

# Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



## DEMS Monthly Webinar on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 7 PM

Join us on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 7 PM to learn about recovery! Link:

[https://youtu.be/PBsQmyH2\\_Pw](https://youtu.be/PBsQmyH2_Pw)

## FEMA and FCC Plan Nationwide Emergency Alert Test Oct. 4 - Test Messages Will be Sent to All TVs, Radios, and Cell Phones

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), will conduct a [nationwide test](#) of the [Emergency Alert System](#) (EAS) and [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#) (WEA) on Oct. 4.

The national test will consist of two portions, testing WEA and EAS capabilities. Both tests are scheduled to begin at approximately 2:20 p.m. ET on Wednesday, Oct. 4.

The WEA portion of the test will be directed to all consumer cell phones and will be the third nationwide test, but the second test to all cellular devices. The test message will display in either English or Spanish, depending on the language settings of the wireless handset. The EAS portion of the test will be sent to radios and televisions. This will be the seventh nationwide EAS test.

The purpose of the Oct. 4 test is to ensure that the systems continue to be effective means of warning the public about emergencies, particularly those on the national level. In case the Oct. 4 test is postponed due to widespread severe weather or other significant events, the backup testing date is Oct. 11.

All wireless phones should receive the message only once. The following can be expected from the nationwide WEA test:

- Beginning at approximately 2:20 p.m. ET, cell towers will broadcast the test for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, WEA-compatible wireless phones that are switched on, within range of an active cell tower, and whose wireless provider participates in WEA, should be capable of receiving the test message.
- For consumers, the message that appears on their phones will read: "THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed."
- Phones with the main menu set to Spanish will display: "ESTA ES UNA PRUEBA del Sistema Nacional de Alerta de Emergencia. No se necesita acción."

WEA alerts are created and sent by authorized federal, state, local, tribal and territorial government agencies through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) to participating wireless providers, which deliver the alerts to compatible handsets in geo-targeted areas. IPAWS helps ensure that these alerts are accessible to the entire public, including people with disabilities, with the alerts being accompanied by a unique tone and vibration.

Important information about the EAS test:

- The EAS portion of the test is scheduled to last approximately one minute and will be conducted with the participation of radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, satellite radio and television providers and wireline video providers.
- The test message will be similar to the regular monthly EAS test messages with which the public is familiar. It will state: "This is a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System, issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, covering the United States from 14:20 to 14:50 hours ET. This is only a test. No action is required by the public."



# How You Receive Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs)



## National Weather Service

Issues a warning for a specific location due to an imminent weather or water threat.



## Warnings that trigger WEAs

- Tsunami Warning
- Tornado Warning
- Flash Flood Warning
- Hurricane Warning
- Typhoon Warning
- Dust Storm Warning
- Extreme Wind Warning
- Snow Squall Warning

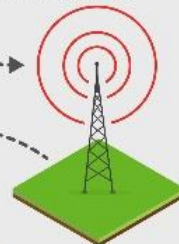
## Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)

The alerts from authenticated public safety officials, such as the NWS, are sent through FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.



## Mobile Networks

IPAWS pushes the alerts to over 100 participating wireless carriers.



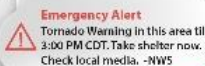
## Your Mobile Device

Cell towers push the alerts to mobile devices in the affected area.



## What WEAs Look Like

The alerts appear like text messages, but they are not text messages. They are different from voice calls and SMS text messages. They are accompanied by a unique attention signal and vibration.



## Who Gets WEAs

Alerts are broadcast only from cell towers whose coverage areas best match the zone of an emergency. Phones that are using the cell towers in the alert zone will receive the WEA.



## Great SouthEast ShakeOut – October 19, 2023 @ 10:19 AM

Fairfax County will be participating in the Great Southeast ShakeOut earthquake drill on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 10:19 AM. What would you do if you felt an earthquake? "Drop, Cover and Hold On" is the protocol to protect lives during earthquakes.

What does this mean?

**DROP** to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!),

you take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table, and

you **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops!

You cannot tell from the initial shaking if an earthquake will suddenly become intense...so always **Drop, Cover, and Hold On** immediately!

If there is no table or desk near you, drop to the ground and then, if possible, move to an inside corner of the room. Be in a crawling position to protect your vital organs, be ready to move if necessary, and cover your head and neck with your hands and arms.

Do not move to another location or outside. Earthquakes occur without any warning and may be so violent that you cannot run or crawl. You are more likely to be injured if you try to move around during strong shaking. Also, you will never know if the initial jolt will turn out to be the start of "the big one" ...and that's why you should always Drop, Cover, and Hold On immediately!

