anything that they may be touching them. Report downed power lines to the local power company immediately.

- ❑ Turn off major appliances. Leave just a couple of light switches on in the home and the front porch light.
 - When major appliances -refrigerators, electric water heaters, air conditioners and pumps -- are left on, they could overload electric lines when power is restored causing a second outage.

- ❑ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Food can be kept cold enough for a day or two, if the doors are kept closed. During the winter, you may be able to store some items outside in a proper container. If temperatures are below freezing, it's possible to freeze water outside in containers and place them inside your refrigerator to help keep food cold.
 - Try to consume perishable foods first.
 - Some partially frozen foods can be refrozen as long as they contain ice crystals or are no warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Consider purchasing a thermometer for both the refrigerator and freezer.
 - Don't refreeze seafood, poultry, ice cream, cream sauces, or anything susceptible to spoilage. When in doubt...throw it out.

- ❑ Portable emergency generators can be used to provide limited electrical power during an outage. But, take care to ensure that they do not pose a threat to you and your family.

- Never fuel or run a portable generator in the home or garage. Gas-powered generators pose a serious fire and carbon monoxide threat.
- Generators should be installed in compliance with your local utility's guidelines. Make sure the generator is equipped with a double-throw transfer switch that protects your equipment and prevents feedback on power lines.
- Always operate according to the manufacturer's instructions. Call the local power company for more information on the proper use of emergency generators.

Gas appliances may not work if the power is off because the equipment may require electricity for ignition or valve operation.

Life support equipment required for family members who depend on respirators, ventilators, oxygen equipment or other life-sustaining devices should be listed with the power company, with your doctor's approval.

You should have a contingency plan that always includes an alternate power source for the device and relocating the person.

You need to take into consideration with severe weather, there are associated strong winds and the chances of losing power are higher with the severity of the weather. In the past it has been several days before power was restored to our community, take all the necessary precautions listed above to ensure the best outcome.

Keep Updated on Emergencies

Getting information during an emergency situation is vital, especially if evacuation may be required. Listen to following local radio/TV stations:

Radio

- WMDM 97.7 FM**
- WSMD 98.3 FM**
- WKIK 102.9 FM**
- WPTX 1690 AM**
- WTOP 103.5 FM**

TV

- WRC-TV Channel 4**
- Fox News Channel 5**
- WJLA-TV Channel 7**
- WUSA-TV Channel 9**
- News Channel 8**
- Charles County Government Cable Channel 95**

Web Site

www.fema.gov

www.charlescounty.org

www.mema.state.md.us

www.civfd.com

Students in School / Children in Day-Care

In the event of a local or national emergency, or ordered evacuation, parents should listen to local radio and television stations for announcements about changes in school closings or openings, or call the following numbers:

Charles County

Charles County School system's 24-hour information line: 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656

Parents may pick up their children from school during the day, but during a crisis the best place for children may be the school itself. Unless an evacuation of a school is ordered, students will be kept at school until they can be safely transported home on normal bus routes. Children may be checked out by their parents at the office before leaving or being released to anyone.

Emergency Supplies for Your Car

Emergency supplies that should always be kept in your vehicle:

- Blanket(s)
- Jumper cables
- Tools (to do minor repairs)
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Bottled water
- Change (for pay phones)
- Work gloves
- Flares or warning triangle

You may want to include:

- Maps of the areas around your routes of travel
- Sleeping bag
- Canned food/nuts
- Can opener
- Shovel
- Traction mats/chains
- Rain gear
- Extra clothes and shoes
- Warm gloves
- Necessary medications
- Personal hygiene items
- Paper and pen
- Spare pair of glasses
- Paper towels
- Matches and candles

Natural Emergencies

Hurricanes

Hurricane Season is June 1 through November 30

Hurricanes are one of nature's most powerful forces.

Hurricanes can destroy entire communities in very little time. It is important to learn the terminology to describe the status of the hurricane and its potential for landfall. If forecasters warn of any of the following, it is important to take the necessary precautions:

A **TROPICAL CYCLONE** is warm-core; non-frontal synoptic scale cyclone originating over tropical or subtropical waters, with organized deep convection and a closed-surface wind circulation about a well-defined center (includes tropical depressions, tropical storms, and hurricanes).

