

# Emergency Preparedness Newsletter



Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)

## Resolve to be Ready in 2023 - DEMS Monthly Webinar on May 3, 2023, at 7 PM

Resolve to be ready for any emergency in 2023. Join us on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, at 7 PM to learn how to stay informed during emergencies!

Join us: <https://youtube.com/live/iOWq65auRvA>



## Hurricane Preparedness Week April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 6<sup>th</sup>

Be ready for hurricane season. Take action today to be better prepared for when the worst happens. Understand your risk from hurricanes and begin pre-season preparations now. Make sure you understand how to interpret forecasts and alerts, and know what to do before, during, and after a storm. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a lot of great tips to share for the week.



### Sunday - Know Your Risk: Water & Wind

The first step of preparing for hurricanes is to know your risk. Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem, so find out today what types of water and wind hazards could happen where YOU live. Link: [www.noaa.gov/your-risk-water-wind](http://www.noaa.gov/your-risk-water-wind)

### Monday - Prepare Before Hurricane Season/Know Your Zone/Storm Surge

The best time to prepare for hurricanes is before hurricane season begins. Avoid having to rush through potentially life-saving preparations by waiting until it's too late. Make a plan, make a kit, stay informed, and get involved! Link: [www.noaa.gov/prepare-before-hurricane-season](http://www.noaa.gov/prepare-before-hurricane-season)

### Tuesday - Understand Forecast Information/High Winds

Prepare for hurricane season by knowing how to understand forecasts. They can tell you a lot about what is expected, including the storm's path, rainfall amounts, wind speeds, and more. Link: [www.noaa.gov/understand-forecast-information](http://www.noaa.gov/understand-forecast-information)

### Wednesday - Get Moving When a Storm Threatens/Inland Flooding

Do you know what to do when a storm threatens? Prepare for hurricane season by taking the time now to understand the actions needed when time is of the essence. Link: [www.noaa.gov/get-moving-when-storm-threatens](http://www.noaa.gov/get-moving-when-storm-threatens)

### Thursday - Stay Protected During Storms/Tornadoes

Be prepared for hurricane season by knowing what to do during a storm. Whether you've evacuated or are sheltering in place, know what to expect from the hazards you may face. Link: [www.noaa.gov/stay-protected-during-storms](http://www.noaa.gov/stay-protected-during-storms)

### Friday - Use Caution After Storms/Rip Currents

You can play a large role in how your neighbors fare before, during and after a hurricane. Link: [www.noaa.gov/use-caution-after-storms](http://www.noaa.gov/use-caution-after-storms)

### Saturday - Take Action Today

Are you ready for hurricane season? Take action today to be better prepared for when the worst happens. Even if you feel ready, there may be additional things you could do or learn. Link: [www.noaa.gov/take-action-today](http://www.noaa.gov/take-action-today)

## Dam Exercise and National Dam Safety Day – May 31<sup>st</sup>

In last month's newsletter we mentioned our department would be participating in a Fairfax Water Occoquan Upper and Lower Dam tabletop exercise. This exercise included a wide range of disciplines (emergency management, police, fire, public affairs, transportation, public works, etc.) and tested the Emergency Action Plan for the dams.

Similarly, Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) recently hosted their annual Emergency Action Plan Drill for their state regulated dams. DPWES maintains 19 dams in the county. Our department always participates in their exercises as we play an important role in the alert and warning of a dam emergency.

Virginia law requires dam owners to operate and maintain dams in a safe manner. Owners of high and significant hazard dams are required to have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), while owners of low hazard dams are required to have an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP). During storm events and emergencies, these plans provide critical action steps for dam owners to use to help protect life and property. According to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, emergency preparedness is improving with the percentage of state-regulated high hazard potential dams with an EAP increasing.

This is all timely as National Dam Safety Awareness Day is observed on May 31 each year. It is important to understand that both safe operation and maintenance are key to avoiding disaster. Here are a few steps you can take:

- Be aware of the dams in your area. Fairfax County has several of them!
- Purchase or renew flood insurance.
- Have an emergency plan and kit in place for your family or business and know what to do if you have to evacuate.
- Take a look at our Dam Hazard Page in the Fairfax County CERG: [Dam Failure | Emergency \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

