

If disaster strikes...
Town of Pittsford's emergency team stands at the ready

Following the tragic events in Japan, I was contacted by several residents inquiring about whether or not the Town of Pittsford has emergency plans in place should disaster strike. It is important that our residents feel secure and are confident that their government can keep them safe during times of instability. I want residents to be assured that, as your supervisor, I have put much consideration into this topic and have assembled local experts on emergency preparedness to help me make sure that the Town is as prepared as possible for the unexpected.

In an emergency, communication between government agencies, emergency personnel and residents is a key component to a successful outcome. For this reason, more than a decade ago, I initiated quarterly meetings of a local Emergency Services Team. This Emergency Services Team (EST) includes representatives from the Town of Pittsford, the Village of Pittsford, Pittsford Central School District, the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, Pittsford Ambulance, and the Pittsford, Brighton and East Rochester Fire Districts. The EST's objective is to maintain communication, cooperation and coordination to provide the highest quality of emergency services to our community.

Our Emergency Services Team has incorporated the federal government's National Incident Management System in its planning efforts. NIMS, developed by the federal government after the events of September 11, provides a systematic, proactive approach to guide departments and agencies at all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work seamlessly to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents. In short, NIMS provides the framework which helps localities plan and prepare for all varieties of disasters. To meet the mandates for NIMS, our local team periodically conducts drill exercises to maintain our local Emergency Preparedness Plan. In fact, a practice scenario has been scheduled for our team in April.

Pittsford's team has conducted extensive risk assessments of our area to ensure that the plans we have in place are suitable for the emergencies that may impact our community (e.g. disease outbreaks, natural disasters, terrorist attacks). The scale of the emergency dictates which municipal body takes chief responsibility for coordinating the emergency plan. If the disaster were countywide, then the town would coordinate with the Monroe County Emergency Operations Center. If the emergency were contained solely to the Pittsford community, we would coordinate emergency operations. All levels of government work closely together to ensure residents have the highest level of protection.

I feel quite certain that the Town of Pittsford is as prepared for a crisis situation as a municipality can be. If you have any questions about these processes or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at bcarpenter@townofpittsford.org or stop in and visit me at Town Hall.