

Mercer MRC

A Newsletter for and about our volunteers



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This month there are two health observances of note: National Preparedness Month & National Food Safety Education Month. As we say goodbye to summer and enter peak hurricane season (mid-August to late October), now is the time to take the necessary steps to ensure our safety and enhance our preparedness for emergencies.

According to the CDC, every year an estimated 1 in 6 Americans (48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food. Providing education about, and raising awareness of, foodborne illness and steps you can take to prevent food poisoning are key to preventing illness from improperly prepared or stored foods.

From the California wildfires, a West Coast heat wave, and flooding in multiple states in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, to Hurricane Lane in Hawaii, the first half of 2018 has had its share of weather-related emergencies. According to the National Weather Service, Hurricane Lane possibly broke the Hawaii tropical cyclone rainfall record, with rainfall gauges on the island measuring more than 52 inches of rain from August 22nd through August 26th.

According to AccuWeather president and founder Dr. Joel N. Myers, Hurricane Lane has the potential to be the costliest hurricane in the recorded history of Hawaii.

These events highlight the importance of preparing for emergencies, starting with making an emergency plan and exercising the plan with your family.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

National Preparedness Month.....	2-3
National Food Safety Education Month.....	4-5
MRC trainings & events.....	6

National Preparedness Month

This month serves as a reminder that we should all take actions to prepare, now and throughout the year, for emergencies that could affect us where we live, work, and travel. This year's themes are built around our knowledge that: Disasters Happen. Prepare now, learn how.

2018 Themes:

Week 1: Sept. 1-8 Make and practice your plan

Make an emergency plan TODAY. Include in it a meeting place in case you and your family are separated during the emergency. Decide how you will contact each other, where you will go if you need to evacuate your home, designate potential evacuation routes, and list supplies you will need to shelter in place. Don't forget to plan for specific needs including medical needs, durable medical equipment, pets, children, and elderly household members who may need additional assistance during an emergency. Put all of these items in your plan, and practice your plan.

Other activities to complete this week:

1. Make an emergency kit in case you need to shelter in place or evacuate

Some supplies you should include:

- ⇒ 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc.)
- ⇒ Can opener
- ⇒ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ⇒ Water – at least a gallon per person, per day for drinking and hygiene
- ⇒ First aid kit
- ⇒ Prescription medications
- ⇒ Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family
- ⇒ Change of clothes to last for at least 3 days, including sturdy shoes
- ⇒ Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and other personal items
- ⇒ Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and extra batteries
- ⇒ Flashlights and extra batteries
- ⇒ Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger
- ⇒ Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, ID, and bank records in a waterproof, portable container
- ⇒ Pet supplies
- ⇒ Assistive devices (glasses, hearing aid and batteries, cane)



Remember to:

Build a separate emergency kit for your pets.
Include: pet food, water, collar, leash, food bowls, medications, rabies vaccination and medical records, sanitation materials, treats, bedding, and a favorite toy.

- 2. Opt-In for emergency alerts and warnings provided by your municipality.



Week 2: Sept. 9-15: Learn life-saving skills

Consider taking a First Aid and/or CPR/AED course. Learn and share 5 simple skills that may save a life by taking the **#UntilHelpArrives** training at: <http://go.usa.gov/x5Xcm>

Other actions to take:

- ⇒ Install smoke, carbon monoxide, and natural gas alarms in your home and test them monthly.
- ⇒ Learn how to turn off the gas in your home.
- ⇒ Have chimneys and vents cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year to prevent home fires.
- ⇒ Know two ways out of your home in the event of a fire and practice evacuation plans



Week 3: Sept. 16-22: Check your insurance coverage

Most homeowners' and renters' insurance does not cover flood damage.
Learn more about flood insurance at www.floodsmart.gov

Other things to do this week:

- ⇒ Complete a detailed inventory of your property's contents to assist you if a disaster strikes. Your inventory will help you prove the value of what you owned, which could speed your claim processing, and will provide documentation for tax deductions you can claim for your losses.