**1999**

35% of state-regulated HHP Dams had an emergency action plan

**2021**

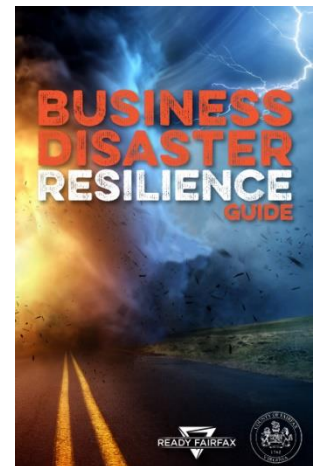
83% of state-regulated HHP Dams had an emergency action plan

If you need the website where I grabbed the graphic: [Take Action and Be Prepared: May 31st is National Dam Safety Awareness Day | Association of State Dam Safety](#)

## Business Continuity Awareness Week May 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>

For those who may not be familiar, business continuity describes an organization's ability to withstand and recover from physical threats, such as natural disasters and security breaches, as well as risks related to technology, operations, and reputational damage. According to the Insurance Institute, "up to 40% of businesses affected by a natural or man-made disaster never reopen."

Fairfax County's Business Continuity Program helps businesses in the county increase their resiliency through the Business Disaster Resilience Guide. Implementing a business preparedness plan to ensure that each component of a business is prepared to respond and recover from a disruption is vital to securing business continuity. By working together, we can ensure that Fairfax County is prepared and resilient in the face of ongoing challenges, contributing to the stability and sustainability of our economy and society.



Join Fairfax County's Continuity Program Manager, Avery Church, on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM to learn about business continuity and how the Fairfax County Business Disaster Resilience Guide can help you. Link: <https://youtube.com/live/qvfV8X6pr5I>

Business Disaster Resilience Guide Link: [Business Disaster Resilience \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

## 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 \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

## National Wildfire Awareness Month

Each year, wildfire burns millions of acres of land. You can help prepare for the wildfire season by following these important tips:

### Tip #1: Home Ignition Zones

- To increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire, choose fire-resistant building materials and limit the amount of flammable vegetation in the three home ignition zones. The zones include the Immediate Zone: (0 to 5 feet around the house), the Intermediate Zone (5 to 30 feet), and the Extended Zone (30 to 100 feet).

### Tip #2: Landscaping and Maintenance

- To reduce ember ignitions and fire spread, trim branches that overhang the home, porch, and deck and prune branches of large trees up to 6 to 10 feet (depending on their height) from the ground. Remove plants containing resins, oils, and waxes. Use crushed stone or gravel instead of flammable mulches in the Immediate Zone (0 to 5 feet around the house). Keep your landscape in good condition.



### Wildfire Preparedness Landscaping Against Your Home

The first Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) is 0-5 feet around your home or to the property line. This zone includes the structure itself, any deck/patio/balcony or other outside entertaining space that butts up to the structure of your home.

- Remove weeds, brush, and other invasive vegetation & debris. Use noncombustible rock mulch instead of standard mulch
- Trim grass and flowers to 4 inches or less in height. Trim back touching or overhanging tree branches to at least 10 feet from your home.
- Move combustible material away from your home. Firewood and other combustibles should be stored farther from your home.



### Tip #3: Decks and Porches

- Never store flammable materials underneath decks or porches. Remove dead vegetation and debris from under decks and porches and between deck board joints.

### Tip #4: Emergency Responder Access

- Ensure your home and neighborhood have legible and clearly marked street names and numbers. Driveways should be at least 12 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 15 feet for emergency vehicle access.
  - Develop, discuss, and practice an emergency action plan with everyone in your home. Include details for handling pets, large animals, and livestock.
  - Know two ways out of your neighborhood and have a predesignated meeting place. Always evacuate if you feel it's unsafe to stay—don't wait to receive an emergency notification if you feel threatened from the fire.
  - Conduct an annual insurance policy checkup to adjust for local building costs, codes, and new renovations.
  - Create or update a home inventory to help settle claims faster.

## Upcoming Trainings

\*All trainings below require a registration, please use the link: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax)

- June 1 – Introduction to Preparedness - Mason District Station at 6 PM
- June 3 – Introduction to Preparedness – Mason District Station at 9:30 AM
- June 13 – Introduction to Preparedness – McLean Community Center at 6:30 PM
- June 22 – Until Help Arrives – Mason District Station at 6 PM
- June 24 – Until Help Arrives – Mason District Station at 9:30 AM



## National Water Safety Month

Life is hectic, and distractions will happen, but in a matter of seconds, so can drowning. A phone call, a package being delivered to the door, cleaning up a spill, or a quick trip to the bathroom are all distractions that can lead a child gaining unexpected access to water. Drowning is the single leading cause of death for children ages 1-4, and sadly, 70% of drownings among young children happen during non-swim times. Drowning happens quickly and quietly, in as little as 2 inches of water within 30 seconds. There is no single way to prevent drowning, but you can arm yourself with the necessary prevention methods by learning the 5 Layers of Protection.

