

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



DEMS Monthly Webinar on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 7 PM

Join us on Wednesday, March 6, at 7 p.m. as we host the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services to learn about Flood Awareness Week. They'll remind us of the importance of preparing for floods and best practices for preparing! Link:

<https://youtube.com/live/jNFHPCICXXM>

Severe Weather Awareness Week - March 4 – 8, 2024

DEMS is partnering with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and the National Weather Service (NWS) to promote Severe Weather Awareness Week which will take place from March 4 – 8, 2024. The week is designed to refresh, remind, and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and how to avoid them. It's also a great time to make and practice your emergency plan!

Each day during the week will cover a different topic will be covered with preparedness tips and ways to stay safe during severe weather.

Monday – Watch vs. Warning

A tornado **WARNING** means **TAKE ACTION** because a tornado is imminent or already occurring. Seek shelter immediately – move to an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows and cover your head to protect yourself from flying debris.

Tuesday – Tornadoes

Tornado Alerts - Tornadoes can occur at any time of day but are particularly dangerous at night since most folks are asleep. Keep Wireless Emergency Alerts enabled on your cell phone, so you know if you are in the path of a tornado. If there is a tornado warning, you may get an alert that looks like this!

Community Emergency Response Guide Tornado Hazard Page - Did you know that the Community Emergency Response (CER) has a hazard page dedicated to tornadoes? Look at the page to learn what to do before, during, and after a tornado emergency. Video link: <https://youtu.be/P7RcfwRPsCY>



Wednesday – Severe Thunderstorms (Hail, Lightning, Wind)

Hail - As a thunderstorm grows, updrafts will push water droplets into a region of the atmosphere which is below the freezing temperature. These water droplets collide with other droplets just before freezing, which is why some hailstones can grow to several inches in diameter.

Lightning - Many of us look forward to outdoor activities during this time of the year. Unfortunately, it is during these recreational activities that a large number of lightning casualties occur. Pay attention to the weather, and don't wait to take shelter.

Wind - Even the most common items become dangerous objects when picked up and carried by the wind! When a High Wind Watch or a Severe Thunderstorm Watch is issued, secure outdoor items such as patio furniture, sports equipment and trash cans.



Thursday –Flash Flooding

Tornado Drill - 3/7/24 @ 9:45 AM - Tornadoes can occur at any time of day but are particularly dangerous at night since most folks are asleep. Keep Wireless Emergency Alerts enabled on your cell phone, so you know if you are in the path of a tornado. If there is a tornado warning, you may get an alert that looks like this!



Flooding - Don't underestimate the power of water. It only takes 6 inches of fast-moving water to knock over and carry away an adult, and 12 inches to carry away a small car. Turn Around Don't Drown!

Friday – Outdoor Safety

Remember, it's always better to prioritize safety during thunderstorms. When you hear thunder stop what you are doing, and head inside. For more information, visit:

www.weather.gov/safety/lightning



Tornado Drill – Thursday, March 7, 2024 @ 9:45 AM

Join Fairfax County on 3/7/24 at 9:45 AM to participate in the Tornado Drill. Practice going to your safe space, such as a windowless interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Tornadoes can occur at any time of day but are particularly dangerous at night since most folks are asleep. Keep Wireless Emergency Alerts enabled on your cell phone, so you know if you are in the path of a tornado.

Video: <https://youtu.be/P7RcfwRPsCY>



Volunteer with the Emergency Management Volunteer Corps

The Department of Emergency Management and Security's (DEMS) Volunteer Corps volunteers are trained in emergency preparedness and emergency management principles to help inform the public by staffing public events, leading presentations, and participating in trainings. Interested in answering the call? Visit here for more info: [Volunteering in Emergency Preparedness | Emergency Management \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emvc).



Introduction to Preparedness E-Learning

DEMS is excited to announce that our first public-facing eLearning course, "Introduction to Preparedness," is now available on our website under the new page titled [Community Preparedness Training](#). This course is designed to complement our Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG).



**TAKE THE
TRAINING
TODAY!**

- ☰ Course Introduction
- ☰ Module 1: Building Resilience
- ☰ Module 2: Fairfax County Threats and Hazards
- ☰ Module 3: Phases of Emergency Management
- ☰ Course Conclusion



Power Outages – Always Report Your Outage

Power outages can affect large groups of people for a matter of minutes, or for an extended period of time. These events usually take place because of other events such as storms, tornados, or even deliberate attacks. The cause of the power outage could impact the time it takes to restore it. Never assume someone else has reported the outage to power companies. Be sure to always report it yourself.

Power Outages in Fairfax County

Dominion **NOVEC**

1-866-366-4357 **703-335-0500**

READY FAIRFAX

After the power is restored, don't plug electronics back in right away. Ensure the power stays on without flickering before reconnecting devices. Only travel if an emergency, some traffic lights may still be affected. Dispose of any cold food that reaches over 40 degrees Fahrenheit for over two hours. When in doubt, throw it out! For additional information about power outages, visit:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/poweroutageblackout>

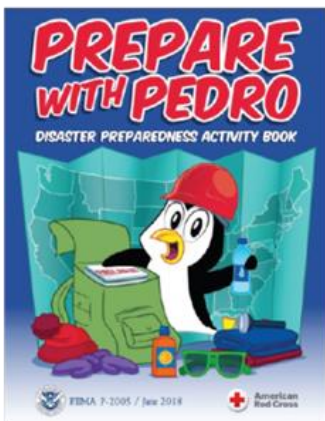
Emergency Preparedness: It's Not Luck!

