



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
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Gov. John H. Lynch, Dr. Jose Montero, Director of Public Health Services, and Christopher M. Pope, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, answer questions from reporters during a news briefing on the H1N1 flu outbreak in New Hampshire.

N.H. Department of Safety photo

JURY STILL OUT ON H1N1 FLU EFFECTS – For nearly two weeks in late April and early May, public health and emergency management officials in New Hampshire and around the country worked intensely to determine the severity of the outbreak of H1N1 flu. The outbreak, which started in Mexico, spread quickly to the United States and around the world. The World Health Organization increased its pandemic watch to five on a scale of six, where it remains. The news media gave the story extensive coverage, with stories on the spread of the disease to new states and victims. But despite the initial concern, the disease has been relatively mild. Most victims have not needed to be

hospitalized. The few who died had other medical problems that made them particularly vulnerable.

As of the end of May, New Hampshire had 31 confirmed H1N1 cases and no deaths. State and federal public health labs had tested 921 samples from people in New Hampshire. Of those, 872 cases tested negative for any sort of flu and another 22 tested positive for seasonal flu. Nationally, there were 6,764 confirmed cases of H1N1 in 48 states and 12 fatalities in six states. While the outbreak is not as severe as it initially appeared, what will happen next with H1N1 is an open question. It could return with greater effect in the fall or it could mutate into yet another flu strain. Public health officials in New Hampshire and around the world will be monitoring its status. For more information, go to the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or to the New Hampshire H1N1 website at http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/swineflu.htm.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE SET – The fifth annual Emergency Management Conference, this year titled Looking Back Moving Forward, is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester. The all-day event will feature the presentation of the 2009 Stovepipe Award, to the emergency manager who has done the most to break down barriers between response organizations. The keynote address will be by James S. Blumenstock, Chief Program Officer, Public Health Practice at the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Breakout sessions will include workshops on communications, working with volunteers, evacuation planning, the FBI Weapons of Mass Destruction Program and Model Practices Identified in the 2008 Disasters. There is no charge for the conference, but registration is required. The deadline is June 15. Go to www.N.H.TRAIN.org to register and download a conference brochure.

The conference is sponsored by the state departments of Health and Human Services and Safety, Volunteer NH!, N.H. Health Officers Association, N.H. Public Health Network, N.H. Hospital Association and the Community Health Institute.

SUMMER WEATHER BRINGS LIGHTNING DANGER – One of the most under-reported natural hazards is lightning strikes. Unlike hurricanes or floods, which claim multiple victims and cause widespread damage, lightning generally picks off its victims one at a time. According to John Jensenius, chief warning meteorologist at the Gray, Maine, National Weather Service Office, lightning killed 28 people in 19 states in 2008. That's actually down from 45 in 2007 and the average of 62 deaths per year, but the 2008 total may not be complete because there is no central reporting of lightning fatalities. In 2008 there were three lightning deaths in New England: two in Maine and one in Rhode Island. Most lightning fatalities occur in July because of increased outdoor activities and violent summer storms. In addition to fatalities, people struck by lightning can suffer severe neurological damage.

Anyone who can hear thunder is close enough to be struck by lightning. For more lightning safety information, go to: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

FEMA ICE STORM AID TO N.H. NEARS \$15 MILLION - Five months after December's ice storm pummeled the region, nearly \$15 million in federal aid has been obligated to help New Hampshire communities recover from last season's devastating storm. Following the presidential disaster declaration on Jan 2, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the New Hampshire Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) began a joint recovery effort. Through FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program, federal funding is provided to local governments and municipalities for the repair, replacement, or restoration of public facilities, as well as costs incurred for disaster cleanup or emergency actions taken to protect lives or property.

The federal share of eligible recovery costs is 75 percent. The PA Program is only activated following a presidential disaster declaration and provides grant assistance to applicants including state agencies, local governments, and certain non-profit organizations.

DEADLINE FOR SBA LOAN APPLICATIONS APPROACHES – Eligible non-profit organizations have until June 5 to apply for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration for economic injury caused by severe storms and flooding that occurred July 24 and Aug. 14 of last year. Non-profit organizations in eight New Hampshire counties are eligible: Belknap, Carroll, Coös, Grafton, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford and Sullivan. Eligible organizations are those that provide non-critical services such as food kitchens, homeless shelters, museums, libraries, community centers, schools and colleges. Applications can be downloaded from www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance.

HURRICANE SEASON BEGINS – The 2009 Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1 and hurricane forecasters are predicting a near-normal season. But the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center says global weather patterns are creating greater uncertainty for the 2009 hurricane season outlook than in recent years. The center is predicting a 70 percent chance of having nine to 14 named storms in the Atlantic Basin, of which four to seven could become hurricanes, including one to three major hurricanes of Category 3 or higher. The Atlantic hurricane season lasts until Nov. 30. Mid-August through September is the period when hurricanes are most likely to strike New England.

NESEC DIRECTORS, PIOS AND GEOLOGISTS MEET – Directors of the Northeast States Emergency Consortium, emergency management public information officers and state geologists met in Windsor Locks, Conn., May 19-21 to discuss a variety of regional issues. On the directors' agenda were regional haz-mat collaboration, coordination between state emergency management and public health agencies, particularly with regard to H1N1 flu, and lessons learned from the December 2008 ice storm. Public information officers discussed regional cooperation on emergency message themes and the use of social media for emergency public information. The state geologists exchanged information regarding hazard prediction and mitigation programs and studies being conducted by their state geological surveys.