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For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

The InfoGram

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Critical Need for Blood Donations After Storms

The American Red Cross (ARC) reports an [emergency need for blood donations after the massive winter storm](#) that swept across the eastern part of the country last week worsened an already-low supply. Winter weather the beginning of January forced over 300 blood drive cancelations, the result being an estimated 9,500 donations going uncollected. This most recent storm forced the cancelation of even more.

Tornadoes and even [mass shootings](#) bring donors out in droves in an effort to help the community recover. The September 11th attacks brought twice the average number of donations in a week, prompting the Red Cross to [freeze the supply](#) to prevent waste. But shortage problems like the current one are more common and hit from two directions – while some events are canceled, those that are still being held have low turnout because people are unwilling or unable to trek out in the cold and snow.

You can help lessen the shortage even if you are not in the area affected:

- Donate blood – [find a scheduled blood drive](#) on the ARC website;
- Host a blood drive – [learn how to host a successful drive and schedule it with the ARC](#);
- Host a competition – what group will donate the most in your community? It can be between [schools](#), [civic groups](#), or [first responder agencies](#). Be sure to publicize it and make it fun.

Having such a low blood supply affects hospital scheduling and forces hospitals to only use it for trauma cases. While blood can be moved around the country to areas in need, such a critically-low supply can threaten lives if a mass casualty incident were to happen. Ensuring a consistent blood supply regionally is something worth working toward.

(Source: [ARC](#))

Zika Virus Outbreak

This week, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that the mosquito-borne virus [Zika is “spreading explosively” and is likely to be in all countries in the Americas except Canada and Chile](#). The symptoms are mild and similar to the flu; however, in Brazil the virus is being linked to brain deformities in thousands of infants whose mothers were infected with Zika while pregnant. Also, the Olympic Games set in Rio de Janeiro this summer makes the sudden spread of the virus even more concerning.

The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.

[Spread of Zika into mainland United States is unlikely](#) due to climate and other variables in our favor, but travelers returning home from more tropical locations may be infected and “import” the virus to their region temporarily. The tropical regions and territories of the United States are at risk for spread of the virus. Healthcare providers, especially obstetrical staff, should be aware of [Zika’s symptoms](#) and make inquiries to patients about recent travel.

Zika has no vaccine and there does not appear to be one coming soon. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), WHO, and [Pan American Health Organization](#) have more information including specific information for medical professional, public health labs, and pregnant women; travel advisories; and maps of affected areas.

(Source: [CDC](#))

Snow-Covered Hydrants Delay Fire Response

With the near-record winter storm past and parts of the east coast still digging out, fire departments are reminded to scout out fire hydrant locations in their communities and make sure they are accessible.

Responding to a fire during or after a heavy snow is hard enough, but getting to a residence and then having to take the time uncovering – or even finding – a hydrant can mean the difference between a salvageable structure and a total loss. In at least one case this week, [residents who shoveled out a hydrant ultimately saved their own home](#) from a potentially devastating fire the very next day. Firefighters would have wasted valuable minutes on the scene trying to clear access, during which time the fire could easily have doubled or tripled in size.

Homeowners in some locations are required by code or law to clear them, but many don’t have such laws. Some communities, like [Harrisonburg, Virginia](#), have [Adopt A Hydrant](#) programs, or civic groups will take the task on as a community service project. These community efforts are worth exploring if there is currently no organized way to account for hydrant clearing in your community.

(Source: [Adopt A Hydrant](#))

Wildfire Community Preparedness Day Set for May

The 2016 [National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day](#), sponsored by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) and State Farm, is scheduled for Saturday, May 7th. State Farm is again providing grant funding to support neighborhood projects to reduce community wildfire risk.

Of all the projects submitted for funding, 125 will receive \$500 to cover the grass-roots project expenses. Organizers interested in working toward this goal can browse project ideas and see detailed rules and guidelines, and once the project details are finalized, organizers can place them on the website’s nationwide map. Project organizers must apply by Sunday, February 28th to be considered.

[With more than 10 million acres burned, 2015 was the worst wildfire year in history.](#) NFPA hopes this annual event will grow, as there is a need for better community involvement in wildfire risk reduction. This is a great opportunity for communities in the Wildland Urban Interface to begin new projects or expand on projects already completed. It is also a chance for a variety of community organizations to band together for a common goal with lasting benefits.

(Source: [WildfirePrepDay.org](#))

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For information specifically affecting the private sector critical infrastructure contact the **National Infrastructure Coordinating Center** by phone at 202-282-9201, or by email at nicc@dhs.gov.