# EMA News & Views



County of Lycoming Emergency Management Agency

Volume 17, Issue 2 Spring 2017

# COUNTY OF LYCOMING EMA QUARTERLY TRAINING

(Emergency Management Coordinators serving the municipalities of Lycoming County)

The next County of Lycoming EMA Quarterly Training will be held on:

# \*DATE CHANGE\* WEDNESDAY - <u>June 28, 2017</u> - 6:30 pm

At

LYCOMING COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY 542 COUNTY FARM ROAD, SUITE 101 MONTOURSVILLE, PA 17754

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MR. MARK DAVIDSON, DIRECTOR LYCOMING COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# MEETING TOPIC DETAILS

For the next EMA quarterly training, our presenter will be Mark Davidson from the Lycoming County Conservation District. The discussion will focus on streambank related issues immediately following a flood event. Topics will include: Conservation District Role following a flood event; Federal and State and local aid that may be available to homeowners or municipalities; permitting discussions related to stream debris, gravel bars, and crossings; and how can the municipality assist us.

Please join us to get a first hand look at the exciting new service available to Lycoming County residents.

Hope to see you there!

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# MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT EXERICSE

On April 30, 2017 the Lycoming County Department of Public Safety participated in the UPMC Susquehanna Mass Casualty Incident Exercise which took place in down town Williamsport. The scenario of the exercise was a terrorist attack at the Grand Slam Parade. There were several mock fatalities and injuries along with a stand-off hostage situation.

The scenario began with two gunman jumping out of the back of a



Photo from the Williamsport Sun-Gazette

truck in the area of West Fourth and Pine Street intersection. The truck was then driven into the crowd of parade spectators along West Fourth Street. The two gunmen entered the Chamber of Commerce building and opened fire. The initial officer entering the building after the gunmen was fatally wounded by a gun shot but was able to get off a shot wounding one of the gunmen. This triggered a massive response by many emergency response agencies including police officers, EMS, and the hostage negotiation team.

Our Department assisted with operations within our alternate Emergency Operations Center located at the Third Street Plaza across from the County Courthouse. The EMA staff assisted with Knowledge Center log entries, preparation of Incident Action Plans for future operating periods, and additional assistance was given to the hostage negotiations team as requested. The EMS staff assisted with preparing the "victims" by applying fake blood and injuries to many volunteer participants. EMS also supplied manikins to serve as fatalities. Our lone IT person, Diana Cleveland, helped assist with any issues that arose with connectivity between the EOC and command, as well as establishing connection between the EOC and the PEMA supplied video feed.

This exercise presented a very scary and serious scenario that will hopefully never occur, but it was a great opportunity for the entire emergency response community to exercise what to do prior to being faced with the actual event. The UPMC staff and the many emergency response agencies are to be applauded for their massive time and effort put into this exercise.

Lycoming County Department of Public Safety would like to thank UPMC Susquehanna and the numerous agencies involved to make this exercise a tremendous learning experience.



### Severe Weather Safety Tips - to Save Your Life!

<u>Fact</u>: Hundreds of people die each year in the United States due to heat waves, hurricanes, lightning, flash floods, powerful thunderstorm winds, and winter storms or winter cold. Additionally, thousands of people are injured by these weather events each year. Will it happen to you?

<u>Fact</u>: If you are aware of what weather event is about to impact your area, you are more likely to survive such an event. To stay on top of the weather, utilize NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receiver units that can be purchased at most electronic stores. Make sure the model you purchase has a battery-backup. The programmable types allow you to selectively screen out those county warnings you are not interested in. Most homes have a smoke detector; shouldn't your home also have a weather radio?

You should also obtain the latest weather information from commercial TV/radio, cable TV, the internet/web, and newspapers. It's your responsibility! The Milwaukee/Sullivan National Weather Service office (WFO MKX) that services south-central and southeast Wisconsin has a web site at: <a href="http://www.weather.gov/mkx">http://www.weather.gov/mkx</a> ...check it out....it is loaded with information and links!

