



**BARNSTABLE COUNTY
REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING
COMMITTEE**
SUPERIOR COURT HOUSE
POST OFFICE BOX 427
BARNSTABLE, MA 02630

Phone: (508) 375-6618
FAX: (508) 362-2603
Email: bcrepc@barnstablecounty.org

PRESS RELEASE / PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 20, 2009

**CAPE SAFETY AGENCIES INVITE PUBLIC TO JUNE 27
EXERCISE SHOWING NEW SHELTERING CAPACITY**

DATE/TIME: Saturday, June 27, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School, 210 Station Avenue,
South Yarmouth

CONTACT: Dave Myers, BCREPC Media-Communications Rep
508-487-2619 (office) / 774-216-9210 (cell) / dave@womr.org

On June 27, a number of Cape Cod safety agencies will join together in an exercise that will demonstrate to the public an integrated, well-resourced system for sheltering Cape residents and visitors during major emergencies.

This regional sheltering exercise will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School (210 Station Ave, South Yarmouth), one of six regional shelters Cape-wide which can be opened during emergencies.

The exercise is intended to showcase the benefits of regionalization, whereby the activities of multiple safety agencies are coordinated for optimal efficiency, timely response, and a high level of public safety.

Resources for the operation and support of the shelter are provided by a number of agencies and groups, including the following:

- Volunteers from the American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter will operate the shelter and provide mass care feeding for those in need in the event of a disaster.
- The police and fire departments of Dennis and Yarmouth will provide safety and logistical support.
- Cape Cod Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) will provide basic medical care to those in need during sheltering.

- Cape Cod Disaster Animal Response Team (CCDART) will provide shelter and support for owners in the care of their pets at the site. This service is currently available only at the Dennis-Yarmouth, Harwich Tech and Sandwich shelters, but plans call for expanding those services to all six of the regional shelters.
- The Barnstable County Regional Emergency Planning Committee (BCREPC), which works year-round to coordinate a regional, integrated, inter-agency response to emergencies on the Cape. The Incident Management Team (IMT), drawn from members of the BCREPC, is responsible for managing the regional sheltering plan.
- First Student Bus will provide bus transportation between the shelter and various locations in Dennis and Yarmouth. BCREPC is working on arrangements with Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA) for a comprehensive transportation system to and from the regional shelters for the future.
- Volunteers from the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), working under the Yarmouth Fire Department and the Barnstable County Sheriff's Department, will staff a variety of positions at the site.
- Members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) will operate a communications system linking all of the elements of the operation in an integrated communications plan.
- The Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled (CORD) will assist people with disabilities in the sheltering process.

The exercise is designed to show the public the benefits of a regionally coordinated emergency response system, which include:

- **Capacity.** The combined capacity of the six regional shelters is 3,000 people, and the sheltering facility at the Massachusetts Military Reservation can house another 3,000 people, making a total capacity of 6,000 people.
- **Quality of mass care.** With the cooperation of a variety of private, local and county sources, the Red Cross will be equipped with ample food, water, supplies, and supporting resources to provide quality care to all potential users of the shelters.
- **Medical care.** The Cape Cod MRC 's team of volunteer medical personnel will be available to address general and special medical needs on the site during emergencies.
- **Shelter for pets.** Previously a factor that has delayed people from going to shelters during past emergencies, the Dennis-Yarmouth facility will include a section operated by CCDART, providing shelter and supporting owners in the care of their pets at the site.

- **Transportation.** Those in need will be transported to shelters in a safe, efficient and timely manner by First Student buses.
- **Coordinated safety, logistics, and communications.** Local police and fire departments, the Massachusetts National Guard, and ARES, in cooperation with other safety agencies, will work together to support the sheltering operations, ensure the public's safety, and facilitate essential communications.

The regional sheltering system is designed to complement local, town management of emergency resources. Local and community shelters can open at any time. In an emergency, each town's Emergency Management Director makes decisions independently on deploying emergency resources, in coordination with regional authorities.

Over the last several years, the BCREPC has performed a comprehensive review of best practices in sheltering – both regionally and nationwide. This review has revealed that regional shelters are easier and more efficient to manage in a major disaster.

A number of officials who are key to the planning and implementation of sheltering on the Cape will participate in the June 27 event, and will be available during a special briefing for the media. This briefing will be held at 10:00 am, in a specially designated space.

“We want this exercise to give the public a look at how they will be served during emergencies,” said BCREPC Media-Communications Rep Dave Myers. “While we hope that we never have to open a shelter, we know that major weather events and other disasters do occur on the Cape. By working cooperatively, we can provide the best, most efficient, and safest care for the largest number of people.”

All members of the public and media who care about the safety and welfare of Cape residents and visitors, those with special medical care, and pets, during times of emergency are strongly encouraged to attend this event. It will provide a unique, up-close view of how our local and regional agencies are working together to provide the highest possible quality of service for all who are in need.

For more information, or to schedule an interview, members of the media can contact BCRPEC's Dave Myers at 508-487-2619 (office), 774-216-9210 (cell), or via email at dave@womr.org.

###