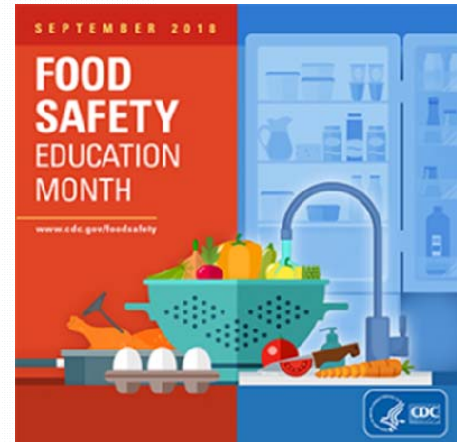
Week 4: Sept. 23-29 Save for an emergency

- ⇒ Gather financial and critical personal, household, and medical information.
- ⇒ Consider saving money in an emergency savings account that could be used in any crisis.
- ⇒ Keep a small amount of cash at home. Credit cards and ATMs may not work during a disaster.
- ⇒ Get your benefits electronically. A disaster can disrupt mail service for days or weeks.



National Food Safety Education Month

September is National Food Safety Education Month. According to the CDC, every year an estimated 1 in 6 Americans (48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food. Many different disease-causing germs can contaminate foods, so there are many different foodborne infections. Some people are more likely to get a foodborne illness (also called food poisoning) or to get seriously ill. People at higher risk include those age 65 and over, children younger than 5 years, people with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women.



Know the symptoms of food poisoning:

- ⇒ Upset stomach
- ⇒ Stomach cramps
- ⇒ Nausea
- ⇒ Vomiting
- ⇒ Diarrhea
- ⇒ Fever

If you experience diarrhea or vomiting, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

See your doctor or healthcare provider if you have symptoms that are severe, including:

- ⇒ High fever (temperature over 101.5°F, measured orally)
- ⇒ Blood in stools
- ⇒ Frequent vomiting that prevents keeping liquids down (which can lead to dehydration)
- ⇒ Signs of dehydration, including a marked decrease in urination, a very dry mouth and throat, or feeling dizzy when standing up.



Protect yourself from food poisoning:

Keep food safe; learn which foods are most associated with foodborne illness and learn how food becomes contaminated.

Four steps to keep food safe in the kitchen are: Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill



Clean: Wash your hands and surfaces often.

Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating.

Wash your utensils, cutting boards, and countertops with hot, soapy water.

Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.



Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

When grocery shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from other foods.

Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.

Cook: Cook to the right temperature

The only way to tell if food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer. You can't tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture.

Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.

- 145°F for whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb (then allow the meat to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating)
- 160°F for ground meats, such as beef and pork
- 165°F for all poultry, including ground chicken and turkey
- 165°F for leftovers and casseroles
- 145°F for fresh ham (raw)

145°F for fish or cook until flesh is opaque



You should not wash raw poultry or meat before cooking it. Washing raw poultry or meat can spread bacteria to other foods, utensils, and surfaces, and does not prevent illness.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly

Keep your refrigerator below 40°F and know when to throw food out.

Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. (If outdoor temperature is above 90°F, refrigerate within 1 hour.)

Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter, because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.

Volunteer Opportunities & Upcoming Events

MRC volunteer opportunities thus far this year include:

3/8/2018	MRC Orientation Training
5/7/2018	Ewing Rabies Clinic
5/12/2018	Bike Rodeo
6/14/2018	Care Assistant Fundamentals Training
6/16/2018	Girl Scout Event
6/28/2018	Hope and Healing Community Meeting
7/18/2018	Ewing Rabies Clinic
7/29/2018	4H Fair
8/11/2018	Sound the Alarm



Upcoming event: Radiation Awareness Training

WHAT: FEMA AWR-140: Introduction to Radiological/
Nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction

WHEN: October 22nd, 2018, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Mercer County Fire Academy, Dempster Fire Training Center, Lawrenceville, NJ

AWR-140 provides an introduction to Radiological/Nuclear WMD operations for first responders and others, who may be tasked with response or support missions. The course provides fundamental knowledge regarding recognition of the threat or incident, protective measures, notifications and securing the incident area. Participants will learn about:

- Ionizing radiation, its sources, properties and methods of measurement.
- Recognizing possible radiological/ nuclear threats and the consequences of a radiological/ nuclear incident.
- Recognizing radiological/nuclear indicators and clues
- Identifying and initiating awareness level protective actions and isolation techniques at the scene to reduce radiation exposure and/or contamination to themselves and others.

Contact Stephanie to register for this training.

If you know someone who may be interested in joining the MRC, or you are currently not a member and are interested in joining, please contact Stephanie Mendelsohn, MRC Coordinator, at: smendelsohn@mercercounty.org or call 609-989-6898.

