

Alexandria CERT: Community Emergency Response Team

Police – Fire – Medical Emergency	911
Alexandria Non-Emergency	703-746-4444
Alexandria Animal Control	703-746-4774
National Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255

September – October
2019

Plan, Prepare, and Practice

Practicing your plans makes it easier and faster for you to react when there is an emergency or disaster. Practice small parts of plan and spread practice throughout the year. Practice can be as simple as reviewing a section of a plan or doing a short exercise.

Short Exercises

- Practice fire escape routes at home and at work. Also try alternate escape routes, in case fire blocks your primary path. Have a home fire drill at least twice a year that includes going to your designated meet-up location. Night-time drills are strongly advised. For small children, make it a game by blindfolding them.
- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors twice a year. Replace batteries.
- Refresh supplies twice a year: Check and replace batteries in flashlights and portable radios. Replace emergency water supplies; keep 1 gallon per person per day on hand. Cycle out older canned foods and replenish the stockpile.
- Use different routes to and from work and other places you frequent to learn how to get around.

Reviews

- Update your financial and critical household and medical information when significant changes occur or at least annually.
- Check your contact lists and revise as necessary. These include family contacts, health professionals, financial services (bank, insurance, retirement accounts), and emergency service providers (plumber, electrician, water/smoke remediation).
- With each season, go through your emergency supplies and go kits. For go kits, put in clothing appropriate for the season.
- Review your property insurance coverage at renewal time. Both renters and homeowners need adequate policies.
- Study different evacuation routes from the area, as evacuations can result in large traffic jams.

September Is National Preparedness Month

The theme for 2019 National Preparedness Month is **Prepared, Not Scared. Be Ready for Disasters.** Each week's theme gives you steps to prepare.

Week 1: Save Early for Disaster Costs. Gather financial and critical household and medical information. Have an emergency savings account. Keep a small amount of cash at home. Obtain insurance for property, health, life, and flood protection if you do not have these policies.

Week 2: Make a Plan. Make plans for evacuation, sheltering in place, evacuation routes, and communicating with family. Base your plans on the specific needs of your household. Sign up for alerts.

Week 3: Youth Preparedness. Teach children what to do in an emergency at home and away from home. Explain how to call 911 and what to say. Review your family communications plan with children and teens.

Week 4: Get Involved. Learn first aid and how to do CPR. Take free training for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

You Are the Help Until Help Arrives

Life-threatening injuries can happen anytime and anywhere: Vehicle and pedestrian accidents. Accidents with tools or machines at home or in a factory. Collapse or destruction of structures in tornadoes or earthquakes or due to poor construction. And intentional attacks such as mass shootings or bombings.

You can learn to provide immediate medical help before emergency medical services arrive and even make the difference between life and death. After a call to 911, it may be 6-9 minutes before EMS arrives. Note: For an active violence attack, keep yourself safe and stay aware of the situation. Let other people call 911.

Deaths from some injuries are preventable in cases of massive bleeding (including from amputation), airway obstruction, and shock and hypothermia. Learn ways to treat serious injuries; you will be covered by Good Samaritan laws even if the person does not survive.

Massive Bleeding. Immediately put direct pressure to the wound to stop or slow the bleeding. Maintain pressure until EMS arrives. For limb injuries, you may also pack the wound with gauze then secure it by wrapping very tightly with an elastic compression bandage; then press down on the wound for 5-10 minutes to see if bleeding slows or stops. Tourniquets can be improvised, but avoid techniques taught in the past such as using a belt. Material should be about 2” wide, long, and not stretchy. Position the tourniquet as close to the torso as possible (upper arm or near the groin). Tie the material in a half-knot. Place a rigid object over the half-knot and secure it with a full knot. Good rigid objects would be 2 or 3 pens or pencils, a pocket knife, a screwdriver, etc. Then make a windlass by twisting the object until the tourniquet is tight. Loop the ends of the tourniquet over and tie them over the wound. Tape the windlass down to secure the tourniquet. Let EMS check or remove the tourniquet.

Airway Obstruction. If the person is not breathing, remove obstructions and perform CPR. If the person is breathing but unconscious, turn them on their side to keep the airway open and prevent choking from tongue slippage, blood, or vomit. Use the “recovery position” for best results: Body laid on the side. Bottom arm reached outward, and top arm resting on bicep of bottom arm. Chin raise forward, and mouth pointed downward. Legs slightly bent, with top hip leaning forward.

Shock and Hypothermia. It’s important to keep seriously injured persons warm, no matter what the room or outdoor temperature is. Cover the person, put something between them and the ground, remove wet outer garments and dry the skin, and protect them from wind. Warmth improves blood clotting, reduces stress, and lowers the risk of shock. A person in shock cannot generate body heat effectively, and shock may become irreversible. Signs of shock may be confusion, lack of alertness, or loss of consciousness.

Learn More. FEMA has video training on Until Help Arrives on its web site: <https://community.fema.gov/until-help-arrives>.

Alexandria Emergency Preparedness

The City of Alexandria offers residents free opportunities to learn about being prepared.

Emergency Preparedness Fair. Tuesday, Sept. 24, 10 am – 2 pm at Market Square, 301 King Street. Get information about emergency preparedness, volunteer opportunities, and Hands-Only CPR training.

Hands-Only CPR Training. Learn how to provide CPR to persons in cardiac arrest. No breaths are part of this method.

- Sept. 5, 6 pm – 8 pm at First Thursday in Del Ray (Mt. Vernon & E. Del Ray Ave.)
- Sept. 6, 11 am – 2 pm at McDonald’s, 1000 N. Henry
- Sept. 9, 11 am – 2 pm at the Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St.
- Sept. 18, 11 am – 2 pm at Dulany Street, in front of the US Patent & Trade Office

Until Help Arrives. Free, but registration is required. Practice skills such as tourniquets. See <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/calendar>.

- Sept. 11, 1 pm – 5 pm
- Sept. 11, 6 pm – 10 pm
- Sept. 25, 1 pm – 5 pm

CERT Basic Course. Train to become a CERT member. On Thursdays, 7 pm – 10 pm from Oct. 10 – Nov. 21 and Saturday morning Nov. 23. Details at <https://www.alexandriava.gov/CERT>.

Learn More. Visit the City’s National Preparedness Month web page for information about preparing for disasters, getting involved, and receiving emergency alerts. The web page also has educational videos.