

MRC SARASOTA NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 4

October - December 2011

The quarterly newsletter for MRC Volunteers & Community Partners

Staying Safe this Holiday Season

The end of the year is a time to relax, spend time with family and friends and review the past twelve months. The holiday season can be one of joy and togetherness, but it should also be one of safety: food, decorating, travel, shopping and personal safety can all be compromised during the holiday season. Read on for quick tips to keep you and yours safe.

Food Safety

For a safe holiday season, remember four words: Clean, Separate, Cook & Chill.

Clean your hands, wash all vegetables, and use clean utensils before cooking.

Separate: Remember to chop meat and vegetables on separate cutting boards. Avoid using a utensil to chop different items unless it's been washed first.

Cook: Be sure to use a meat thermometer to test the temperature of the meat. Turkey, stuffing & leftovers should be cooked to 165 degrees. Beef, veal and lamb should be cooked to 145, and ham, pork and eggs should be cooked to 160.

Chill: Refrigerate food within two hours of serving. Store-bought pumpkin pie should always be refrigerated. Never thaw meat on the counter. Instead, use one of the



methods in the Turkey Defrosting" box on the next page.

For the holidays, you'll probably cook items like turkey or roasts for an extended period of time – be sure to set timers and avoid oven fires (and burnt food).

Holiday Decorating Safety

In Florida, we need a bit of festive decoration to make the holidays feel like winter. Decorate away, but keep the following in mind as you do:

Keep your tree fresh. Dry trees are major fire hazards. If you have a tree, choose a fresh one. Fresh trees are green, do not easily lose needles, and has a trunk that is sticky with resin.

When decorating with lights, be sure to use them where appropriate: indoor or outdoor. Be sure to use no more than three standard-size light strings on one extension cord.

Holiday Travel Safety

In 2010, 25% of all Americans traveled more than 50 miles from home over the holiday season. If you are one of the

What's New

- ◆ Eblasts will now be sent out twice monthly
- ◆ Please update your contact information in ServFl by the end of the year
- ◆ Finish your credentials in 2011!

In This Issue

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Do Your Receive Our E-newsletters?

Sign up below to have our two monthly e-newsletters delivered to your inbox:

<http://eepurl.com/fut4U>



Staying Safe this Holiday Season

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Americans hitting the road, take care to prepare for the trip. Read on for the two top holiday safety tips:

1. Take the car in for a checkup. You don't want to have costly repair bills in an unfamiliar situation. To prevent this, take the car in for a checkup before leaving on vacation.
2. Create a car safety kit. While you are not likely to get stuck in a snowstorm around here, there are plenty of traffic jams. Your car safety kit should include a blanket, flashlight, non-perishable foods and bottled water.

Online Shopping Safety

With online ordering, it's easier than ever to shop for the holidays. Unfortunately, that also means that it's easier than ever to fall prey to online scams! The top three tips for avoiding online scams are:

1. Beware of phishing. Many scammers will send emails claiming to be from legitimate businesses and ask for financial information. If you receive an email like this, it is best to call the businesses customer support number to confirm the email is really from who it says it is from.



2. Confirm your credit card information is safe by looking at the website url. On secure sites, the url will begin with https, not simply http. The 's' at the end stands for Secure.
3. Pay with a credit card. It is safest to pay with a credit, not debit, card because federal law allows buyers to dispute charges.

Personal Safety

Amongst the hustle of the holiday season, it is easy to become so busy that you slip on your personal safety. The top two tips for holiday personal safety are:

Defrost a Turkey Safely:

1. In the fridge: 24 hours for each 3 – 4 lbs of turkey.
2. In cold water: Submerge in a deep pan for 30 minutes for every pound. Change water every 30 minutes.
3. In the microwave: per your microwave's instructions.

1. Be aware – when shopping, don't allow yourself to be so bogged down with gifts that you are an easy mark for thieves and pickpockets.

2. Many children want to write a letter to Santa – and now they can do it online! However, be sure that the website your child uses to write a letter does not collect personal information. A first name and email address should be enough – after all, Santa already knows where your child lives.

Practicing these safety tips will ensure that you can spend your holiday season safe with your loved ones.

Thank You MRC Volunteers!

The holidays are a season of gratitude—and MRC Sarasota is thankful to have wonderful volunteers. Many thanks for everything you do.