What You Can do Before Severe Weather Strikes

- Develop a disaster plan for you and your family at home, work, school, and when outdoors. The American Red Cross
  offers planning tips and information on a putting together a disaster supplies kit at: <u>http://www.redcross.org</u>
- Identify a safe place to take shelter. Information on how to build a Safe Room in your home or school is available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to\_saferoom.shtm
- Know the county/parish in which you live or visit and in what part of that county you are located. The National Weather Service issues severe weather warnings on a county/parish basis, or for a portion of a county/parish.
- 4. Keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins.
- Have a NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receiver unit with a warning alarm tone and battery back-up to receive warning bulletins.
- 6. National Weather Service (NWS) watches and warnings are also available on the Internet. Select your local NWS office at: <u>http://www.weather.gov/organization.php</u>...or go to the to the NWS Home Page at <u>http://www.nws.noaa.gov</u>
- 7. Listen to commercial radio or television/cable TV for weather information.
- 8. Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended periods outdoors. Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- If severe weather threatens, check on people who are elderly, very young, or physically or mentally disabled. Don't
  forget about pets and farm animals.

#### Tornado Safety Tips:

- Seek shelter in a sturdy building, or a pre-designated shelter. Go to the lowest level of the building, preferably in a basement, and get under a heavy desk or workbench or sit next to the wall and cover your head with your arms/hands. Best bet – have a safe room in the basement.
- If an underground shelter is not available, move to an interior room/hallway put as many
  wall between you and the outside of the building, and stay away from windows. Other
  possibilities: get into a bathtub or under a bed or sofa.
- 3. Get out of vehicles they can easily be tossed around do not try to outrun a tornado.
- 4. If caught outside lie flat on the ground and cover your head with your hands. Remember, in tornado situations debris likes to settle in roadside ditches or other low spots. If heavy rains are falling in the area, ditches and low spots may quickly flood. Therefore, laying down in a ditch may not be your best choice.
- 5. Be aware of flying debris most deaths and injuries are caused by flying debris.
- Manufactured homes (mobile trailers) offer little protection, even if tied down. Leave these for a sturdy shelter before the storm approaches.
- Do not seek shelter under a highway overpass. Wind blow stronger under the overpass due to the wind-tunnel effect. Additionally, flying debris (glass, wood, metal) can pummel you, and the tornado winds may suck you out from under the overpass anyway.
- Don't waste time opening windows and doors to equalize air pressure differences this is a waste of time and buildings have enough air leakage to equalize air pressure differences anyway. Buildings are more likely to explode after the wind gets inside.
- 9. The southwest side of the basement isn't necessarily the safest place to be vehicles can be pushed into basements you can still be crushed no matter where you are in the basement. Even the bricks/stones of a fireplace can crash into the basement and crush you!
- 10. Remember the tornado can occur before there is a visible funnel cloud. A tornado is nothing more than a violently rotating column of air extending from the ground to the cloud base. You may not be able to see the tornado (can't see the rotating air) until enough debris and dirt get swept into the vortex, and/or the visible funnel cloud develops all the way to the ground.
- No place is <u>totally</u> safe from tornadoes (except for a safe room) if weather conditions come together properly, the tornado will go over or through mountains, lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes, bogs, and through downtown areas that have 1000 foot skyscrapers!
   Web sites: <u>http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/index.html</u>
  - Using a search engine on the Internet/YouTube, type in these key words for additional web sites: skywarn, tornado, thunderstorm, downburst, tornadoproject, storm chaser, vortex, derecho, severe weather, Enhanced Fujita Scale, safe room, lightning, jet stream





