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# Are You Ready?

A Preparedness Newsletter for Residents of Montgomery County, MD

## Cleaning Up After Sandy

Now that Sandy has moved out of our region, Montgomery County residents and businesses will spend the next few days cleaning up. As we return to a state of normalcy, it's important to take precautions while the recovery continues.

- Inspect your home for damage. If you have any questions about possible structural damage, have your home inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer.
- Watch for flash flooding. Even though Sandy has left the area, streams and rivers may still overflow their banks several days after the storm.
- Be careful of any wires that are down. Do not try to remove tree limbs from power lines.
- Do not drive through standing water. It only takes a few inches of water for drivers to lose control of their vehicles.
- Never use a generator inside your home. Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can build up in your home and linger for hours after the generator is no longer running.

Check your emergency kit and restock any supplies that you used including water, non-perishable food, medication, and batteries.

For a complete list of items you should have in your emergency kit, visit the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security's [Make a Kit page](#).

## How to Stay Safe Online

For many of us, the internet and the tools we use to connect to it are vital parts of our lives. Just as we take precautions to protect our families and our homes, it's important to protect ourselves online.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has started a campaign called '*Stop. Think. Connect.*' to help individuals, families and businesses better understand how they can make their online usage safer.

Some tips include:

- Set strong passwords and change them regularly.
- Use privacy settings to limit the amount of personal information you have online.
- Be wary of online offers. As the saying goes - if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

To learn more about cyber-safety, [visit 'Stop. Think. Connect.'](#)

## Drop, Cover, and Hold

On October 18, 2012, Montgomery County OEMHS and more than one million people from Maryland to Georgia participated in the Great Southeast Shakeout. At 10:18 a.m., participants *dropped* to the ground, took *cover* under a sturdy desk or table, and *held on*.

These steps participants took during the drill are the same ones that everyone should take during an earthquake. When the shaking starts you should:

- **Drop** to the ground
- Take **Cover** under a sturdy desk or table
- **Hold on** until the shaking stops

If you're in bed when an earthquake starts, stay where you are and cover your head with a pillow until the shaking stops.

If you are outside when an earthquake happens, move to a clear area if you are able to do so. Avoid trees, power lines, buildings, and other overhead hazards.

Do not seek cover in a doorway. Modern home and building doorways will not provide you the protection that a solid table or desk will.

To learn how to react in other situations, the Earthquake Country Alliance has [a PDF](#) with great information or you can visit <http://www.dropcoverholdon.org>.

## November's Preparedness Tip

### Get vaccinated for the flu

Even though flu season peaks around January and February, it's not too early to get a flu vaccine. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends the vaccine for everyone six months of age and older.

The vaccine is available in two forms - a flu shot and a nasal spray. The shot is given by needle and is approved for use in healthy people over six months of age and those with chronic conditions.

The nasal spray is given with a mist through your nose. It is approved for healthy people between the ages of two - 49, except for pregnant women.

To determine which vaccine is best for you, check with your physician.

To use the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services vaccine finder and to learn more about the flu, [visit the Flu.gov vaccine page](#).

### About Montgomery County OEMHS

The Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

(OEMHS) coordinates disaster response activities, offers preparedness education for residents, develops and maintains response plans, coordinates exercises and mitigation activities, and runs the hazardous materials permitting program.

**Learn about Hazards and Preparedness**

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