

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter



Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)

Resolve to be Ready in 2023 - DEMS Monthly Webinar on April 5, 2023 at 7 PM

Resolve to be ready for any emergency in 2023. Join us on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 7 PM to learn how to make your emergency kit, as well as how to financially prepare for emergencies!

Join us: <https://www.youtube.com/live/qQh5GrmSHqQ?feature=share>

Safe Place Selfie April 5, 2023

One of the most essential preparedness actions anyone can do is to identify their safe locations from various extreme weather threats. Knowing where to go ahead of time can minimize hesitation and ensure your decisions are good ones even under great duress.

To encourage everyone to take some time and identify their safe places, we ask that you post a “selfie” photo using the hashtag #SafePlaceSelfie and challenge others to do the same. Imagine a “Weather-Ready Nation” where everyone knows where to go or where not to go, and when extreme weather is forecast, makes decisions to ensure their safety. Here are some helpful tips as you take a big step toward greater preparedness:



Step #1: Think about what hazards are relevant to your area and those locations where you spend lots of time.

- Don't limit yourself to just one selfie post.
- Maybe your most common hazards aren't exactly weather events -- wildfires, rough surf/rip currents, earthquakes.

Step #2: Get Creative.

- Have pets or children? Get them involved in the creative process. What is your plan for them if an emergency threatens your home? Make things fun by including things you have in your emergency kit.

Step #3: Challenge others by tagging them in your post.

- “Hey, @_____, where is your safe place when extreme weather threatens?”
- Encouraging others to participate makes you a force multiplier that could result in saving lives.

Step #4: Follow the action throughout the day.

- Stay engaged by replying to, liking, and/or retweeting your favorite #SafePlaceSelfies.

| Hazard | Safe Place |
|--------------|---|
| Extreme Cold | Indoors with the heat on (or safely operated generators, not candles) |
| Extreme Heat | Indoors with the AC on // If outdoors, find shade and drink plenty of water |
| Flash floods | Indoors (not basement/lowest level), higher ground // Avoid flooded roadways |
| Lightning | An enclosed building away from plumbing & plugged in electronics A hard-topped vehicle with the windows up |
| Wind | In a sturdy building, away from trees // Interior room away from windows |
| Tornadoes | Tornado Storm Shelter or FEMA Safe Room Basement or sturdy interior room, away from windows |
| Tsunamis | Official evacuation zones // Farther inland // Higher floors in well-constructed buildings |

#SafePlaceSelfie
NOAA
weather.gov/SafePlaceSelfie
NOAA

Financial Preparedness Month

If a disaster or other emergency strikes, you may only have seconds or minutes to react. Having your homeowners or renters' insurance policy, bank account information, and other household records and contacts ready will be very important as you begin the recovery process. The Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) can help you be ready (link below).

The nonprofit organization Operation HOPE, in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), created the EFFAK in 2004 to help individuals and families collect and organize critical financial, medical, and household contact information.

Four Steps to Financial Preparedness:

1. **Assess and Compile:** Gather your important financial documents and contacts.
2. **Review:** Review your insurance policies and financials to ensure they are accurate and current.
3. **Safeguard:** Store paper and electronic copies of all files in safe locations.
4. **Update:** Revisit and your EFFAK regularly. Updates are especially important when significant changes in your life occur.

Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK): www.fema.gov/emergency-financial-first-aid-kit

Celebrating Autism Acceptance Month

April is National Autism Acceptance Month! According to the National Autism Association, autism is the fastest growing developmental disability, affecting 1 in 44 children in the US. Fairfax County's Department of Emergency Management and Security is celebrating by raising awareness of the challenges those with autism may face during an emergency and promoting practical ways you can prepare your child with autism to respond to an emergency.

The best way to prepare your child for an emergency is to involve them in discussions, planning, and practice, as much as possible. If your child experiences anxiety due to uncertainty and unexpected changes, taking time to talk to them before a disaster may help mitigate some of the effects on their emotional and mental wellbeing. Explain what may happen during different types of disasters or emergencies and what your family's plan is for each one. For some children, having information in writing or pictures may help them understand and retain information.

There are tools available to help guardians discuss these topics using a trauma-informed approach. Autism Speaks also has online resources designed to help parents of children with autism prepare themselves and their child to respond to and recover from emergencies. For more information and resources from Autism Speaks, visit: www.autismspeaks.org/autism-speaks-natural-disaster-resources.

National Exercise Day – April 18th

April 18th is National Exercise Day. Yup, they are talking about physical exercises to break a sweat and get moving. However, we are going to take this opportunity to tell you about the DEMS Training and Exercise Division, which focuses on planning and executing preparedness, response, and recovery trainings. Training is provided for DEMS Staff and partner agencies in all facets of preparedness to effectively mitigate county emergencies through all hazards planning. Plans are written which require specific training and ultimately must be exercised and evaluated prior to implementation/validation. There are several different types of exercises, such as workshops, seminars, tabletops, functional and full-scale that test plans and procedures to increase Fairfax County's preparedness. In fact, we will be participating in a Fairfax Water Occoquan Dam tabletop exercise next week!



Training Spotlight: DEMS Hosting National Weather Service SKYWARN® Convection Class April 17, 2023

The SKYWARN® Convection course provides an in depth training of severe weather hazards and the role of spotters during these events. The course is intended for all levels of expertise, though having attended a Basic class (with any NWS office) is mandatory to attend. We also require you to be at least 14 years of age. Topics to be covered include:

- Severe weather hazards in the Mid-Atlantic
- Ingredients and forecasting for severe weather
- Severe weather statistics
- Severe weather preparation and safety
- NWS severe weather products
- The role of a SKYWARN® spotter in severe weather



This SKYWARN® Spotter Class is offered free of charge from the combined efforts of your local National Weather Service Forecast Office and Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security. A National Weather Service meteorologist will teach the class.

Registration is MANDATORY: www.eventbrite.com/e/skywarn-convection-fairfax-county-va-tickets-608556618227

Upcoming Trainings

***All trainings below require a registration, please use the link: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax**

April 12: Introduction to Preparedness @ Providence Community Center

April 19: Special Webinar for National 9-1-1 Education Month @ 7 PM

April 19: Until Help Arrives @ Reston Government Center

April 26: Until Help Arrives @ Providence Community Center

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/emergencymanagement/presentation-requests)

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.).