### 1. Barriers and Alarms:

It's important to use four-sided fencing with self-closing, self-latching gates, pool safety covers, and alarm systems to help prevent children and unauthorized adults from accessing water unsupervised.

### 2. Supervision:

Stay vigilant and aware of your surroundings with close, constant, and capable adult supervision from a designated water watcher or lifeguard anytime children are in or around water.

### 3. Water Competency:

Every child and adult should be equipped with the skills to protect themselves in water by learning and enhancing their basic water safety skills to reduce the risk of drowning and aquatic-related injuries.

### 4. Life Jackets:

When used appropriately, life jackets protect you when you are not expecting to be in the water, especially around open water. Ensure your life jackets are tested and approved by the United States Coast Guard (USCG)

### 5. Emergency Preparation:

Knowing how to prepare for an emergency with CPR training with rescue breaths, and basic water rescue skills can make the difference between life and death. Have a phone available and ready to call 911.

## Older Americans Month

Older Americans Month was established in 1963 and is celebrated every May. It is a time to address the needs of older Americans, encourage intergenerational sharing of wisdom, and recognize the contributions and achievements of older family members and friends. This May, join Ready Fairfax as we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Older American's Month. Whether you are young or old, you can celebrate by considering these steps:



- If you are an older adult, work to form a network of friends, family, and service providers who can assist you in an emergency or disaster. Think about things you may need help with if you need to evacuate or shelter-in-place and don't be afraid to ask for them.
- If you are a younger person who has family or friends who are older, you can be a valuable resource to that person by investing time and energy to make sure they are as prepared as possible for a crisis.
- Older Americans Month also celebrates the wisdom of older adults and encourages them to pass it on to others. If you are an older adult who has lived through an emergency or disaster, you have valuable information to share! Tell stories about the challenges you faced, how you overcame them, and what you wish you would have done differently to be better prepared. Sharing personal stories and advice is one of the best ways to encourage others to take action to protect themselves. Even smaller "everyday emergencies" are stories worth sharing with those you care about.

To learn more about preparing for emergencies or disasters as an older adult, visit:

<https://www.ready.gov/older-adults>.

## First Responder Interaction Day – June 3<sup>rd</sup>

The Arc of Northern Virginia is partnering with Fairfax County public safety agencies to host the First Responder Interaction Day for people with developmental disabilities to interact with first responders and learn about other available safety resources. The idea of interacting with first responders, calling 9-1-1, or responding to a natural disaster or other emergency can be very intimidating, especially if you or your loved ones have a disability. One of the best ways to manage anxiety and prepare yourself for a successful real-world interaction is to practice and learn about first responders, what to do in an emergency, and how to use the resources Fairfax County has to offer.



Join us for Fairfax County's First Responder Interaction Day on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 9am to 12pm!

Participants will be able to:

- Practice calling 9-1-1 and reporting an emergency to a real dispatcher.
- Practice police traffic stops and ask police officers questions.
- Talk with and learn about fire and EMS responders and their equipment.
- Learn about preparing for and responding to natural disasters and other emergencies.
- Speak with a representative from the Health Department about special considerations and best practices for those with disabilities.
- Practice hands-only CPR.
- Learn about free, tech-based safety resources available from the Arc of Northern Virginia's Tech for Independent Living program.
- Receive a personalized DD identification card to hand to first responders in the event of an emergency.

For more information and to register, visit:

<https://arcofnva.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/arcofnva/event.jsp?event=8176&>

## Save the Date – June 10<sup>th</sup> Public Safety Open House

**Public Safety Day**

**Join us**  
June 10th, 2023 10am - 2pm  
4890 Alliance Drive Fairfax VA

**Events:**

- ✓ Career Opportunities
- ✓ Food and Games
- ✓ Tours
- ✓ Demos and Displays

**FREE ENTRY**

## 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](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/presentation-requests). Workshop Topics:

- Personal Preparedness using the Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG).
- 5 Step Neighborhood Guide Workshop – Learn how to prepare for where you live!
- Business Disaster Resilience Workshop – Learn how to prepare your business!
- Youth Preparedness (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, schools, etc.).