From July through October, MRC Volunteers were activated for five activities: the Summer Venice Wellness Fair, the First Stop Citgo Customer Appreciation Health Fair, the K-Mart Safety Fair, PSN Registry Data Entry, and a Drive-Thru Flu Clinic at Tabernacle Church.

A special thanks goes out to James Deckert, Jane DeMauro, Abdelsalam Elshaikh, Mary Jane Hamilton, Heidi Heine, Caryl Magnus, Symphony O'Keefe, Joyce Payne, Sharon Wetzler, and Susan Wood for volunteering at one or more recent MRC events.



Spotlight: MRC News & Notes

Are you checking the MRC News & Notes feed for new content weekly? Below, find spotlights on the most popular posts—visit News & Notes to read more.

Disaster Hits: Where to Call?

“Being without power can be unavoidable, but the uncertainty around the situation makes it worse. No matter where a disaster hits, those affected want to know when the power will be back, if the roads are safe to drive, and how they can get the assistance they need.”

NOAA’s Extreme Weather Information Sheet for Southwest Florida has emergency phone numbers for state, county and local offices and radio stations.

Interview: EOC Chief Ed McCrane



“Just about anything that can go wrong, we have to be prepared to get the right players in action to deal with it...”

Emergency Operations Chief Ed McCrane discusses the County’s disaster planning, Social Media Outreach, and his military emergency management background.

Partnerships: Sarasota COAD

“It is so important to be aware of the other players in disaster response and try to do the best to avoid duplication of services, while staying open to the possibility of partnership in an effort to get the job done...”

How the Sarasota Community Organizations Active in Disaster partners with MRC and other groups to prepare for a disaster.

Text First. Talk Second.

“Eight simple numbers can become a comforting conversation: 7865 (RUOK) and 4665 (IMOK)...”

The National Text First. Talk Second Campaign encourages Americans to use bandwidth-saving text messages after disasters.

Strategic Planning Session Report

On Thursday, October 27th, MRC Volunteers participated in a Strategic Planning Session. At the session, the group formalized three actions that MRC Sarasota had been moving towards:

Volunteers have been increasingly interested in participating in non-emergency activities. At the session, the group detailed future MRC activities to include health education, health screenings and first aid stations at community events.

In keeping with the inclusion of non-emergency activities, the MRC mission will be revised to include a focus on overall community health and wellness. A final revised mission is forthcoming.

Lastly, the group tackled training topics. Potential new topics are: CERT, Decon training, Behavioral Health training, advanced First Aid training & more!

The group will continue to meet to develop a strategic plan. If you would like to join them, contact Tammi. Keep up on the strategic planning committee’s activities on MRC News & Notes and in future editions of the newsletter!

Thank you to Caryl Magnus, Tina Steele, Mary Jane Hamilton and Debbie Herrygers for participating in the first planning session.

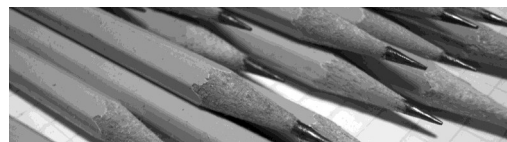
Get Credentialed in 2011!

There is still time to complete your MRC training by the end of this year! The Medical Reserve Corps of Sarasota County welcomes practicing and retired physicians, nurses and other medical professionals with an active license.

As an MRC Volunteer, You Will:

Be part of a dedicated public health & emergency response team • **Receive** professional liability insurance protection • **Volunteer** according to your schedule

Contribute to MRC News & Notes!



Would you like to write a short guest post for MRC News & Notes? Your post can be on why you chose to volunteer, a volunteer experience, something you have learned in MRC training, or on an aspect of emergency preparedness. Contact Tammi to guest post.



OF SARASOTA COUNTY



When disaster strikes... we will be there.

September Volunteer Dinner & October Drive-Thru Flu Clinic

Thanks to all the MRC Volunteers that attended these successful events— both events were learning opportunities. A few snapshots of each are below.



About the Sarasota County MRC

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Sarasota County began in 2005 in an effort to expand local response capacity to a major public health threat or local disaster. MRC Sarasota volunteers serve alongside staff from the health department, Red Cross and other community agencies and may serve in shelters during hurricanes, give medications during serious outbreaks, work aboard our mobile medical unit "Health In Motion" for health screenings, or participate in health fairs.

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We're actively recruiting!

Become a member of the Sarasota MRC! By completing a few training courses, medical and non-medical professionals become credentialed to serve our community in a disaster. For more information, visit www.mrcsarasota.com.