**If you are unable to Drop, Cover, and Hold On** or have physical difficulty getting safely to the floor on your own, participate as best you can by understanding that, in an actual earthquake, you would get as low as possible, protect your head and neck, and move away from windows or other items that can fall on you.

**If you are in a wheelchair** you would lock your wheels and remain seated until the shaking stops. Always protect your head and neck with your arms, a pillow, a book, or whatever is available.

**If you are in a high-rise or building with multiple floors** Drop, Cover, and Hold On. Avoid windows and other hazards. Do not use elevators. During a real earthquake do not be surprised if sprinkler systems or fire alarms activate.

**If you are outdoors** you can participate by moving to a clear area if safe to do so; observe your surroundings and avoid power lines, trees, signs, buildings, vehicles, and other hazards.

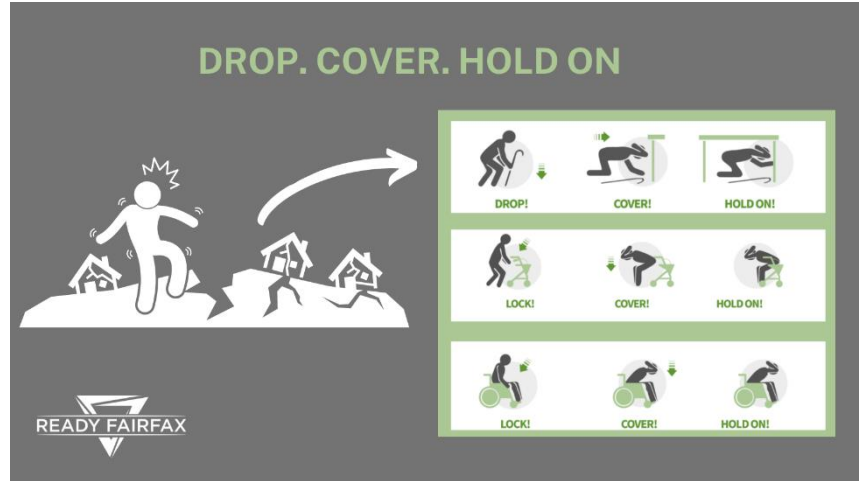
**If you are driving at the time of the exercise** you can participate, if it is safe to do so, by pulling over to the side of the road, coming to a full stop, and setting the parking brake. Avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs and other hazards. In a real earthquake you would stay inside the vehicle until the shaking is over. If a power line fell on your car, you would stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

**In stadium or theater seating, such as our Board Auditorium,** you would stay at your seat or drop to the floor between rows and protect your head and neck with your arms. In a real earthquake you wouldn't try to leave until the shaking is over, always being cautious of aftershocks.

You can visit the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG)'s earthquake hazard page for information and a video on how to prepare and protect yourself during an earthquake:

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

Visit the ShakeOut webpage for more info! [Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill](#), [Animated Graphics](#), [Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety](#)



## How Prepared Are You?

Fairfax County launched the 2023 Emergency Preparedness Survey to assess the culture of personal disaster preparedness and resilience in Fairfax County. How prepared are you? Here is your chance to tell us!

Survey link:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/fd34b75072184e5daf72eb338421b3b9?portalUrl=https://Fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com>



## Cybersecurity Awareness Month

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month! The purpose of this month is to empower everyone, whether government, private industry, or individual households – to take action to protect personal information from digital forms of crime.

One thing that you can do to increase your cybersecurity is to ensure that you are always using long passwords, that are also hard to guess because using an easy to guess password is like locking the door but leaving the key still in the lock!

Strengthen your passwords with these tips:

**Longer is stronger:** Passwords with at least 16 characters are hardest to crack.

**Hard to guess:** Use a random string of mixed-case letters, numbers, and symbols. If you need to memorize a password, create a memorable “passphrase” of 5 – 7 unrelated words. Get creative with spelling and/or add numbers and symbols.

**One of a kind:** Use a unique password for each account. Another easy way to increase your cybersecurity is to keep all your software applications updated. Software updates are periodically released to fix software problems and provide security patches for known vulnerabilities. This Cybersecurity Awareness Month don't hit the “remind me later” button. Take action to stay one step ahead of cybercriminals!

**Check for notifications:** Devices and applications will usually notify you when the latest software updates become available, but it is important to check periodically as well! It's important to install all updates, but especially for web browsers and antivirus software, or apps with financial or sensitive information.

**Install updates as soon as possible:** When a software update becomes available, especially critical updates, be sure to install them as soon as possible. Attackers won't wait, and neither should you!

