

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



DEMS Monthly Webinars

Check out our monthly webinar series each month where we talk about a variety of preparedness topics! Link: <https://bit.ly/DEMSWebinar>

Community Emergency Preparedness Expo featuring 123 Andrés!

In recognition of the twenty-first annual *National Preparedness Month* this September, the **City of Fairfax Office of Emergency Management and Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security** are co-hosting a **Community Emergency Preparedness Expo** on **Saturday, September 6, 2025**, at the **Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center (3740 Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22030)** from **10 AM - 2 PM**.



The event will kick off with a special family-friendly performance by Grammy Award-winning artists 123 Andrés from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Known for their energetic and educational shows, 123 Andrés will debut a brand-new song about emergency preparedness designed to engage kids and families in a fun and meaningful way. While children enjoy the music, parents will have the opportunity to visit vendor tables and learn more about how to prepare their households for emergencies. This performance sets the tone for a day focused on building a more resilient and informed community.

This event will take place both indoors and outdoors, with activities set up in the parking lot.

The event is free, but registration is requested. Register by either scanning the QR code above, or by visiting <https://bit.ly/SeptPrepExpo123Andres>.

Public Safety Day – Saturday, October 4, 2025

It is never too early to add MPSTOC'S Public Safety Day to your Calendars! Join us for a day of celebrating, learning, and practicing public safety and emergency preparedness! The event is hosted by Fairfax County 9-1-1 and Department of Emergency Management and Security and will take place October 4, 2025, at MPSTOC 4890 Alliance Dr from 10 AM – 2 PM.



Staying in the Loop: How to Maximize your Access to Emergency Alerts

Emergencies happen quickly, and your ability to respond rapidly depends on how fast you are informed of the incoming or active danger. Signing up for emergency alerts is one of the most critical aspects of emergency preparedness as it allows you to increase your response time and gives you the best chances of keeping you and your loved ones safe! Luckily, in the modern age of technology, you have endless opportunities to sign up for different ways to receive emergency alerts – some of which you might not have even guessed! Redundancy is a very important aspect of emergency preparedness, meaning it is important to have different ways to receive emergency alerts in case one way, such as phone alerts, is disrupted! This idea also extends to your emergency plan and ensuring that all members of your family and network have different ways to receive these emergency alerts – not just one person! Here are some examples of different ways for your family members to sign up and receive emergency alerts:



Emergency Alerts on your Personal Phone

There are actually a few different and very important ways to receive emergency alerts on your mobile devices. Apple iPhones, Google Phones, and all other phones have an Emergency Alerts tab in their settings application that can be toggled on to receive different types of emergency alerts. This is an easy and simple way for you and your loved ones to receive vital information in a time efficient manner!

Signing up for Fairfax Alerts

Fairfax Alerts is one of the best and easiest ways for Fairfax County residents to receive specified emergency alerts. Fairfax Alerts is free and provides families, businesses, faith communities, nonprofits, and volunteers with vital information about weather, traffic, public safety, and more! When creating an account, users can choose up to 10 delivery methods, including cell phone, home phone, email, text messages, and more. Scan the QR code or visit [the Fairfax Alerts Website](#) to sign you and your loved ones up!



Emergency Alerts on your Home Assistants (Amazon Alexa, Google Home, Nest Thermostats)

In the modern age of technology, it is common for households to have home assistants such as Amazon Alexa and Google Home. Additionally, some houses might be equipped with high tech thermostats such as Nest Thermostats. Did you know that these devices could be used to stay prepared, alert, and even call for help? While each device may offer different services or functionalities, many of these technologies have features that can help you, your family, and your loved ones stay prepared! For example, Amazon Alexa offers the ability to set an emergency contact through which you can simply ask Alexa to “call your emergency contact” to get hands-free help! Additionally, Amazon Alexa and Google Home offer features that can notify you of severe weather alerts, or even more routine updates like when it’s going to rain, snow, or be extremely hot. These features can help you stay informed and better prepared for the day ahead.

Similarly, smart devices like Nest Thermostats can provide homeowners with emergency alerts and response options. For example, if a Nest carbon-monoxide alarm is triggered, you’ll receive a mobile alert notifying you of the danger and offering options such as shutting off the thermostat remotely. Exploring the safety features included with these devices can help you better prepare and protect yourself and your loved ones.

