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State Emergency Response Officials: Community Risk Reduction Can Help Communities Be Prepared for and Respond to Emergencies

Harrisburg, PA – State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego, alongside Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Director, Randy Padfield and officials from West Hanover Township Fire Department are encouraging local leaders, first responders, businesses and residents to learn more about the concept of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) by participating in the inaugural CRR Week being held from Jan. 20 - 26.

“The concept of Community Risk Reduction is fairly new, and I often hear people question what exactly it means,” Trego said. “First and foremost, we want individuals to be able to understand how to identify and prioritize local risks, and then be able to develop a plan to mitigate the highest priority risks that affect them.”

CRR Week is a grassroots effort to focus on the five “E’s” of risk reduction: education, engineering, enforcement, economic incentive, and emergency response.

“CRR Week is another tool for emergency responders to educate the public on the importance of personal preparedness,” Padfield said. “Being prepared and knowing ahead of time how to react to an emergent situation are critical to ensuring your safety and that of your loved ones.”

According to Padfield, one the simplest first steps to be prepared is to have a basic emergency plan that everyone in the family knows. This plan should include ways to get into contact with one another, and how to meet if separated. Consider having designated meeting places nearby as well as a neighboring town. Social media is a great resource for communicating, if telephones are not working.

Padfield added that families should also have a basic emergency kit, with enough supplies to support your loved ones for at least 3 days.

- One gallon of water per person per day;
- Non-perishable food and a manual can opener;
- Vital medical supplies, hearing aid batteries or other medical equipment and mobility devices you may need;
- Specialized items such as baby supplies and pet care products;
- First aid kit;
- Hand-crank or battery-operated flashlights and radio;
- Car cell phone chargers or battery packs;
- Special toys or supplies to keep children and pets occupied and busy.

“Local fire departments can do more for their communities than just respond to emergency calls,” said Deputy Fire Chief Matthew Kuntz of West Hanover Township Fire

Company. “Already, many departments are playing important community outreach and education roles. We are here to help.”

Additional resources, including emergency plan templates and emergency kit checklists, are available online www.Ready.PA.gov. To learn more about CRR Week, visit www.CRRWeek.org. For additional information on fire safety, including seasonal fire safety tips, visit www.BeFireSafePA.com.

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