A **TROPICAL DEPRESSION** with the lowest intensity is given a number once it has a counterclockwise spin and winds of 34 mph or less.

A **TROPICAL STORM** is when wind speeds reach 34 mph and the storm is given a name is from a pre-determined list. While a tropical storm does not produce a high storm surge, its thunderstorms can still pack a dangerous and deadly punch.

A **HURRICANE** is the most intense tropical event, with five categories and winds ranging from 64 mph to 155 mph or greater. Storm surge is a major concern with hurricanes. The extremely high winds cause ocean water to pile up, creating higher than normal sea levels with waves up to 40 feet in open water. High sea levels and shallow waters can devastate a coastline and bring ocean water miles inland.

Hurricane Watch means the potential for hurricane conditions are good for your area over the next 36 hours.

❑ **Hurricane Warning** means that hurricane conditions are expected for your area within the next 24 hours. If you live in an area subject to storm surge or flooding, you may be asked to evacuate. Begin precautionary action at once.

When a warning is declared you should put a family protection plan into action and ensure you have disaster supplies ready. Also prepare your home for the storm. Shutter, board, or tape all windows and remove loose objects from your yard. Finally, fuel your car. Gas stations may not be open after the storm.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Destructive Potential Scale

Hurricanes are sub-categorized using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Destructive Potential Scale, ranging from 1 (least intense) to 5 (strongest). This scale indicates the potential winds, storm surge, and damage associated with each:

Category 1

- Winds 64-82 knots (75-95 miles per hour [mph]).
- Damage primarily to shrubbery, trees, foliage and unanchored mobile homes.
- No real damage to permanent building structures.
- Storm Surge 4'-5' above mean water level.

Category 2

- Winds 83-95 knots (96-110 mph).
- Considerable damage to shrubbery, tree foliage and some trees blown down.
- Major structural damage to exposed mobile homes.
- Some damage to roofing material, windows and doors – no major damage to permanent building structures.
- Storm Surge 6'-8' above mean water level.

Category 3

- Winds 96-113 knots (111-130 mph).
- Damage to shrubbery and trees, foliage off trees and large trees blown down.
- Some roofing material damage, some window and door damage, some structural damage to small residences and utility buildings.
- Mobile homes destroyed.
- Storm Surge 9'-12' above mean water level.
- Serious flooding along the coast.

Category 4

- Winds 114-135 knots (131-155 mph).
- Shrubs and trees down.
- Extensive roofing material, window and door damage.
- Complete failure of roof structures on many small residences and complete destruction of mobile homes.
- Storm Surge 13'-17' above mean water level.
- Major erosion of beach areas.

Category 5

- Winds greater than 135 knots (155 mph).
- Roofing damage considerable and very severe/extensive window and door damage.
- Complete failure of roof structures on many residences and industrial buildings.
- Extensive glass and some complete building failures.
- Small buildings blown over or away.
- Major power distribution failures causing loss of water and sewer for an extended period.
- Storm Surge in excess of 18' above mean water level.

Tropical Cyclone Conditions of Readiness

Conditions of Readiness (COR) are **Guidelines** set by the **Cobb Island VFD & EMS** to prepare our community on the approaching weather based on National Weather Service forecasts and Local warnings.

Condition of Readiness V (COR V)

- Destructive Winds of 50 kts or greater associated with a tropical system are possible ***within 96 hours***.
 - **The Cobb Island VFD and EMS will hold a community meeting at 2 locations to prepare for the approaching severe weather**
 - **One location will be at CIVFD Fire/EMS Station and the other will be announce, Possibly Swann Point Club House or The Holy Ghost Church depending the availability of the locations**
 - **The meeting will include the impact of the severe weather in our community on the approaching storm and preparations that should be taken**

Condition of Readiness IV (COR IV)

- Destructive Winds of 50 kts or greater associated with a tropical system are possible ***within 72 hours***.
 - **The Cobb Island VFD and EMS will be close contact with the Charles County Emergency Preparedness to keep on top of the current track and possible conditions expected on the approaching storm.**

Condition of Readiness III (COR III)

- Destructive Winds of 50 kts or greater associated with a tropical system are possible ***within 48 hours***.
 - **At this stage the Cobb Island VFD and EMS will have a pretty good expectation based on what the National Weather is forecasting and we will be making ourselves available on assisting our community with ANY assistance you might be requiring, examples – secure boats, tying down any loose objects that may become blown away or lost, Identifying and making arrangements for any special needs in our community.**
 - **(CIVFD) 301-259-4258**

