

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



Resolve to be Ready in 2023

Resolve to be ready for any emergency in 2023. Join us on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at 7 PM to learn how you can make an emergency plan and some scenarios to practice your plan!

Join us: <https://youtube.com/live/IXTyivOZ3Yg>

How Do I Make an Emergency Plan?

A commitment to planning today will help you respond to future emergencies. Before an emergency strikes – under “blue skies” – you should call a family meeting to discuss your most concerning hazards and determine your basic actions for each likely disaster. Next, you will determine whether to shelter-in-place or evacuate, and where you will meet up if needed. Discuss how you will communicate if you are separated. Identify an out-of-area contact in case local communication lines are not usable. When you are done with your plan, keep a printed hard copy in a safe and easily accessible place, known to everyone and in your emergency kits. Finally, keep the information current. You should update it twice a year: when your clock “falls back” or “springs forward.”

Special Considerations

Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs - If you or someone close to you has a disability or access and functional need, tailor your plan to meet those needs. Each person’s needs and abilities are unique, but everyone can take steps to be prepared. Write down caregiver and emergency contact information. You can also create a support network, a team that can help you identify and get the resources you need. The support network should be prepared to check on an individual to see if they need assistance during an emergency. If you use a personal care attendant, check to see if the agency has an emergency plan. Do they provide service at another location if you need to evacuate? Plan for any assistance to get to a shelter.

Infants and Young Children - Remember the unique needs of household members when making your family emergency plan. Incorporate your child’s school’s emergency plans, locations, and contact information into your plan. Know who is responsible for picking up whom, and where everyone will meet up. Try to make emergency planning fun for young children. Gather your family members together for a quick family meeting, maybe over a pizza or before watching a favorite movie. Talk about what you will do in an emergency and discuss your family’s plan. By using play and pretend – talking about “what-ifs” as stories – emergency planning becomes a little less scary.

Pets - Don’t forget about your pets when you are developing your emergency plan. Research a pet-friendly hotel, a shelter that accepts animals, or a friend’s house. Do not leave pets at home if you evacuate your house. If you can’t get back to your house, make a plan with a trusted friend or neighbor who can retrieve or care for your pet. And don’t forget – this person will need to have a key and know where your pet’s supplies are kept. Make sure your animals are wearing collars with up-to-date identification and even consider microchipping your pet.

Don’t worry, we have an Emergency Plan Template for you to use that will walk you through all of the topics and considerations. Link: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cepg



Severe Weather Awareness Week in Virginia March 6th – 10th, 2023

Monday – Watch vs. Warning

What is a watch versus a warning? In all instances, warnings are more important than watches. A watch means that conditions are favorable for the event to occur but does not mean the event WILL occur. A warning means that action is needed because the event is imminent, occurring, and headed your way, or a high likelihood of occurring.



Tuesday – Tornado Drill

The Virginia Statewide Tornado Drill is scheduled for Tuesday, March 7th at 9:45 A.M.

Every school, business, workplace, and family across the state is strongly encouraged to participate in the statewide tornado drill. The drill will be broadcasted on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio and the Emergency Alert System via the Required Monthly Test. There **WILL NOT** be an actual tornado warning issued.



If there is actual severe weather occurring on the morning of Tuesday, March 7, 2023, the statewide tornado drill will be postponed. The alternate date for the drill is Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 9:45 AM EST.

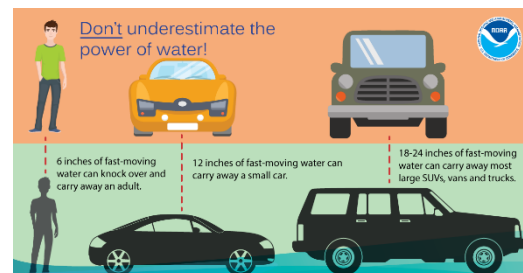
Wednesday – Severe thunderstorms – Hail, Lightning, Wind

There is no safe place outside when thunderstorms are in the area. If you hear thunder, you are likely within striking distance of the storm. Just remember, **When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors**. Each year in the United States, there are about 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes and about 300 people struck by lightning. Of those struck, about 30 people are killed and others suffering lifelong disabilities. Most of these tragedies can be prevented. When thunderstorms threaten, get inside a building with plumbing and electricity, or a hard-topped metal vehicle!



Thursday – Flash Flooding

Flooding occurs in every U.S. state and territory, and is a threat experienced anywhere in the world that receives rain. In the U.S. floods kill more people each year than tornadoes, hurricanes, or lightning. *Turn around, don't drown! Most fatalities in the U.S. from flash flooding are from vehicles driving into flooded roadways.*



Friday – Outdoor Weather Safety

Know Before You Go! Before heading outdoors, check the latest forecast from <https://www.weather.gov/akq/>, or from a trusted weather source. If severe weather is expected, stay home, or go before the weather is expected to deteriorate. Have a NOAA Weather Radio, and/or apps that have radar and lightning data. Make sure you have a way to receive weather warnings, such as [Fairfax Alerts](#).

March Webinars

March 1st at 7:00PM: Making an Emergency Plan and Learn How to Practice.

March 8th at 7:00PM: Severe Weather Awareness Week

March 14th at 12:00PM: Lunch and Learn - Understanding Your Flood Risk.

March 15th at 7:00PM: Flood Awareness Week with Special Guests

March 17th at 12:00PM: Lunch and Learn - Reduce Your Flood Risk at Home.

Website Link: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/monthly-webinars

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

If you or a loved one have a developmental disability, there are some special considerations to keep in mind when making an emergency plan and kit. Developmental disabilities present themselves differently in each person and it's important to carefully consider the specific needs and challenges faced by each individual. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, below you will find steps will help you get started.

First, recognize that stress will cause everyone to become forgetful and it can be very helpful for people with developmental disabilities to have written instructions on how to respond to an emergency which they can reference when they are under stress. Take the time to write down detailed steps and information and practice responding to emergencies using the notes. If you have school-aged children with disabilities, it may be a good idea to write down important steps and contact information for them to keep in their backpacks while they are at school.

Second, make sure you pack calming items or fidget toys in your emergency kit which may make coping with stressful situations easier. It is also important to include extra doses of medication.

Lastly, communicate your needs to first responders and emergency workers. Many people will not know how to best help someone with a developmental disability unless they are specifically told. This can be done during an emergency, or in advance through resources like Community Connect. You can sign up for Community Connect today at Fairfax County Community Connect.

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://Volunteering in Emergency Preparedness | Emergency Management (fairfaxcounty.gov))



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. Workshop Topics:

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