#### Severe Weather Safety Tips (continued from page 3)

#### Lightning Safety Tips:

- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are imminent. Lightning can travel 5-10 miles away from the thunderstorm and strike the ground with blue sky overhead. The storm doesn't have to be overhead in order for you to be struck.
- Move to a sturdy shelter or vehicle. Do not take shelter in a small shed, under isolated trees, or in a convertible-top vehicle. Stay away from tall objects such as trees or towers or poles.
- 3. If in your vehicle when lightning strikes don't touch a metal surface. You are safer in a vehicle than being outdoors.
- Remember that utility lines or pipes can carry the electrical current underground or through a building. Avoid electrical appliances, and use telephones or computers only in an emergency.
- 5. If you feel your hair standing on end get down into a baseball catcher's position and plug your ears with your finger tips so if lightning does hit it will not blow your ear drums out. Do not lie flat!
- 30/30 rule if the time between lighting and thunder is 30 seconds or less, go to a safe shelter. Stay there until 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder.

Web site: <u>http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov</u>

#### Flash Flood/Flood Safety Tips:

- Nearly half of all fatalities in a flash flood involve a person driving a vehicle. Do not drive into a flooded area Turn Around Don't Drown! It takes only 2 feet of water to float away most cars. It's amazing how powerful we feel when we get behind the wheel – don't do it!
- 2. It takes only 6 inches of fast-moving water to sweep a person off their feet don't walk through a flooded area!
- 3. If you are camping in a river valley, move to higher ground if thunderstorms with heavy rains are in the area. Do not attempt to drive away.
- Don't operate electrical tools in flooded areas.
- Most flash flood deaths occur in the middle of the night when it is more difficult to see rising water levels judge the depth of water covering road surfaces.
- Web sites: <u>http://www.weather.gov/os/brochures.shtml</u> (to find the "Flash Floods and Floods...The Awesome Power" brochure) <u>http://www.srh.noaa.gov/srh/tadd/</u> (for information on Turn Around Don't Drown - TADD)

#### Severe Thunderstorm Straight-line Winds:

- Don't underestimate the power of strong thunderstorm winds known as straight-line winds they can reach speeds of 100 to 150 mph. Hurricane-force winds start at 74 mph. Wisconsin does experience these kinds of winds!
- If a severe thunderstorm warning contains hurricane-force wind speeds seek shelter immediately (as you would for a tornado situation).
- 3. Stay away from windows and go to the basement or interior room/hallway. Do not use electrical appliances.
- Be aware that tall trees near a building can be uprooted by straight-line winds that tree can come crashing through the roof of a home and crush a person to death.
- 5. Powerful straight-line winds can overturn a vehicle or even make a person air-borne when they get up over 100 mph!
- 6. One type of a straight-line wind event is a downburst, which is a small area of rapidly descending rain-cooled air and rain beneath a thunderstorm. A downburst can cause damage equivalent to a strong tornado!
- Web site: http://www.spc.noaa.gov/misc/AbtDerechos/derechofacts.htm (information on strong straight-line wind events)

#### Large Hail:

- Although it is rare, people have been killed by large hail stones after sustaining head injuries. Additionally, several people are injured by large hail stones each year in the U.S.
- 2. Some thunderstorms can produce large hail stones that can reach the size of baseballs, softballs, or even as big as computer compact discs (CD) or DVDs! These large hail stones can fall at speeds over 100 mph! – that's why they are dangerous! The largest hail stone in Wisconsin was over 7 inches in diameter!
- If a severe storm is producing large hail stones, seek a sturdy shelter and stay away from windows that can easily be smashed.
- 4. If you are in your vehicle before the hail storm starts, get out of it and go to a sturdy shelter. Glass windows in vehicles can easily be smashed by the hail stones. If you can't get out of your vehicle, then come to a stop and cover your head with your arms and hands.