Condition of Readiness II (COR II)

- Destructive Winds of 50 kts or greater associated with a tropical system are possible *within 24 hours*.
 - **The Cobb Island VFD and EMS will be manned 24 hours a day at this stage**
 - **Depending on the severity of the storm preparations will be made to relocate apparatus and personnel based on the severity of the storm. The locations will be the Cobb Island area and the Tompkinsville / Swann Point Area.**
 - **The Cobb Island VFD and EMS will establish a local Emergency Operations Center at the Cobb Island Fire/EMS Station.**
 - **At this stage based on the decision from Charles County Preparedness evacuations may be necessary at this time.**

Condition of Readiness I (COR I)

- Destructive Winds of 50 kts or greater associated with a tropical system are possible *within 12 hours*.
 - **At this stage the Cobb Island VFD and EMS will be Responding to Emergencies. If at any time during the COR conditions you need assistance PLEASE CALL THE FIRE/EMS STATION (301-259-4258) we would rather assist our community prior to the storm then during the storm.**
 - **Take in consideration based on the severity of the storm the CIVFD may have to decide that the storm conditions are too severe to send rescue personnel in the field until the storm has passed or conditions are favorable to deal with the emergency. All preparations need to be made prior to the storms arrival.**

Take extreme precaution after the storm. Do not travel unless officials have deemed your area safe. If you were evacuated to a shelter, stay there until officials say it is safe to leave. Avoid disaster areas so that recovery crews can begin clean-up efforts. Avoid downed power lines and report them to your utility company.

Storm Surge

Historically in our community the storm surge has been a significant problem in the past. The water rises with the pending storm approaching our area and creates a major concern of getting in and out of the communities. The Cobb Island VFD has identified roads in the past that have become impassible due to the storm surge.

Cobb Island Road between the sewer treatment plant and the Cobb Island Bridge becomes affected with just a 3 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 5 foot storm surge

Hill Road off of Cobb Island Road becomes affected with just a 3 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 5 foot storm surge

Saunders Marina Place / Pine Grove Road becomes affected with just a 3 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 5 foot storm surge

Swann Point Road between the sewer treatment plant and the cemetery becomes affected with just a 4 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 6 foot storm surge

Woodland Point Road / Swann Point Road at the intersection and approximately ½ mile in on Woodland point road becomes affected with just a 4 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 6 foot storm surge

Cuckolds Creek Road / Anchorage Anchors Road at the end of both roads and subdivisions become affected with just a 4 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 6 foot storm surge

River Road off of Wicomico Beach Road at the intersection become affected with just a 3 foot storm surge and becomes impassable at a 5 foot storm surge

In the past the Cobb Island VFD and EMS was instrumental in making arrangements to provide transporting for our community when the roads to the affected areas were closed due to storm surge. County and State Vehicles were used to insure that people were safely transported through the water and taking to there residences. **In the future the Charles County Emergency's Services (Charles County Government) has made it clear that county vehicles may not be available for such an operation and that evacuation of the affected areas will be an option.**

Post Incident Hurricane or Tropical Event

The Cobb Island VFD and EMS has always been and always will be instrumental in the recovery process for our community's. In the event that a significant weather occurrence should impact our community's the Cobb Island VFD and EMS will make appropriate arrangements to have the following plans in effect to provide to our neighborhoods.

Recovery Area

In the event portions our community have no power due to the severity of the weather and possibly be down for days the Cobb Island Auxiliary will make preparations to serve refreshments and drinks to our community. **This task is based on availability of help and the availability of food to take on such a task.** The Cobb Island Fire/EMS Station has a back up generator that provides emergency power and a commercial kitchen that can serve to a large quantity of people. As the recovery area for our community, information can be passed on to the citizens pertaining to assistance that could possibly come from local, state, and federal assistance.

Post Incident Response

The local Emergency Operation Center will still be in effect at the CIVFD Fire/EMS Station. Telephone lines and power lines may be down due to the severity of the weather, it may be necessary if an emergency occurs in your community to report in person and pass on the information about the emergency provided that no other communications to 911 can be established. The CIVFD has in the past and will continue to support our affected communities after the event with any help that they might need.

