Red Cross promotes readiness during National Preparedness Month

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

The Yokosuka branch of the American Red Cross and Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Emergency Management Office set up outside the commissary Sept. 7 to bring the message of National Preparedness Month (NPM) to base residents.

According to www.ready.gov, NPM is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. For CFAY residents, this includes preparing an emergency kit, submitting individual noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO) forms and learning about the different types of emergencies that can happen in Yokosuka and the appropriate ways of responding to them.

"We have a display of items just to remind members of our community to be prepared for disasters or emergencies," said American Red Cross Yokosuka Branch Station Manager Cecil Goodman. "We have a disaster preparedness kit, literature and information on CPR and first aid training. We just want people to be informed on the various types of emergencies so they can be ready."

Typhoons and earthquakes are the two disasters that those of us stationed in Japan worry about the most. However, by being aware of and having a plan for possible emergency situations, individuals can keep their families safe.

"Right now we're in typhoon season so we just want to make sure that people are keeping their head on a swivel," said CFAY Emergency Management Officer Robert James. "We tell everybody to go to the CFAY website and download the NEO forms. It's very important that you keep your information updated in NEO."

Residents should keep in mind that all NEO forms need to be signed by the service member. If information is incorrect or not up-to-date, families will have to wait while new forms are generated and if the spouse is deployed during an emergency situation, it could make things that much worse for family members.

"It's very important that you keep your information updated in NEO. Keep in mind that there are approximately 23,000 people on the base, said James. "If you come to us with all of your information ready, it's easy for us to process your paperwork and get you out of the country."

For more information about disaster preparedness, visit the CFAY website at http://www.cnic.navy.mil/Yokosuka/CommunitySupport/EmergencyManagement, or visit the American Red Cross Yokosuka Branch website at www.yokoarc.org.

American Red Cross Yokosuka Station Manager Cecil Goodman speaks to Kathy Tai about National Preparedness Month (NPM) in front of the commissary Sept. 7. NPM is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities.

Use of American-made wireless electronic devices illegal in Japan

By Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

In accordance with instructions from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) Japan, the use of American-made 900 MHz range baby monitors and other wireless devices is illegal and therefore not allowed in Japan.

Individuals who do not follow MIC instruction and continue to use baby monitors and wireless devices not approved in Japan can be subject to penalties such as a one million yen fine and, or one year imprisonment under Japan's Radio Law. Examples of illegal devices are:

- Cell phones.
- Cordless phones (900 MHz range).
- Low power handheld radios (Family Radio Service and General Mobile Radio Service).
- Radio controlled model airplanes.
- Automobile keyless entry systems.
- Various computer components (keyboard, mouse and printers).
- Military equipment.

According to an article by MIC, the use of American-made baby monitors cause harmful radio interference to Japan's cellular phone services and radio communications due to the fact that American-made baby monitors use the same frequency band as Japan's cellular phone services and radio communications.

However, according to Lead Spectrum Manager Gary G. Vogel, of Navy and Marine Corps Spectrum Office Far East, which is responsible to ensure Navy and Marine Corps access to, and effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum in national security and military operations in Japan, Korea, Singapore and Diego Garcia, very rarely do they interfere.

In theory, they can interfere if, for example, a wireless mouse, which radiates a frequency in an omni-directional pattern, is picked up by another device that amplifies the signal.

"It could find something resonant, nearby and inadvertently be sent much farther than its original path," said Vogel.

Fortunately, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Atsugi Naval Air Facility, Yokota Air Force base and U.S. Army base Camp Zama have not received many complaints.

"We have received very few reports in the CFAY area. We have received many more reports in Okinawa, and the Marines in particular have addressed those problems," said Vogel. "But, we've received very few here in the Kanto plain. And the ones we have received have been very minor. They haven't been sourced to civilian interference; it's more [from] military use."

According to Vogel, devices such as the aforementioned are legal to sell and purchase. However, the use of them in Japan is illegal.

"The practical reality is that our devices are low-powered devices and cause very little interference. But that isn't the point really, where Japan is coming from," said Vogel.

"The Government of Japan, the Ministry of Telecommunications is saying, 'We haven't allocated any spectrum for that use. Your devices don't fit into the parts that we have allocated for the use of baby monitors and other wireless devices.' So, from that standpoint, they're illegal and they don't want you to use them. So it's a matter of legality more than it is a matter of practical day-to-day interference, and that's where they are coming from therefore we have to comply with their rules and regulations," he added.

NAVFAC Far East employee recognized as "*Women of Color*" magazine Technology All Star

By Ron Inman, NAVFAC Far East Public Affairs

When you ask 2010 "*Women of Color*" magazine Technology All Star Andrea "Andi" Freeman what she attributes her success to, her answer is very… non-technical.

"The folks that I work with are just absolutely phenomenal," says Freeman, who was selected for her achievements and leadership as the NAVFAC Far East command information officer. "I think that they're the best there is in NAVFAC, and being able to work with, assist, guide and direct them has been truly a pleasure for me, an honor for me, more than anything else."

The Women of Color Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Conference recognizes outstanding women in the STEM fields and provides opportunities for professional development, networking and recruiting.

Freeman will be recognized with other selectees at the conference Oct. 28-30 in Dallas, Texas. The conference is focused on the development of STEM minority women and aims to ensure their achievements and importance are highly visible to all conference participants.

"She is the best of the best and should be recognized for her accomplishments, teamwork and 'can do' spirit," said NAVFAC Far East Executive Officer Capt. Christopher J. Lacaria, of Freeman. "Our success as a command is largely due to her outstanding support."

NAVFAC Far East supports the Navy mission by providing construction and services for 10 installations in four countries within the Far East region, and consists of more than 2,000 employees providing $700 million of construction and service support annually.

Freeman is responsible for the organization, supervision and management of the Information Technology Department, as well as the research, planning, design and deployment of information systems required to support the command.

She has led a multicultural team of 15 Japanese employees, one contractor and four U.S. government civilians to achieve many successes. A native of Virginia Beach, Va., Freeman has worked for NAVFAC for the past 18 years.