#### Additional Web Sites:

PDF-printable brochures on a variety of weather-related issues are available at: http://www.weather.gov/os/brochures.shtml Wisconsin Emergency Management homepage: <u>http://www.emergencymanagement.wi.gov</u> Basic and advanced storm spotter slide sets (Part I and II) can be found on Storm Spotter's Page http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx/?n=spotters Wisconsin severe weather graphics and bean counts: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx/climate-severe.php National severe weather hazard statistics: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/hazstats.shtml Preparedness and Safety Tips: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx/edu.php http://www.fema.gov/kids/ Storm Prediction Center's web site address: <u>http://www.spc.noaa.gov</u> Glossary for storm spotters: http://www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/severewx/glossary.php Link to other NWS sites: http://www.weather.gov/organization.php National Climatic Data Center - Ashville, NC - http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov Midwestern Climatic Center - http://mcc.swsuiuc.edu Wisconsin State Climatology Office: http://www.aos.wisc.edu/~sco Wisconsin Storm Write-ups: <u>http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mkx/?n=documented\_storms</u> Sullivan Committee (oversees ham activities and receipt of ham reports at MKX) - http://www.sulcom.info Organized spotter groups - http://www.mke-skywam.org/ http://www.midwestsstrc.org







# Notes from the Director...

I want to take some time to update you on several projects ongoing at the Department of Public Safety. DPS/911 is moving forward with seven other counties to purchase a replacement 911 phone system for the communications centers in the region. We are all planning to utilize a single 911 phone system to maximize efficiency, redundancy, and some projected operational costs savings. The plan is for the communications connectivity between the participating counties to be completed by late summer and the phone system to be installed and operational by late fall. The regional project is funded by PEMA911 funding.

DPS has attained a professional service agreement with MCM Consulting to conduct a field user needs assessment for the design recommendation of our next County-level public safety radio system. A meeting to discuss communications needs and a detailed survey will be forthcoming.

The County of Lycoming has continued to utilize the SWIFT911 system for mass notification. Recently, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, we issued a SWIFT911 message to residents of Jersey Shore Borough concerning smoke detector installation teams operating in the Borough. Over 218 smoke detectors were installed during the May 2017 event. The issues encountered with the Tornado Watch message from the National Weather Service on May 1, 2017 have been reviewed. Future Tornado Watch statements from the NWS, forwarded by DPS/SWIFT911 to fixed/hard lined phones ,will not be the entire Watch message just a prompt that the NWS has issued a Tornado Watch for Lycoming County.

On a closing note, PLEASE ensure you forward copies of your certification or training certificates to the DPS Office. Many of these programs are available on-line for your convenience.

THANKS!

John

# VACANT EMC POSITIONS

In accordance with Title 35, all municipalities in the Commonwealth must have an Emergency Management Coordinator. Currently, the following do not. If you or anyone you know would be interested in this position, please contact the Lycoming County EMA office at 570-433-4461.

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# **Grilling Safety Tips**



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Every year dozens of people are injured and hundreds of fires are reported because of grilling accidents. With the growing popularity of outdoor cooking, the problem promises to get worse before it gets better.

The leading cause of injuries from gas grilling is leaking fuel line. Improperly connected hoses, cracked or broken hoses, misaligned venturi tubes can release unlit propane that can quickly build up and cause an explosion.

When it comes to out-of-control gas grill fires, identify the source of the fire. If the fire is in the grill itself then carefully turn the control knobs and let the fire die down. If the fire is under the grill and you can get to the fuel tank, turn off the

tank. This should kill the fire almost immediately. If it does not, or if you cannot get to the tank valve, get away from the grill and call 9-1-1.

Charcoal presents its own risk due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Burning charcoal produces a lot of this gas. There were over 20 deaths in the U.S. last year alone from carbon monoxide poisoning associated with charcoal grilling.

The leading cause of injury related to the use of lighter fluids, is attempting to relight charcoal. Pouring lighter fluid onto hot coals causes the fluid to quickly vaporize. These vapors become extremely flammable. Without a strong wind the explosive vapors will not dissipate and will wait around for you to light the match.