Normal Operations

There will be a time after the event has passed and the CIVFD will operate in the Normal Emergency Response. This will be based on the severity of the weather and the amount of damage that has occurred in our community.

Floods

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural hazards. Some floods take days to develop, but flash floods can result in raging waters very quickly. Everyone should know the terms used to describe flooding conditions.

A **flood watch** means flooding is possible.

A **flood warning** means flooding is expected.

Before a flood, find out if you live in a flood-prone area. Store materials like sandbags, plywood, and plastic sheeting to help protect your home from floodwater

Never attempt to walk or drive through floodwater or water on a road. Two feet of water can float most cars, and not much more will float a large pickup. The water can be deeper and moving faster than it appears. If your car stalls on a flooded roadway, abandon it and move to higher ground.

After floodwaters have subsided, don't return home until authorities say you can. Be careful entering buildings that have been flooded, and don't enter buildings if floodwaters are higher than the first floor.

Thunderstorms

Small-scale storms produced by cumulonimbus clouds that are always accompanied by lighting and thunder and usually only affect a small geographical area.

Hail is frequently associated with thunderstorms and may inflict major damage.

Thunderstorms may be accompanied by extremely strong winds with gusts of 40 knots to occasionally more than 100 knots.

These winds are usually of short duration and the direction may be radically different from the prevailing winds before the storm.

A **Thunderstorm Warning** is forecast to impact the designated warning area.

A Severe Thunderstorm Warning (with wind gusts equal to or greater than 50 knots and/or hail of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter or greater) is forecast to impact the warning area.

Thunderstorm Conditions of Readiness

Based on the speed and uncertainty of the severity of the thunder storm the Cobb Island VFD does not have a Condition of Readiness for thunderstorms.

- However the Cobb Island VFD and EMS will be in the community in the event of severe thunderstorm, responding to emergencies and assisting our community.
- If any citizen of our community needs assistance please call (301-259-4258) for (Non Emergency Community Services) and **911** for Emergency Situations

Tornadoes

A violent, rotating column of air, which emanates from a thunderstorm type cloud, and often touches the ground.

Tornadoes can strike the ground with winds of up to 300 miles per hour leaving a wide path of destruction in just seconds.

The speed of movement of a tornado over the earth is comparatively slow, at 20-35 knots.

Because a tornado can appear quickly, learn what to do to protect yourself and your family.

The life of a thunderstorm that generates a tornado is short, averaging only a few hours.

The life of an average tornado is approximately 20 minutes.

A **tornado watch** means conditions are conducive for tornado activity and severe thunderstorms within and close to the watch area.

A **tornado warning** means a tornado has been sighted in or adjacent to the warning area or has a strong potential to develop in the warning area.

If you see a tornado or hear a tornado warning for your area, go to the lowest level or basement and get under something sturdy. Stay away from windows. Take a battery-operated radio with you to your shelter location and listen to the Emergency Broadcast System for official information. If you are outside when a tornado is sighted, get inside if possible. If shelter isn't nearby, lie in a low area or ditch and use your arms to protect your head and neck.

NEVER try to out drive a tornado. Leave the vehicle and seek shelter in a building, low-lying area, or ditch. After a tornado hits, be careful when entering buildings. Stay clear of downed power lines.

Disaster Tips for the Deaf Community

Hearing Aids

Store hearing aids in a strategic, consistent, and secure location so they can be found and used after a disaster.

For example, consider storing them in a container by your bedside, which is attached to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro.

Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a disaster.

Batteries

Store extra batteries for hearing aids or implants, your TTY, and light phone signaler.

If available, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.

Consult owner's manual for information on proper battery maintenance.

Alarms

Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery-operated.

Communication

Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter, or if you don't have your hearing aids.

- ❑ Consider carrying a preprinted copy of important messages with you, such as: "I speak American Sign Language and need an ASL interpreter"; "I do not write or read English"; and "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."

- ❑ Obtain a battery-operated television; if possible, that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.

- ❑ Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Arrange so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on-camera emergency duty.

Have a light source. Without light, movements and the ability to participate in any communication is impossible.

Maintain a list of qualified interpreters that can be contacted. Secure more than one source for this information.

