Public Safety

Keeping citizens safe is of the utmost importance to the Town of Christiansburg. Preparation for emergencies as well as manmade and natural disasters requires coordination between local government departments and cooperation with localities and regional organizations.

Primary Public Safety Goal

Provide residents with superior, reliable public safety services, facilities, and equipment.

Communications

In 2011, the Town joined the New River Valley Emergency Communications Regional Authority, which is a cooperative effort of the Towns of Christiansburg and Blacksburg, Montgomery County, and Virginia Tech for merged E-911 dispatch services. The dispatch center is planned to be fully operational in 2015 with approximately 45 staff members. It will be located in the previous Montgomery County Courthouse at 1 East Main Street in Christiansburg, after it is renovated into the Public Safety Building, with a back-up dispatch center currently being considered.

Communications Goal

Improve and increase public safety communication to the citizens and between jurisdictions.

Implementation Strategies

- Increase and integrate communication among various public safety organizations.
- Support the use of STARS (Statewide Area Radio System).
- Support greater cooperation between jurisdictions.
- Educate citizens on emergency operation procedures and locations.
- Maintain mutual aid agreements and support coordinated services between jurisdictions.

Law Enforcement

The Town's Police Department is manned by a full-time staff of 57 sworn officers and 15 civilian staff as well as two part-time employees. The Chief of Police is appointed by the Christiansburg Town Council on an annual basis. The Police Department utilizes 58 vehicles including 31 patrol vehicles. Six of these vehicles are sport utility vehicles and are used during times of inclement weather. The Police Department operates two 12-hour patrol shifts in a day utilizing four rotating Platoons with eight patrol personnel assigned to each platoon. The Town's E-911 service and dispatching is handled through the Police Department.

The Christiansburg Police Department was relocated to the Wimmer Building at 10 East Main Street in 2000. The Christiansburg Police Department is a State Accredited Law Enforcement Agency and has met the standards set forth by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission since 2000. Since 2009, the Town of Christiansburg has been recognized by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services as a Certified Crime Prevention Community.

The Town does not operate its own jail. Prisoners are housed at the Montgomery County Jail at 16 South Franklin Street in Christiansburg, which is under the jurisdiction of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. A regional juvenile detention center, the New River Valley Juvenile

Detention Home, located at 650 Graves Street NW in Christiansburg is owned and operated jointly by Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Giles County and the City of Radford.

Law Enforcement Goal
Secure appropriate resources to maintain first-class law enforcement services.

Implementation Strategies

- Preserve status as a State Accredited Law Enforcement Agency and a Certified Crime Prevention Community.
- Hire personnel in order to maintain low crime rates with expanding population.
- Maintain low crime rate and quick incident response time.

Safe Neighborhoods

- Enhance neighborhood safety.
  - Install curb and gutter and sidewalks.
  - Install low-impact/low-glare street lights.
  - Support community building events.
  - Implement neighborhood and community watches where appropriate.
  - Encourage public safety urban design features such as natural surveillance and access control in new development.

Fire Protection
The Christiansburg Fire Department has provided fire protection since 1911. The Fire Department is manned by a paid full-time Fire Chief/Fire Marshall and 39 trained volunteer firefighters available to answer calls. Other officers within the department include an Assistant Chief, a Captain, and two Lieutenants. Calls to the squad are dispatched by both the Christiansburg Police Department and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

The Christiansburg Fire Station was constructed in 1976 with 12 bays and is located at 110 Depot Street NW. The Town houses additional fire equipment for Montgomery County at the Fire Station since Christiansburg responds to calls in the County. Equipment operated by the department includes four engines, two ladder trucks, one tanker, two brush trucks, and various personnel units. The Christiansburg Fire Department responded to 852 alarms during the period from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012.

The Christiansburg Fire Department response service area is approximately 80 square miles and is shown on the following map. The Town also has plans for a future Emergency Services Building located just off Peppers Ferry Road on Quin W. Stuart Boulevard. This building will house Fire and Rescue personnel and equipment with office space for the Police Department. (Show on MAP)

Fire Protection Goal
Continue to provide high-quality, efficient fire protection service.

Implementation Strategies

- Transition from volunteer to parcel paid staff for Fire Department.
- Begin planning for 3rd Fire and Rescue Station on east side of Town.
- Increase residential fire safety.

- Maintain quick response time.
- Hire additional staff to address inspections for fire prevention and commercial building inspections.