The Rules of Safe Grilling are as follows:

- 1. Location is everything. Grills need to be kept away from houses, fences, trees and anything else with a propensity for burning. This includes all around the grill as well as above. A good idea is to stand in front of your grill and imagine a large flare-up. Will the house survive? Will everything else? If the answer is "yes" then you have a good location.
- 2. Be prepared to fight a fire. Having close access to water or a fire extinguisher is a very good idea. Remember that water can cause grease fires to literally explode so if you need to put out a grease fire you need to be a safe distance from it. If you go with a fire extinguisher, make sure you know how to use it. When you do need to use it, you might not have time to read the instructions.
- 3. Keep flammable materials far away from your grill. Do not store lighter fluids in close proximity to your grill. If a can of lighter fluid gets too hot it can explode. Also, never add lighter fluid or any flammable liquid to a burning fire.
- 4. When lighting a gas grill, use the 10 to 5 rule. If the grill does not start within 10 seconds, turn off the gas, leave the lid open and give it 5 minutes before you try again. Propane gas can develop into a large cloud quickly.
- 5. Frequently check gas lines for leaks. Brushing soapy water over the hoses and connectors will show you any potential leaks. Make sure you go over every part of the gas line from the tank to the burner. If you find a leak, you need to replace the part before you grill again.
- 6. Make sure that the fire is out when you are done. With a gas grill, turn off the control valves and the tank valve. Make sure that any burning grease is put out and let the grill cool completely before you cover it. On a charcoal grill, replace the lid and close all vents. Let the charcoal burn out and wait about 48 hours before disposing of
- charcoal burn out and wait about 48 hours before disposing of ashes.7. Make sure that the person in charge of grilling has a clear
- head and is not distracted from his/her duties.

As always, remember that the greatest safety feature we humans have is common sense. Pay attention to what you are doing and if you have a bad feeling, run with it.

From: www.safeathome.com



# UPCOMING EMA CLASSES

Classes listed below with an (\*) are required for one or more of the certification levels for municipal Emergency Management Coordinators. Attendees <u>must</u> register on-line or through the County EMA office. Contact Kelle Robinson with any questions concerning these classes.

### \*G-235: EMERGENCY PLANNING COURSE

*Tuesday, September 26, 2017* 8:00 am - 4:00pm, Lycoming County EMA Office Wednesday, September 27, 2017 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Lycoming County EMA Office

### **G-393: HAZARD MITIGATION FOR EMERGENCY PLANNERS COURSE**

Monday, October 23, 2017 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Lycoming County EMA Office Tuesday, October 24, 2017 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Lycoming County EMA Office Wednesday, October 25, 2017 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Lycoming County EMA Office

#### Other Training Resources:

#### PEMA TRAINING CALENDAR:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt? open=512&objID=5051&&mode=2

#### PEMA (ON-LINE) TRAINING:

https://www.centrelearn.com/login\_pa.asp

#### FEMA (EMI) (ON-LINE) TRAINING: http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp





# **COUNTY SUSTAINS STORM DAMAGE**

The first week of May brought with it several storms which caused damage to many Lycoming County Communities. The first round of storms passed through the County on the evening of May 1st. In response to the storm, the Lycoming County Emergency Operations Center was opened with a partial activation to assist municipalities with any needs they had associated with the storms. There was wide spread tree damage, power outages, and some structural damage. Our own John Yingling, sustained tree damage on his property from the line of storms that



Tree damage on the property of DPS director, John Yingling.

passed through. The 9-1-1 Center answered over 950 calls that evening. The Department of Public Safety and our neighboring Pre-Release Center also lost power as a result of the storm. Thankfully, we have back-up power to continue operations for



Storm damage in Hughesville area on May 5th.

\_ the citizens of Lycoming County.

A second round of severe storms passed through the Eastern part of the County later that same week. On May 5th, another line of sever storms with damaging wind swept through Hughesville and surrounding areas. These storms took place during business hours so our staff was already on stand by when they hit. The damage from this storm was once again tree and power line damage.

County EMA staff toured some of

the affected areas to survey the damage following the storms. Some of the damage was devastating to home owners but unfortunately we were unable to reach the State level threshold to qualify for any assistance from FEMA.

Thank you to our EMA and 9-1-1 staff for the extra time they put into assisting the public with their needs associated with these storms. An additional thank you goes out to area Emergency Management Coordinators for their reports and assistance.