Winter Storms

Heavy snowfall, extreme cold, and ice can become dangerous. When caught in a winter storm outside, find shelter, try to stay dry, and cover all exposed parts of the body.

If in a car or truck, stay inside the vehicle. Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat, open the window for a little fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Make yourself visible to rescuers, and vigorously move your arms, legs, fingers, and toes from time to time to keep blood circulating.

At home or in a building, stay inside. Properly ventilate and use fire safeguards if using an alternate source of heat. Eat and drink. Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing.

National Weather Service Winter Season Terminology

Winter Storm Watch: Adverse winter weather is possible in the watch area.

Winter Storm Warning: Adverse weather will occur in the warning area.
Heavy Snow: Accumulation to 6 inches or more in 12 hours; or 8 inches or more in 24 hours.

Blizzard: Sustained winds or frequent gusts up to 35 mph or greater, considerable falling snow and/or blowing snow, reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile for three hours or more.

Snow Removal

When it snows, County and contract forces concentrate on keeping primary County roads and major residential streets passable. These roads are cleared down to bare pavement as soon as possible after a storm is over.

A storm has ended when wind has diminished and temperatures start to rise above freezing.

Plowing generally begins when snow becomes 1 to 3 inches deep and the temperature indicates there will be no melting. Even after plowing, snow that has been hard packed by traffic often remains on the street, and the plows are unable to remove it completely. In this type of situation, a mixture of sand and salt is spread to provide adequate traction.

Snow Removal

The type of snow (wet or powdery), temperatures, and wind conditions following a storm can alter this schedule. In some cases where snow is drifting and blowing, snowplows will concentrate on snow emergency routes and primary roads. This may decrease response time to residential or neighborhood roads.

Clearing driveways and entrances is the responsibility of the property owner. All residential and business owners are responsible for clearing sidewalks on their own property. When a storm is predicted, always park your vehicles in your driveway so trucks can plow through.

Fire Prevention

The Cobb Island VFD & EMS takes pride during National Fire Prevention week (October 7-13). The Cobb Island Volunteer Fire Department and EMS has been recognized at the state level for its program pertaining to fire prevention and life safety. Make all preparations to attend during the month of October for our annual open house at the fire station and make plans to bring you friends and family for a day of safety briefs and live demonstrations.

Fire prevention is of special importance during an emergency. To prevent fires in your household from starting: Don't let junk accumulate. Clean out attics, basements, closets, and garages frequently.

Fire Hazards

- Check electrical wiring and appliances.
- Replace worn or frayed cords.
- Don't overload circuits with too many appliances.
- Don't string extension cords under rugs.
- Use irons, curling irons, and other heat appliances with caution.
- Store explosive or flammable materials outside.
- Never use flammable fluids such as gasoline, benzene, naphtha, etc. indoors or near flames. They ignite readily from a spark.
- Don't leave rags soaked with oil or turpentine lying around. They may spontaneously ignite.
- Check furnaces and stoves for cracked or rusted pipes, and sooty chimneys.
- Don't put papers or magazines on radiators, or near stoves or fireplaces. Don't let light bulbs touch lampshades.
- Develop a safe escape route for your family in case of fire. Plan two ways of escape in the event one path is blocked by fire.
- Establish a meeting place outside for everyone. You can tell if someone is missing. This will help firefighters know who is or is not safe.
- Conduct regular fire drills.

Fire Safety

In case of fire:

- Stay low. Don't stand up. If you are in bed, roll out and crawl low on the floor under the smoke.
- Crawl to the door; use the wall as a guide. Check the door for heat with the back of your hand before opening.
- If door is cool to the touch, crack it open so it can be shut quickly if flames or smoke are on the other side.
- If the door is hot or smoke is seeping underneath, do not open the door. Put a blanket, towel, robe, or heavy clothing in the crack.
- Take short breaths to avoid breathing in fumes and smoke.
- Signal others in the house by pounding on the walls, floor, and door.
- "**Shout Fire**," but do this once outside the heavy smoke.
- Using the wall as a guide, crawl to a window and open it. Take a sheet or large piece of cloth and wave it and shout for help if unable to climb out of the window to the ground to safety.
- Once out of the fire, don't go back in. Let the firefighters know if anyone is missing.
- Escape first. If firefighters are not at the scene, call or tell someone to call 911. Don't go back inside to make the call.

Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors can warn that there is a fire.

