

10/8/20 Municipal & First Responder Call Notes

I. **Welcome and Introduction:** VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- This is the every-other-week call for first responders, EMDs, RPCs, and municipal officials. The next call will be on Thursday, October 22nd at 2PM. The invitation will go out on Monday, October 19th.
 - The meeting invitations include a link to a survey we use to guide our talking points. The survey will only capture one question per response. To ask multiple questions, fill out the survey multiple times. The survey link will not change week to week.
 - On today's call we will hear from DEPRIP Director Dan Batsie and Fire Academy Chief Peter Lynch. In addition, we have Capt. Mike Manley from the Vermont State Police available to answer questions. We will be providing you all an overview of the State's response to COVID-19 and we will have time for additional questions at the end of the call.
 - FAQs will be updated as needed and can be found at: <https://vem.vermont.gov/coronavirus>
 - From this site you can also click on the "[Call Notes](#)" section on the left-hand side where we will post notes from this call. It will be added to the list of First Responder Notes.
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II. **COVID-19 Overview/VDH Comments:** HOC Incident Commander and DEPRIP Director Dan Batsie

- Most new cases of COVID-19 in Vermont are related to outbreaks, as opposed to general community spread.
 - There are currently 17 outbreaks/clusters being tracked by the Department of Health: 4 associated with workplaces, 5 associated with healthcare facilities, 6 associated with schools/colleges/childcare, and 2 others.
 - There have not been the larger outbreaks many feared at schools – instead clusters of COVID-19 infections in Vermont schools have been small and well contained.
 - The largest outbreak right now is at an orchard in Addison County. There are 27 COVID-19 cases among workers who were not interacting with the general public, so risk of further spread is low. One person was hospitalized but since released. The Department of Health is working with community partners and the SEOC to ensure that the infected individuals and close contacts have their needs met while they quarantine.
- EMS updates
 - The [EMS tuition voucher](#) program is still active. Students enrolling in a Vermont-approved EMS course (EMR, EMT, AEMT, paramedic) before December 31 who are actively affiliated with a Vermont EMS agency are eligible for a tuition voucher. The paramedic vouchers are sponsoring training for 50 people, who will represent a sixth of Vermont's paramedic workforce. There is still funding available for other certification levels. Please advertise this program in your departments and your communities; there will never be a better time to pursue EMS education.
 - The Office of EMS is working with the Agency of Human Services on two upcoming grant programs. The EMS Stabilization Grant Program will providing funding to EMS agencies who had reduced call volume during the height of the pandemic, and a workforce stabilization grant will provide funding to individual providers in recognition of their efforts. More information on both grant programs will be available soon.
- Halloween guidance
 - Vermonters can likely still look forward to Halloween.
 - Important precautions include wearing a face mask (over your mouth and nose!), staying 6 feet apart, and keeping groups small. Like many things happening in the pandemic, trick-or-treating will look different — treats might be left outside on a table, for example.

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III. SEOC Overview/VEM Comments: VEM Director Erica Bornemann

- **SEOC status:** The SEOC remains activated every weekday from 0800 until 1600. On the weekends, the SEOC is in monitoring status, meaning the watch officer is the point of contact for any resource needs that arise. The SEOC is entirely virtual.
- **SEOC active missions that have been progressing this week:**
 - The Farmers-to-Families food box program, now run by the Vermont Foodbank, is back in action until the end of October. Starting this past Monday, food boxes are available at distribution sites throughout the state each weekday from 10am to 2pm.
 - Reservations are required to keep wait times to a minimum, at <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/food-help>.
 - Each recipient will be given 1 box with about 30 pounds of food, including fresh produce, dairy products, and meat.
 - On Monday, the state's [isolation and recovery site](#) moved from Harbor Place to Ho-Hum Motel, both in Chittenden County.
 - The isolation and recovery site is for those exposed to or infected with COVID-19 who need to quarantine but do not have a suitable home environment to do so. [Referrals to the site](#) are made by the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health, or a physician or health center.
 - Harbor Place transitioned back to a General Assistance Motel Voucher facility.
- We received a question on what advice to give local adult sport groups who don't feel a need to wear masks because they view their team as a "family pod."
 - ACCD guidance stresses that face coverings must be worn by all those participating in or attending sporting events, when physical distancing can't be maintained.
 - There are no exceptions to this policy, regardless of whether the team considers themselves a "family pod." (The term "family pod" generally refers to multiple families who agree to limit outside exposure to be able to drop precautions around each other.)
- The [Local Government Expense Reimbursement \(LGER\) grant](#) deadline was extended by the Department of Taxes to October 15th.
- FEMA Public Assistance applications covering expenses through September 14th are due to be submitted by October 31st, per a memo from the Vermont Agency of Administration (appended to the end of these notes).

IV. Vermont Fire Academy: Chief Peter Lynch

- It is currently fire prevention week, but with the ongoing pandemic, most events associated with this week can't happen (e.g., fire department open houses and school events). It is important to still get out the message of fire safety – this year's focus is kitchen fire safety. Kitchens are the most common place for fires to start.
- For more information, refer to the press release appended to the end of these notes.



