

ODHH Monthly Bulletin

July/August
2012

A message from Director Lisa Kornberg

This month, it seems that weather is making the news more than usual. At the beginning of the month, there was a heat wave and a derecho that impacted much of the State. And just this week we experienced extreme heat that brought temperatures to over 90 degrees. Hurricane season is also upon us, stretching from now until November 30.

With all of this extreme weather impacting so many in our state, it is a good time to review safety procedures for weather-related emergencies. This edition of the *Bulletin* is focused on just that: keeping you and your family safe during extreme weather.

If you have any questions or want more information about staying safe in extreme weather, please contact the staff here at ODHH.

Thank you and be safe,

-Lisa

In This Issue

Staying Safe in Extreme Heat

Hurricane Season is June 1-November 30, 2012

What to Do When the Power Goes Out

Staying Safe in Extreme Heat



People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs.

Because heat-related deaths are preventable, people need to be aware of who is at greatest risk and what actions can be taken to prevent a heat-related illness or death. The elderly, the very young, and people with mental illness and chronic diseases are at highest risk. However, even young and healthy individuals can succumb to heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather. Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death. If a home is not air-conditioned, people can reduce their risk for heat-related



Using Twitter to Get Information During Extreme Weather and Other Emergencies

Many federal, state, and local agencies and nonprofits use Twitter to send out emergency updates as information becomes available. While you should not use Twitter as your sole means of staying informed (what if the site is down, you lose power/internet, or your phone battery dies?), it is an excellent way of receiving near real-time updates during a weather emergency.

Do you have a Twitter account? Are you following accounts that will give you updates during an emergency? If not, here are a few you should consider following:

- @GovernorOMalley
- @MDMEMA
- @MDODHH
- Your Local Emergency Management Office

illness by spending time in public facilities that are air-conditioned.

Personal symptoms from overexposure to heat may range from the mild heat rash to the dreaded heat stroke. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a very informative page](#) that focuses on the descriptions and symptoms of each heat-related condition and discusses ways to protect yourself and others. For a YouTube video in American Sign language about staying safe in extreme heat, [click here](#).

Hurricane Season is June 1-November 30, 2012



History teaches that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster.

Hurricane hazards come in many forms, including storm surge, heavy rainfall, inland flooding, high winds, tornadoes, and rip currents. The National Weather Service is responsible for protecting life and property through issuance of timely watches and warnings, but it is essential that your family be ready before a storm approaches.

To prepare for a hurricane, here are a few tips:

- To begin preparing, you should [build an emergency kit](#) and [make a family communications plan](#).
- Know your surroundings.
- Learn the elevation level of your property and whether the land is flood-prone. This will help you know how your property will be affected when storm surge or tidal flooding are forecasted.
- Learn community hurricane evacuation routes and how to find higher ground. Determine where you would go and how you would get there if you needed to evacuate.
- Make plans to secure your property:
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- If in a high-rise building, be prepared to take shelter on or below the 10th floor.

The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have a number of videos in American Sign Language about preparing for and staying safe during hurricanes on its website](#).

Hurricanes cause heavy rains that can cause extensive flood damage in coastal and inland areas. Everyone is at risk and should consider flood insurance protection. Flood insurance is the only way to financially protect your property or business from flood damage. To learn more about your flooding risk and how to protect yourself and your business, visit the [Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration \(NFIP\) website](#) or call 1-800-427-2419.

Twitter can provide you with timely updates during an emergencies. It can also connect you to people in your neighborhood who may provide helpful information about conditions in your immediate area. If you don't have an account, consider signing up for one at www.twitter.com.

Quick Links

[ODHH Website](#)



[Contact Us](#)

Maryland.gov

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

ODHH on the Move

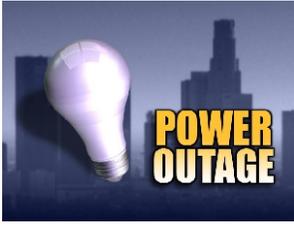
Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration

July 26
2 - 5 PM

UMBC University Center
Ballroom
Baltimore, MD

State Offices will be closed August 31 - September 3 in observance of Labor Day.

What to do When the Power Goes Out



Power outages are common throughout Maryland. They can be caused by a variety of events, including hurricanes, summer storms, high winds, winter storms, falling trees, traffic accidents, even small animals crawling in to transformers at transmission substations. While most outages last just a short while, outages in the wake of Tropical Storm Isabel in 2003 lasted more than a week in

some places.

Here are some tips to help you and your family stay safe in a power outage:

- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, use generators, pressure washers, grills, and similar items outdoors only.
- If the power is out longer than two hours, throw away food that has a temperature higher than 40°F.
- Check with local authorities to be sure your water is safe.
- In hot weather, stay cool and drink plenty of fluids to prevent heat-related illness.
- In cold weather, wear layers of clothing, which help to keep in body heat.
- Avoid power lines and use electric tools and appliances safely to prevent electrical shock.
- Learn more at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#).

You should have a plan for making emergency 911 calls when there is no electricity or no Internet service. Videophones rely on power and an internet connection in order to make a call, so [it is a good idea to hang on to that old TTY](#). Most TTYs have a battery that provides limited back-up power. The battery should give you enough power to make a 911 call. You can test your TTY battery back-up power by unplugging your TTY and placing a call to a family member or friend who has a TTY or through 711 relay service.

It is also a good idea to sign up for emergency alerts through your email or cell phone. Some counties use reverse 911 to call TTYs and provide emergency information. Others will send text messages or emails to your phone. Some counties have multiple options on how you can receive up to date alerts in an emergency. A deaf man in Florida recently wrote a very good [blog post about staying informed in an emergency](#). Twitter has become a very popular method of receiving information during extreme weather. For more tips on that, see the FYI Section of this newsletter.

Questions? Comments? Contact:

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