- Keep detectors in proper working order.
- Check and replace batteries every 9 to 12 months. A good way to remember is to change the batteries when Daylight Savings Time changes. Some units beep when the batteries need to be replaced.
- Clean the detector annually to keep out dust that can damage the unit.
- Test the detector at least once a month by pushing the test button.

Fire Extinguishers

A fire extinguisher is a storage container for a fire-extinguishing agent such as water or chemicals.

Fire extinguishers are labeled according to the type of fire they are intended for. There are four types of extinguishers:

- A:** For ordinary combustibles (paper, cloth, wood, rubber, and many plastics);
- B:** For flammable liquids (oils, gasoline, paints, etc.);
- C:** For electrical equipment;
- D:** For combustible metals.

Using the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire can make the situation much worse. If you plan to buy only one type of extinguisher, a multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher labeled ABC puts out most types of fires.

Recharge or replace the extinguisher after any use. Install extinguishers near escape routes away from potential hazards.

Bio-Terrorism Threats

Anthrax is only one component of bio-terrorism. Tomorrow it could be other bacteria, such as plague, tularemia, the smallpox virus, or the botulism toxin. Unlike bombs or chemical weapons, these highly infectious agents cannot be identified by sight, smell, or feel. Once exposure has happened, it may be several days before the source is determined.

❑ **Anthrax** is “nature’s perfect bioweapon.” It is readily available, easily produced, easily stored, and highly lethal and does not break down in sunlight. There is no screening test for anthrax. Treatment: antibiotics.

❑ **Smallpox** is highly contagious between humans. Symptoms include high fever, fatigue, head and backache, followed in 2-4 days by a rash. The lesions are round, tense, and deeply embedded in the skin. Treatment: vaccine.

❑ **Botulism** toxins are among the most toxic to man. They can inhale or ingested. Symptoms include droopy eyelids, generalized weakness, dizziness, dry mouth and throat, blurred and double vision, altered speech and voice production, difficulty swallowing, and respiratory failure. Treatment: antitoxin.

❑ **Plague** comes in three forms, bubonic (spread by rodents), pneumonic (by aerosol), and septicemia (from dissemination of the other two forms). Symptoms include malaise, high fever, chills, headache, myalgia, and a cough with bloody sputum. Treatment: antibiotics.

Tularemia, which is transmitted by handling infected animal tissues, ingestion of contaminated water, food, or soil or inhalation of infective aerosols, is characterized by fever, fatigue, chills, headache, and malaise. Treatment: antibiotics

What precautions should you take?

❑ **Practice** good personal hygiene

❑ **Follow** the USPS procedures established for handling suspicious mail, since bioterrorism exposure has come from the mail.

Handling Mail Safety

What constitutes suspicious mail?

Parcels that:

- Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you,
- Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated,
- Have no return address, or have one that can't be verified as legitimate,
- Are marked with restrictive markings, such as "personal" or "confidential,"
- Have protruding wires, strange odors, or stains, show a city or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address, or
- Have excessive postage, tape or string.

What should I do with a suspicious piece of mail?

- Don't** handle a letter or package you suspect is contaminated
- Don't** shake it, bump it, or sniff it.
- Wash** your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Notify** local law enforcement authorities.

When opening mail:

- Examine** it for foreign bodies or powder:
- Lay** it flat on a desk and open it with a letter opener.
- Use** a minimal amount of movement. Don't shake or spill contents without first looking inside.

For biological or chemical (a suspicious powder or liquid):

If the substance spills onto a surface:

- Leave the letter, and don't move or clean up the substance;
- Cover with another piece of paper, newspaper, or what is at hand;
- Don't move it or leave it unattended,
- Ask everyone in room to leave; call 911;
- Wash hands with soap and water;
- After assessment, follow instructions of emergency responder.

If the substance from the envelope spills onto your skin:

- Wash with soap and water right away.
- Remove the clothes you were wearing and put them in a plastic bag.
- Change clothes and take a shower as soon as possible.
- Call 911.
- Seek medical attention immediately.

Report Suspicious Activity

The federal, state, or local government may call for a heightened state of alert on the part of local law enforcement and residence. When on heightened alert, law enforcement may add extra patrols at a number of locations, increase staff, carry extra protective equipment, and communicate more frequently with federal, state, or other local law enforcement agencies.