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Susanne R. Young, Secretary

TO: FEMA Eligible Organizations
FROM: Bradley Ferland, Deputy Secretary of Administration
DATE: October 2, 2020
RE: DEADLINE of OCTOBER 31, 2020 for FEMA eligible expenses

The State of Vermont is allocating funds from the CARES Act, more specifically the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to reimburse state agencies, municipalities, and health care organizations for COVID-19 costs *which are not eligible for FEMA Public Assistance*. The CARES Act sets a deadline of Dec. 30, 2020 by which the State must allocate all CRF funding. Funds not expended by that date must be returned to the U.S. Treasury. To allocate all available CRF, including the FEMA-PA local 25% match, and avoid Duplication of Benefits, we will need to have visibility into which costs are being submitted and deemed eligible by FEMA.

Accordingly, we are setting a **DEADLINE of OCTOBER 31, 2020 for all FEMA-eligible organizations to submit FEMA Public Assistance grant applications covering expenses incurred between July 1, 2020 and September 14, 2020, inclusive. If you have not submitted FEMA-eligible expenses incurred before June 30, 2020, please also submit them before October 31, 2020.** For COVID-19, the process for submitting costs to FEMA is self-driven, through FEMA's online Grants Portal. Information about how to apply is available through the Vermont Emergency Management website at <https://vem.vermont.gov/applicant>. The incident period for COVID-19 is still open, therefore it is not too late to register as a FEMA Public Assistance applicant. We understand that COVID-19 costs are ongoing, and FEMA applicants may need to submit additional costs to FEMA at a later date. Nonetheless, costs through September 14th must be submitted by October 31st to allow the State to allocate CRF appropriately.

At this time, we have not set a deadline for expenses incurred on or after September 15, 2020 to be submitted for FEMA PA. However, we encourage you to submit those costs at your earliest convenience if you qualify for the following criteria issued by FEMA:

You are only eligible to apply for FEMA PA with expenses incurred on or after September 15th if you are performing one of the following emergency response activities:

- Medical Care
- Purchase and distribution of food
- Non-congregate medical sheltering



- Communications to disseminate public information regarding health and safety measures and provide warnings about risks and hazards
- Emergency Operations Centers response activities
- Mass casualty management, including storage of human remains and mass mortuary services
- PPE that is directly related to the performance of eligible emergency work (funding for stockpiling a supply of eligible PPE is limited to a supply that is projected for up to 60 days from date of purchase; funding for storing eligible PPE is limited to what is necessary to store a projected 60-day PPE supply; face masks that are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are not considered PPE)

Eligible Applicants for the **Local Government Expense Reimbursement (LGER) Grants** and the **Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program** are required to also apply to FEMA Public Assistance for FEMA-eligible expenses (typically PPE and staff overtime). If you plan to apply to one of these programs and have not already also applied to FEMA, you will be directed to do so.

Thank you for submitting eligible costs to FEMA. This will help the State of Vermont conserve and allocate our CRF appropriately. We appreciate that the FEMA process takes time and effort, and that everybody is stretched thin at this time. Members of the Vermont Emergency Management Public Assistance Team stand ready to support you with your FEMA applications as needed. If you need assistance with registering via the FEMA Grants Portal, contact VEM Public Assistance Officer Kim Canarecci at kim.canarecci@vermont.gov.



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Division of Fire Safety – Public Education Section

Fire Prevention Week™ October 2020

Fire Safety Officials reminds residents to:

“Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!”™

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic forcing most people to adjust their routines, it comes as no surprise that this year’s Fire Prevention Week (FPW) looks a bit different in many communities. Most of our tried-and-true approaches to communicating FPW and its messaging, events such as Fire Department Open Houses and school events won’t occur this year. Despite this year’s unique challenges, we still need to maximize the opportunity to promote this year’s theme, “Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!”.

According to NFPA, Cooking Fires are the leading cause of home fires in the United States and the second-leading cause of home fire deaths. With most people forced to stay home, the number of us cooking at home has also increased. Fire Departments across the country are anecdotally reporting an uptick in kitchen fire incidents. All this makes the campaign’s messages even more relevant and timely. The Vermont Fire and Life Safety community encourages all residents to embrace the 2020 Fire Prevention Week theme and share safety tips to keep everyone safe and to prevent the possibility of having a cooking fire.

While the pandemic has forced all of us to get creative and adopt a few innovative approaches, the Vermont Fire and Life Safety community has been working diligently this year to prepare for Fire Prevention Week. The Vermont Division of Fire Safety applauds them for their efforts, innovation and creativity to keep Fire and Life Safety Education happening throughout the year, providing programs that include all age levels, and including all circumstances that may occur, day or night.

To find out more about Fire Prevention programs and activities in your area, please contact your local Fire Department and for more general information about Fire Prevention Week and “Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!”, please visit www.fpw.org and www.firesafety.vermont.gov.