# **GETTING TO KNOW OUR EMCs**

For the next edition in the series of "Getting to Know Our EMCs", we will be featuring Mr. Chuck Whitford. Mr. Whitford is the Emergency Management Coordinator for Eldred Township. He was appointed as EMC in January of 1997.

Mr. Whitford has been a lifelong resident of Lycoming County. Chuck graduated from Williamsport Area High School and the Pennsylvania College of Technology. He holds a degree in Forestry. Along with his title as Township EMC, Chuck is also the Chief of the Eldred Township Volunteer Fire Company. He is a member of the Trout Run Volunteer Fire Company, an EMT for Loyalsock Volunteer Fire Company, and a member of the Masonic Lodge #755. Chuck enjoys giving back to his community and is proud to serve Eldred Township and the surrounding communities.

Chuck and his wife, Diane, have been married for 27 years. They are the proud parents of a daughter and a son. They also have two grandchildren.

Diane is also a member of the Eldred Township Volunteer Fire Company and is the current President of their Ladies Auxiliary.

During the flooding event the County experienced in October 2016, Chuck also had to handle a gas line break which impacted his community. He was host to Governor Wolf during the his tour of the damaged areas within the County. His fire house was the base for the companies involved in the gas line repair and clean up. During this incident, Chuck was a great asset to his community and the County.

Lycoming County EMA would like to thank Mr. Chuck Whitford for his many years of service within the county and his communities.







In an emergency, portable electric generators offer lifesaving benefits when outages affect your home or business. They can safely power important electrical equipment such as portable heating units, computers, water pumps, freezers, refrigerators and lighting. However, portable generator use can also be very hazardous. If you plan on using an emergency generator, it's essential that you take precautions for your safety and the safety of those working to restore power.

The most effective way to avoid portable generator mishaps is to make sure you fully understand the proper operating procedures. Read and follow the manufacturer's guidelines before operating or maintaining your generator – and don't forget to use common sense.

#### Follow these tips for safe portable generator use:

- Always read and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions before running generator
- Engines emit carbon monoxide. Never use a generator inside your home, garage, crawl space, or other enclosed areas. Fatal fumes can build up, that neither a fan nor open doors and windows can provide enough fresh air.
- Only use your generator outdoors, away from open windows, vents, or doors.
- Use a battery-powered carbon monoxide detector in the area you're running a generator.
- Gasoline and its vapors are extremely flammable. Allow the generator engine to cool at least 2 minutes before refueling and always use fresh gasoline. If you do not plan to use your generator in 30 days, don't forget to stabilize the gas with fuel stabilizer.
- Maintain your generator according to the manufacturer's maintenance schedule for peak performance and safety.
- Never operate the generator near combustible materials.
- If you have to use extension cords, be sure they are of the grounded type and are
  rated for the application. Coiled cords can get extremely hot; always uncoil cords
  and lay them in flat open locations.
- Never plug your generator directly into your home outlet. If you are connecting a
  generator into your home electrical system, have a qualified electrician install a
  Power Transfer Switch.
- Generators produce powerful voltage Never operate under wet conditions. Take
  precautions to protect your generator from exposure to rain and snow.

2017 QUARTERLY TRAINING				
larch 23	6:30 pm	Thursday	Holiday Inn	
une 28	7:00 pm	Wednesday	County EMA Office	
eptember 28	7:00 pm	Thursday	County EMA Office	
ecember 14	7:00 pm	Thursday	County EMA Office	
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### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

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Just a reminder, this newsletter is written for you, the emergency responder in Lycoming County. If there is something that you wish to see in the newsletter or you have a story that you would like to share, please let us know. We are always looking for ideas for upcoming newsletters!

### COUNTY EMA STAFF

Your County EMA staff is proud to serve you, and will always welcome your comments and suggestions to promote a better EMA community. Please contact us at any time.

**TELEPHONE:** 570-433-4461 (local) 570-329-4061 (local)

EMAIL: ema@lyco.org - for general department email

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