Residents should also be on the alert and report any suspicious activity to police. Don't fail to act because you are not sure what you observe is worth reporting. If you suspect a crime is being or is about to be committed, call 911. Don't panic. Don't put yourself at risk.

What types of activity should you report?

- A strange vehicle parked in your neighborhood for a long time.
- Recurring appearances of a strange vehicle in your neighborhood.
- Strangers looking into houses and vehicles, or knocking on doors.
- A person tampering with utility systems without an identifiable company vehicle and uniform.
- A large amount of traffic coming to an apartment or house.
- A house where extreme security measures are in force.
- Homes or buildings where no owner or primary renter is apparent, and no home activities, yard work, painting, or maintenance seem to go on.
- Strange odors coming from houses or buildings.
- Door-to-door solicitors without proper identification or permits.
- Persons standing around possibly acting as lookouts.
- Strangers who come around livestock or crops, or employee-only areas.

Heat Wave Safety Tips

- ❑ Slow down. Strenuous activities should be reduced, eliminated or rescheduled to the coolest time of the day.
- ❑ Individuals at risk because of medical problems should stay in the coolest place available, not necessarily indoors.
- ❑ Dress for summer. Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing that reflects heat and sunlight and helps the body maintain normal temperatures.
- ❑ Reduce consumption of foods that increase metabolic heat production, like protein, that also increase water loss.
- ❑ Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with sugar, caffeine, or alcohol. Those with epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, who are on fluid restrictive diets, or have a fluid retention problem, should consult a physician before increasing their water consumption.
- ❑ Do not drink alcoholic beverages.
- ❑ Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician. Those on salt-restrictive diets should consult a physician before increasing their salt intake.
- ❑ Spend more time in air-conditioned places. Air conditioning in homes and other buildings greatly reduces your danger from heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, spend some time each day during hot weather in an air-conditioned environment.
- ❑ Do not get too much sun. Sunburn makes heat dissipation more difficult.

Heat Disorder Symptoms and Treatment:

❑ **Sunburn:** Redness and pain. Severe cases may result in swelling of the skin, blisters, fever, and/or headaches. Use ointments for mild cases. If blisters appear, do not break. If blisters break, apply a dry sterile dressing. For serious cases, consult a physician.

❑ **Heat Cramps:** Painful muscle spasms may occur in the legs and/or abdomen. Use firm pressure on cramping muscles, or gentle massage to relieve the spasms. Give sips of water to replace water lost through sweating. Discontinue water if nausea occurs.

❑ **Heat Exhaustion:** Heavy sweating, weakness, skin is cold, pale, and clammy. Pulse is weak and shallow. Normal temperature possible. Fainting and vomiting may occur. Get victim out of the sun. Lay him or her down and loosen clothing. Apply wet, cool cloths.

❑ **Heat stroke:** High body temperature (106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher). Skin is hot and dry. Pulse is rapid and strong. Possible unconsciousness.

Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency.

- ❑ **Call 911 to summon emergency medical assistance.**
- ❑ **Get victim to a hospital.**
- ❑ **Until help arrives, do not give fluids.**
- ❑ **If safe to do so, move victim to a cooler environment. A cool bath, sponging with cool water and use of fans or air conditioning, may be attempted to reduce the victim's body temperature.**
- ❑ **Repeat cooling process if victim's body temperature rises again.**

Other Information Sources

Get more information on preparing for emergencies from the following web sites:

Virginia Dept. of Emergency Management: www.vaemergency.com

Virginia Dept. of Health: www.vdh.state.va.us

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

Dept. of Emergency Services: www.charlescounty.org

Charles County Sheriff's Office: www.ccsso.us

King George County: www.king-george.va.us

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

MD Emergency Management Agency: www.mema.state.md.us

MD Department of the Environment: www.mde.state.md.us

Maryland State Police: www.mdsp.maryland.gov

MD Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene: www.dhmd.state.md.us

Weather Channel: www.weather.com

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin: www.noaa.gov

National Weather Service: www.nws.noaa.gov

The Cobb Island VFD & EMS Inc. is a group of volunteers who live with in our community and take great pleasure and pride in providing emergency services and community support in time of need. On behalf of the entire membership of the Cobb Island VFD & EMS we hope this emergency guide will assist you in preparing for an emergency.

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