

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ROUNDTABLE**  
**Regional Emergency Management Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00pm**  
**MARC Conference Room & Zoom**

**Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present: Kevin McAllister, Michael Spackman, Erik Boedtger, Rick Bates.

Staff Present: Malia Cordero, Allison Hopkins, Taiga Christie (VEM).

Others Present: Ray Stapleton, Sue Marchand-LeBrun, Jennifer Frank, Misha McNabb, Nate Fraser, David Young.

Action Item – Vote to Appoint Representative to Statewide Committees:

- a. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
  - M. Spackman motioned to appoint K. McAllister as the LEPC Representative. E. Boedtger seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.
- b. Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment/Stakeholder Preparedness Review (THIRA/SPR)
  - E. Boedtger motioned to appoint K. McAllister as the THIRA/SPR Representative. M. Spackman seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.
- c. Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)
  - M. Spackman motioned to appoint K. McAllister as the LEPC Representative. E. Boedtger seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

Roundtable Discussion with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) - Long Term Outage Scenario:

- Taiga Christie, the Southern Regional Coordinator at VEM, led a facilitated discussion focused on a long-term power outage scenario.
- The presentation slides are available online at <https://www.marcvt.org/regional-emergency-management-committee>.
- Upcoming CATEX: Binary Blizzard, Oct 2024 and 2025
  - Focus of the exercise will be on the southern part of VT
  - All towns in southern VT are encouraged to participate
  - To sign up, contact: [Julie.benedict@vermont.gov](mailto:Julie.benedict@vermont.gov)
  - CATEX's will be held every 3 years, alternating between the north and south of the state.
  - State will be exercising a scenario involving: Winter storm, power outage, & cyberattack
- Towns can work with MARC and Taiga to create plans and practice exercising them

## Module 1 – Initial Response

- Taiga asked the group what their first steps would be in responding to Day 0 the following scenario:
  - Severe winter storm coming up the coast shifts inland, aimed for VT
  - Heavy, wet snow begins to fall overnight
  - Majority of the southern region loses power
  - Residents were largely unwarned
  - Power, landlines, internet, and cell service are all impacted
- Group members shared priorities such as:
  - Communicating with the Mount Ascutney Hospital to check on fuel supply, generator capacity, and road access in and out of the hospital. The Hospital is equipped with emergency backup fuel and water for at least 72 hours. Levels are checked frequently, especially when an emergency event is anticipated.
  - Opening and staffing the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
  - Identifying who has lost power, and who has critical power needs (i.e. home oxygen, temperature-controlled medications).
  - Opening a warming shelter if needed.
  - Collecting data on which roads are closed
  - Identifying where hazards are and mapping out alternate routes
  - Getting life safety, transportation, and sheltering information out to residents
    - Some towns use VT Alert to notify residents.
- Ideas for communication with unreliable phone service:
  - Door-to-door/face-to-face outreach; during the July flooding event, volunteers drove around checking if lights were on, if residents needed anything, etc.
  - Some Town Halls equipped with generators; serve as public information center
  - Assign volunteer “Road Captains” for each area of roads that can distribute information out to residents.
  - Vermont Emergency Management can send out alerts that hit every land line and/or cell phone within a geographic area; Towns may need to contact VEM to send out a life safety or time sensitive notification – i.e. evacuation notice.
  - In advance, put together a list of residents at higher risk, i.e. residents with at-home health aides, residents that rely on meal deliveries.
    - See Vermont CARE (Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies):  
<https://e911.vermont.gov/care>
- Other Notes:
  - CARE info is kept confidential until there is an active event. EMDs can request their Town’s CARE list 72 hours prior to an anticipated event.
  - Interested EMDs can contact VEM (Taiga) to request access to deidentified CARE information such as # of people registered, # on Medicare/Medicaid needing equipment.

- Some residents seek shelter/electricity at the hospital but don't require medical staff attention - if Towns can inform residents of where local shelters are and if they will have power, this can reduce the demand and grid usage at the hospital.

#### Module 2 – Secondary Response

- Taiga asked the group what their next steps would be in responding on Day 3 of the scenario:
  - Total snowfall nearly 30" in some areas
  - Power has remained out, cell service is spotty and unreliable
  - Shelters consistently have 7-15 people
  - Regional shelter has opened in Springfield
- Towns would continue doing checks on residents and roads, particularly ensuring access to vulnerable residents.
- Taiga mentioned that in a recent snow event in Brattleboro, there were still people who hadn't been plowed out 3 days into the storm. There were 30 inches of heavy, wet snow and there were side roads that still needed clearing.
- Plows cannot get through if a power line is down
- Highway crews may run out of fuel within 24 hours if pumps are closed.
- How are Towns communicating with their Emergency Management team if power is still down?:
  - Radios
  - Through the EOC
  - Internal team activated in advance
- How are Towns communicating with the public if power is still down and cell phones are dying?
  - Designated physical posting locations
    - Need to be well-advertised in advance: newsletters, mailings, Town Meeting, etc.
  - Word of mouth
- Who is available to staff shelters by day 3?
  - Towns can reach out to community groups such as churches.
  - Local volunteers will be the quickest to respond. Towns can also contact the State Watch Floor to check on resources from: American Red Cross, Medical Reserve Corp, and National Guard. Resources may come at a cost to the Town.

#### Module 3 – Extended response, Day 7

- What State resources do Towns need at this point?
  - Restock shelter equipment & supplies
  - Road equipment/contractors (i.e. trucks, plows)
- What resources are there for pet owners?
  - Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society provides support in West Windsor.

- The Upper Valley Disaster Animal Response Team (UVDART) will stand up a pet shelter when the American Red Cross opens a shelter (in Hartford for this region). The UVDART shelter will take in pets and provide care for them while their owners seek their own shelter/assistance.
- In July, the Central VT DART group ran a pet shelter in Barre for almost 3 weeks. They received support from other DART teams and from outside organizations.
- Every town should have a pet sheltering plan. If a town local shelter cannot take in animals, they can go to a regional shelter, or contact the State to find support.

Next Steps:

- Interested towns can work with MARC and VEM to create an in-depth personalized tabletop exercise. Contact Malia at [mcordero@marcvt.org](mailto:mcordero@marcvt.org) for more information.

Next Discussion:

- Possible topics include pet sheltering, cybersecurity planning, and public outreach communications (i.e. mailings packet).