

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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Office of Communications



PRESS RELEASE

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Mayor Vincent C. Gray Proclaims September ‘National Preparedness Month’

Serve DC and HSEMA Hosting Events to Help Residents Prepare for Emergencies

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Mayor Vincent C. Gray has declared September National Preparedness Month (NPM) in the District of Columbia. NPM is an annual campaign to encourage Americans to take steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, schools, organizations, businesses and communities. Serve DC – The Mayor’s Office on Volunteerism will hold three events to recognize National Preparedness Month, and the District’s Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA) will hold ward-based emergency-preparedness training sessions.

“As the nation’s capital, we must be prepared to respond to a number of natural and man-made threats, and National Preparedness Month is a way for us to emphasize emergency readiness across our city,” said Mayor Gray. ***“Informed and engaged residents are a key to keeping our communities safer, stronger and better prepared to address threats of terrorism, crime and natural disasters as varied as hurricanes, blizzards, earthquakes and tornadoes.”***

Serve DC is the District’s lead agency for coordinating the management of emergency volunteers and donations. The agency provides support to the city’s official emergency-response effort, led by HSEMA. Serve DC recruits and trains residents to respond and assist during emergencies.

In addition to its regularly scheduled Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainings, Serve DC will host the following [NPM events](#):

9/11: September 11th National Day of Service & Remembrance

On Tuesday, September 11th, Serve DC and HandsOn Greater DC Cares will commemorate the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance and National Preparedness Month with an afternoon of service dedicated to supporting veterans and first responders. The event will be held on Freedom Plaza (along Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 13th and 14th Streets) from 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The event features

hands-on service projects, emergency-preparedness demonstrations and trainings and a volunteer recruitment fair.

9/14: Commander Ready Kick-off

On Friday, September 14th, Serve DC joins local emergency-management and first-responder agencies, students, teachers and parents to kick off the 2012-13 season of [Commander Ready](#), Serve DC's specialized program designed to educate and engage youth ages 5-13 in emergency preparedness. *(Note: This event is closed to the public.)*

9/24: Planning for Access & Functional-Needs Populations in Emergencies

On Monday, September 24th, Serve DC hosts its 2nd annual Access & Functional Needs Emergency Preparedness Forum. This free event convenes access-and-functional-needs experts, advocates and emergency-management professionals for a discussion on how to ensure all District residents' needs are understood and accommodated in times of crisis.

HSEMA "Whole Community" Ward-Based Exercises

Throughout September, HSEMA will host a series of educational, interactive, ward-based preparedness exercises that are open to residents. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn how to better prepare themselves and their homes for emergencies and will gain a deeper understanding of their roles during major disasters. Participants will also have the opportunity to provide input that will aid the District government in improving community-preparedness efforts. To find out when your community exercise is taking place, please visit www.hsema.dc.gov and click on the "[Whole Community" Ward-Based Exercises](#) link located on the home page. Registration, while not mandatory, is nonetheless highly encouraged. Bring a neighbor and learn how to plan today for what's on the way!

General Emergency-Preparedness Tips

One of NPM's key messages is: Be prepared in the event an emergency forces you to be self-reliant for three days (72 hours) without utilities and electricity, water service, access to a supermarket or local services, or without the guarantee that police, fire or emergency medical services will be able to respond rapidly (as is the case in some disasters where sustained dangerous conditions preclude immediate responses). Preparing can start with three important steps:

1. Get an emergency supply kit (more information: <http://72hours.dc.gov>)
2. Make a plan for what to do in an emergency (more information: <http://72hours.dc.gov>)
3. Be informed about emergencies that could happen in your community, and identify sources of information in your community that will be helpful before, during and after an emergency. Sign up to receive emergency text alerts by visiting <http://alert.dc.gov>.

For more information on National Preparedness Month events, visit the websites of HSEMA <http://hsema.dc.gov> and Serve DC at www.serve.dc.gov.

A copy of the Mayor's proclamation is attached to this press release.

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