For more information on cybersecurity please visit the Cyber Attack page of the Community Emergency Response Guide: [Cyber Attack | Emergency \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#).





## Interfaith Resiliency Conference

This past Thursday Fairfax County hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Faith Communities in Action Interfaith Resiliency Conference. Houses of worship and faith communities throughout Fairfax County came to the day long conference to learn about the Fairfax County Public Safety agencies, and the unique ways each agency can help their community or congregation be ready for the next emergency or disaster.

The conference had informational and workshop style sessions from multiple public safety agencies such as:

**Fairfax County Police:** CRASE (Civillian Response to Active Shooter Events)

**Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department:** Hands Only CPR

**Fairfax County Health Department:** What's in your cabinet

**Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security:** Until Help Arrives

If you are interested in learning about opportunities for Fairfax County to help support your place of worship, sign up for the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services newsletter titled "Interfaith – Common Ground" here: [Mailing Lists | Fairfax County](#)

## Fairfax County Annual Exercise

On Wednesday, September 27, 2023, The Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security conducted a functional exercise. This exercise was intended to test an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation by simulating an active shooter scenario in a Fairfax County Government building. The scenario triggered the activation of the county EOC. The EOC is staffed by members from multiple Fairfax County agencies as well as external partners to coordinate response to an incident. Throughout the exercise 80 participants and observers worked together to identify and operationalize plans to respond to the simulated active attacker scenario to ensure the well-being and continuity of county services for county employees, residents, and visitors.



## 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.).

## 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)).



## Cooking Safety

By the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department

Home fires are a leading cause of disaster in the United States, causing approximately seven deaths per day and over \$7 billion in property damage yearly. Cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. According to the National Fire Protection Association, ranges or cooktops cause 62% of home fires. Learn to protect your home and family from cooking fires and burns.

### Cooking safety tips

#### Keep it Clean

- Clean up grease spills.
- Keep groceries, food packaging, towels, and other flammable materials away from the stovetop.
- Keep pot handles turned inward to prevent spills.
- Create a three-foot **child-free zone** around the stove.
- Don't put metal in a microwave: utensils, aluminum foil or twist-tie wraps can cause a fire.
- Only use the oven for cooking, not for heating or storage.

#### Stand By Your Pan

- Remain in the kitchen when boiling, broiling, or frying food.
- Set a timer when baking or roasting so you don't lose track of time.
- Loose sleeves can ignite if they get too close to burners or heating elements. wear clothing with short or tight-fitting sleeves.
- If you're drowsy or impaired, order takeout: falling asleep with food on the stove can cause a serious fire, injury, or worse.

#### Put a Lid on It

- In the event of a fire on the stovetop, cover the pan with a lid or cookie sheet to smother the flames.
- Never try to move a burning pan or douse it with water.
- For a fire in the oven or microwave, leave the door closed, turn off the appliance, and call the fire department.
- If you can't extinguish the fire quickly, get to safety and call 9-1-1.
- If your clothing catches fire, *stop, drop, and roll* to put out the flames. Put burns in cool running water for 10-15 minutes. Call 9-1-1 for help.



## HOME COOKING FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

**62%** Cooking is the leading cause of **home fires** and fire injuries. **Ranges or cooktops** cause **62%** of home fires.\* Learn how to stay safe.



Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop



ALWAYS unplug countertop appliances when not in use



Make sure you have, and test, GFCI receptacles in your kitchen to prevent shock and electrocution



Double check that everything is off when you finish



Prevent fires by keeping your oven and stove top clean of grease and dust



**NEVER** leave the kitchen while cooking



**NEVER** cook while sleepy, drinking alcohol, or taking medication that makes you drowsy



**NEVER** disable a smoke alarm while cooking



**NEVER** use a cooking stove to heat your home

\*According to the National Fire Protection Association

Please share this free resource to save lives



[www.facebook.com/ESFi.org](https://www.facebook.com/ESFi.org)



[www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg](https://www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg)



[www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg](https://www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg)

Fire Prevention and Safety Grants: Funding provided through DHS/FEMA's Grant Program Directorate Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program





*Join us*  
**OPEN HOUSE**



In celebration of Fire Prevention Week, please join the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department as we host an Open House. Stop by your local station to meet your firefighters, see the fire apparatus, join in the activities, and learn about fire safety.

**SATURDAY,  
 OCTOBER 14, 2023  
 10AM - 4PM**

**ALL FAIRFAX COUNTY  
 FIRE AND RESCUE  
 DEPARTMENT STATIONS**