It's Not Luck! We all hope for the best, but being prepared is key to facing unexpected situations head-on. Whether it's a natural disaster, a medical emergency, or unforeseen circumstances, having a plan in place can make all the difference. Take the time to create an emergency kit with essential supplies like water, non-perishable food, first aid supplies, and important documents. Develop a family communication plan so everyone knows what to do and where to go in case of an emergency.

Preparation is not luck—it's proactive action. Let's empower ourselves and our communities by being ready for whatever comes our way!



Kids Preparedness: Prepare with Pedro!



Pedro is a penguin who loves learning about how he can be prepared and take action during an emergency to help stay safe. He visits friends all over the United States and learns about hazards local to their area like earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and many others! From blizzards to blackouts, Pedro is always ready to face the unexpected. He's here to remind us that preparation is key to staying safe and resilient in any situation.

Follow Pedro's lead and make sure you're prepared too! Put together your own emergency kit, create a family communication plan, and stay informed about potential risks in your area. To learn how to get prepared with Pedro visit <https://www.ready.gov/kids/prepare-pedro>

Request an Emergency Preparedness Workshop

DEMS conducts workshops (virtual or in person) to prepare your networks for an emergency. Submit your request today: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/presentation-requests.

- Introduction to Preparedness
- Until Help Arrives
- 5 Step Neighborhood Guide Workshop – Learn how to prepare for where you live!
- Business Disaster Resilience Workshop – Learn how to prepare your business!
- House of Worship Workshop – Learn how to prepare your house of worship.
- Youth Preparedness (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, schools, etc.).



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

This topic is important year-round, but it gets a spotlight during the month of March. During Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, it's important to plan for emergencies with the needs of individuals who have developmental disabilities in mind.

This means providing easy-to-understand information, using helpful communication tools, and creating support

systems that work for different needs during emergencies. It's a good idea to involve the person with a developmental disability in the planning process right from the start. This way, we make sure that the information is clear to them, and we also consider and include their concerns during the planning process.

An important point to mention is that all disabilities affect everyone differently, meaning that there is no one size fits all for any one type of disability. Even if two people have the exact same disability, that does not guarantee that their limitations are the same. Discuss with the individual to figure out what works best for them.

Take Control and Be Informed About Spring Flooding!

1. Know when flooding may occur. Sign up for alerts.
 - Spring is a highly turbulent season that poses a multitude of weather and flooding threats to the MidAtlantic and Central Appalachia.
 - Dangerous weather can happen anyplace and anytime. Dangerous weather includes hazardous conditions such as torrential rain, lightning, damaging straight-line winds, tornadoes, large hail, and flash flooding. No matter where you live, work, or travel you should take steps to prepare.
 - One of the best ways to stay prepared is to stay informed! Sign up for emergency alerts through Fairfax Alerts and be notified wherever there is weather event happening in your area. To sign up for alerts visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts
 - Those in low-lying, flood prone areas such as Belle View, New Alexandria and Huntington also should subscribe to Riverwatch Alerts and other custom alerts in the My Subscriptions tab on their Fairfax Alerts account.
2. Know what to do. Practice Protective Measures.
 - Flash flooding can develop in just minutes. If a flash flood warning is issued, it means a flash flood is imminent or occurring and you should take action. If you are in a flood prone area move immediately to high ground.
 - Turn Around Don't Drown: Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other thunderstorm related hazard. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report



that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters.

3. Know your protected. Talk to your Insurance Agent.

- Find out if you live in a flood plain or other flood prone area using the county Flood Risk Awareness Tool, and prepare accordingly, including purchasing flood insurance. Services also may be available for residents to make their property more resilient.
- Purchase Flood Insurance: A flood insurance policy through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is your best protection against flood-related loss.
- Floods are the most common and costly natural disasters in the United States. Just one inch of floodwater can cause up to \$25,000 in damage.
- Most homeowners' insurance does not cover flood damage. Flood insurance is a separate policy that can cover buildings, the contents in a building, or both, so it is important to protect your most important financial assets — your home, your business, your possessions.

Flood Safety for People with Access and Functional Needs

To keep yourself safe during floods, it's crucial to know the difference between a Flood Watch and a Flood Warning. A Flood Watch means conditions are right for flooding, while a Flood Warning means flooding is happening or about to start. If you are alerted that there is an active Flood Warning for your area, the time to act is NOW.

It is not uncommon for places, whether homes or businesses, to lose power when a flood is taking place, as trees and other large objects can fall and create downed power lines. Because of this, it is important to include power outage supplies when preparing for a flood such as:

- Flashlight
- Extra flashlight batteries
- Shelf-stable food
- Can opener – if your kit includes canned food
- Extra batteries for any electric assistive devices

If you make the decision to evacuate before a flood, whether directed by emergency officials or by your judgement, there are important things to consider with driving when there is a flood risk:

- Never drive through flood waters **Turn Around, Don't Drown**
- Never drive around barricades
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.

Ensure that you have an emergency kit with you in your car in case you become stranded within your vehicle. To learn more about emergency kits, and what you should include in them, visit

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/makeanemergencykit>.