Rescue and Emergency Services

The Christiansburg Rescue Squad began as a private non-profit corporation known as the Christiansburg Lifesaving and Rescue Crew, Inc., providing rescue services to the community beginning in 1947. In the late 1980's, the Christiansburg Lifesaving and Rescue Squad surrendered its corporate status and became a Town department. The Town completed a new Rescue Squad Building at 190 Depot Street NW next to the Fire Station in 1997.

The Christiansburg Rescue Squad is led by a full-time Chief who reports directly to the Town Manager. The squad is staffed by approximately 75 active volunteer members and supplemented by several part-time employees.

The Christiansburg Rescue Squad serves the entire Town as well as a portion of Montgomery County for a total service area of approximately 150 square miles as shown on the following map. The squad handles over 3,800 calls for service each year. (How many calls last year, 2012?) Calls to the squad are dispatched by both the Christiansburg Police Department and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. The squad operates five advanced life support ambulances, two crash/rescue trucks, one utility truck, two boats and several quick response vehicles.

The Christiansburg Rescue Squad is a member of the Virginia Association of Governmental EMS Administrators and the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads, and is licensed as an Advanced Life Support agency by the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services.

Rescue and Emergency Services Goal

Continue to provide high-quality, efficient rescue service.

Implementation Strategies

- Increase training and continuing education opportunities locally to keep Rescue Squad certifications up to date.
- Transition from volunteer to paid staff for the Rescue Squad.
- Increase accountability among volunteer Rescue Squad personnel.
- Begin planning for 3rd Fire and Rescue Station on east side of Town.
- Maintain quick response time.

New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Town of Christiansburg participated in the development of the New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan adopted by Town Council in January 2012. The Hazard Mitigation Plan is required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order for localities to be eligible for FEMA project funds. The New River Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan incorporates all natural hazards affecting the Towns of Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Pulaski, Pearisburg, and Pembroke, as well as Pulaski County, Montgomery County, Giles County, Floyd County and the City of Radford. A plan concentrating on all hazards instead of each hazard individually makes the most efficient use of resources.

Hazard Mitigation entails localities enacting and enforcing building codes, zoning ordinances and subdivision ordinances to protect life and property. Localities have the responsibility of making the public aware of the hazards that present risks and the measures that can be taken to reduce risk and loss. Mitigation actions are not designed to improve the ability to respond in an emergency situation, but rather to reduce the need for emergency response.

Emergency Response

The Town of Christiansburg is vulnerable to a variety of hazards such as flooding, winter storms, high winds, wildfires and resource shortages. To respond effectively to any emergency of a size or complexity beyond routine response systems, it is critical that all Town of Christiansburg public officials, departments and agencies, non-governmental emergency organizations and the public understand their roles and responsibilities. A planned-for and coordinated response on the part of state and local officials in support of in-the-field emergency responders can save lives, protect property, and more quickly restore essential services. The foundation for this coordinated response is established through the Town of Christiansburg Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) most recently revised in October 2009. The EOP identifies a range of disasters that could possibly occur in or near the Town. The EOP works to anticipate the needs that the jurisdiction might experience during an incident and provides guidance across town departments, agencies, and response organizations by describing an overall emergency response system including:

- How town departments/agencies will be organized during response to an event, including command authorities;
- Critical actions and interfaces during response and recovery;
- How the interaction between the jurisdiction and regional, state, and federal authorities is managed;
- How the interaction between the jurisdiction and its private partner organizations (hospitals, non-governmental emergency organizations and others) is managed during emergencies; and
- How to handle and manage needs with the resources available.

Emergency Management Goal

Continually improve the Town's emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a public emergency notification system.
  - Locate sirens for emergency notification throughout Town.
- Support greater cooperation, integration, and collaboration with Local Emergency Planning Commissions (LEPCs).
- Provide for certifications for emergency management personnel.
- Provide for citizen education on emergency management procedures.
- Integrate citizen training and citizen outreach with Emergency Management objectives.
  - Bring organizations and grassroots groups together with Police, Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management personnel.
- Support and administer cross-training among personnel as a preparedness measure.
- Increase the training available for Red Cross volunteers.
- Maintain the integrity of floodplains.
- Keep the Emergency Operations Plan updated.

- Examine the reliability of the power grid and verify that adequate backup exists.
- Ensure the security of infrastructure systems; such as the power grid and water distribution system.