



the SIREN UPDATE

A New Web Site for Ohio Disaster Volunteers

The Ohio Emergency Management Agency (Ohio EMA) and the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Office of Health Preparedness have announced a new Web site, <http://ohioresponds.gov>, to support the coordinated volunteer programs



that make Ohio communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation. Ohio Responds maintains a pool of volunteers who can be quickly and efficiently mobilized to respond in the event of an emergency. Activities change with each disaster, and can vary from sandbagging to answering telephones to providing medical assistance.

ODH is the coordinating agency for Ohio Medical Reserve Corps. Ohio EMA coordinates the remainder of the Ohio Citizen Corps programs which include: Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Fire Corps, Volunteers in Police Corps Services (VIPS), and USA on Watch/Neighborhood Watch.

This network empowers the "first responders" to focus on saving lives during an emergency, and allows volunteers to quickly mobilize and focus on critical support tasks such as debris removal, staffing shelters or providing critical medical support for disaster victims. As community service continues to grow, Ohio Responds will support volunteering through a variety of programming to meet the needs of the individual, community and state.

Ohioans who wish to volunteer with an Ohio Citizen Corps program found on Ohio Responds can register through the new Web site, <http://ohioresponds.gov>. This site will continue to serve existing Ohio Citizen Corps volunteers, unit leaders and points of contact.

FCC Launches New Web Page Dedicated to Narrowbanding

The Federal Communications Commission's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has launched a new Web page dedicated to providing information and assistance to licensees migrating their land mobile radio systems from 25 kHz to 12.5 kHz or narrower channel bandwidth.

This is in compliance with the Jan., 1, 2013 narrowbanding deadline for VHF/UHF public safety and commercial licensees in the 150-174 MHz and 421-512 MHz bands.

Migration of these systems to narrowband operation will ultimately help reduce spectrum congestion, improve communications, and increase access to the spectrum for users of the 150-174 MHz and 421-512 MHz bands.

The new Web page, www.fcc.gov/narrowbanding, will supplement the Bureau's ongoing outreach and educational efforts to increase the awareness of state and local public safety officials, lawmakers and policymakers of the benefits of narrowbanding and the importance of meeting the 2013 narrowbanding deadline.

For additional information about the 2013 narrowbanding compliance deadline, please contact Roberto Mussenden, Policy Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, at 202-418-1428 or via email: roberto.mussenden@fcc.gov.

RPAB News

The Division of EMS would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest additions to the Regional Physician Advisory Boards (RPAB);

Tracy Sawyer-Nash, M.D. – RPAB Region I

Dr. Sawyer-Nash has served as Chief of Emergency Medicine with Brown County (OH) General Hospital since 2009 and currently serves as medical director for seven EMS agencies in Brown County. Dr. Sawyer-Nash completed medical school at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine and an emergency medicine residency at Albany Medical Center and was previously certified as an EMT in Kentucky.

Eric Ferguson, M.D. – RPAB Region IV

Dr. Ferguson served as an attending surgeon with the Toledo (OH) Hospital since 2006. He completed medical school at the Medical College of Wisconsin and a surgery residency at the University of Florida College of Medicine. Dr. Ferguson has been certified in surgery by the American Board of Surgery since 2006.

The Division of EMS also welcomes the return of eight members to the RPAB;

Phillip Oblinger, M.D. – RPAB Region I

Hamilton Lempert, M.D. – RPAB Region I

William (Randy) Marriott, M.D. – RPAB Region II

William Tucker, M.D. – RPAB Region III

Michael Humphrey, M.D. – RPAB Region III

David Lindstrom, M.D. – RPAB Region IV

Eric Schmidt, M.D. – RPAB Region IV

R. Esther Lutes, M.D. – RPAB Region VIII

CMS Implements Clarification on Air and Ground Ambulance Reimbursement

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued instructions describing special payment limitations for air ambulance services which became effective Jan. 1, 2011.

Section 10.4.6, Special Payment Limitations, of the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual states that: "If a determination is made to order transport by air ambulance, but ground ambulance service would have sufficed, payment for the air ambulance service is based on the amount payable for ground transport. If the air transport was medically appropriate (that is, ground transportation was contraindicated, and the beneficiary required air transport to a hospital), but the beneficiary could have been treated at a nearer hospital than the one to which they were transported, the air transport payment is limited to the rate for the distance from the point of pickup to that nearer hospital."

The official instruction, CR 7161, regarding this change may be viewed on the CMS Web site at www.cms.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R133BP.pdf.

NIOSH Publication Focuses on Healthcare Workplace Injuries

EMS managers may find that a new publication from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) geared for hospitals is very relevant to EMS work environments.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the incidence rate of lost-workday injuries from slips, trips, and falls on the same level in hospitals was 90 percent greater than the average rate for all other private industries combined. Slips, trips, and falls as a whole are the second most common cause of lost-workday injuries in hospitals.

This guide provides excellent tips and checklists for assessing and preventing workplace injuries. The guide can be downloaded from www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-123/pdfs/2011-123.pdf.