Staying Alert with Accessible Emergency Radios

When power is out or cell service is down, staying informed during emergencies can be a challenge. That's why having a radio - preferably hand-crank or battery-powered - is an essential part of your emergency kit. These radios not only keep you connected to important updates, but many models include features that support individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

NOAA Weather Radios (NWR) equipped with SAME (Specific Area Message Encoding) can send alerts tailored to your exact location. With the help of attachments like strobe lights, bed shakers, or loud sirens, these devices ensure that emergency warnings are received - whether you're asleep, hard of hearing, or simply away from your phone. Some models even include battery backup, so you stay informed during power outages.

Place your radio in an accessible spot in your home, by your bed, or keep one in your emergency go-kit. It's a simple step that can make a big difference.

Visit [weather.gov/nwr/special_needs](https://www.weather.gov/nwr/special_needs) to learn more about accessible alert options and find the right radio for your needs.

Extreme Heat Preparedness in the Summer

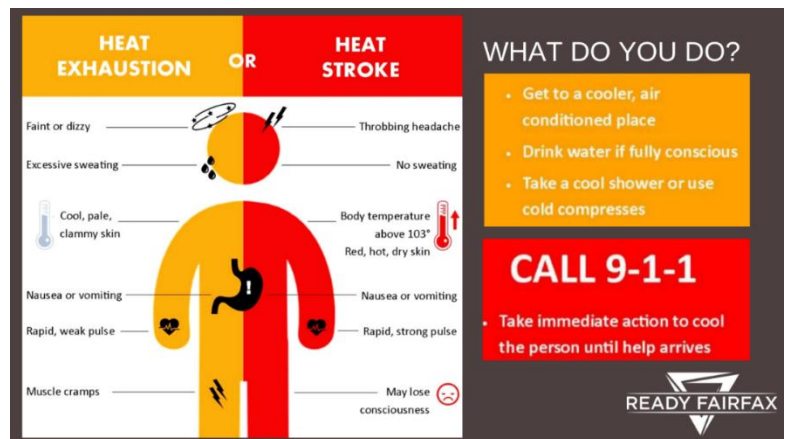
As summer heats up, the risks associated with extreme temperatures increase. That's why it's important to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and take steps to stay safe, reducing your chances of becoming ill in the first place.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Related Illness

The signs and symptoms of heat related illness can vary from person to person but some of the more common signs and symptoms can be seen in the diagram below:

What You Can Do to Stay Safe and Minimize Risk

Below are some basic steps you can take to stay safe when out in the heat and minimize your risk of experiencing heat related illness:



- Stay Hydrated:** Make sure you drink plenty of water. Be sure to avoid drinks with caffeine or lots of sugar like coffee or soda, as these can dehydrate you.
- Stay Indoors or in Shaded Areas:** Take frequent breaks indoors (public libraries, malls, even the movies are a great place to go). If you are outside, try to stay in the shade, such as under a tree or umbrella.
- Dress for the Weather:** Avoid wearing heavy or dark colored clothes as these can keep heat in and make you extra hot. Opt for lightweight, light-colored clothing to help you stay cool.
- Keep Yourself Cool:** Using things like handheld fans, ice packs, or a mist bottle can help you stay cool when doing activities outdoors.
- Modify Physical Activity:** If you do decide to go outside, especially for activities such as workouts, try to go out in the early morning or later in the evening, as this is when the sun won't be as strong, reducing your risk of overheating.
- Protect Vulnerable Individuals:** Be sure to check on your elderly neighbors, your children, and those with disabilities who may struggle more with the heat. Make sure they are staying

cool and have everything they need, such as cold water and ice.

Looking for additional resources about how to stay safe in the heat? Check out these links below to help you stay cool and prepared:

Extreme Heat Hazard Page: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/extremeheat

Extreme Heat Resources: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/extreme-heat-resources

Pool Safety

With summer being in full swing you and your family are likely to enjoy some time by the pool. It's important to have fun while remembering to stay safe when swimming and spending time around the pool. Below are some things that you can do to keep you and your family safe when spending time by the pool:

1. **Supervise Your Kids:** Whenever your kids are out by the pool, make sure there is an adult with them. This ensures that if an emergency were to arise, such as a drowning incident, a grown-up is there to respond and ensure the safety of the child.
2. **Teach Your Kids to Swim:** It's important that your kids know how to swim before they go in or near the pool. This will help to minimize the risk of drowning and make sure they can react if they were to fall in unexpectedly.
3. **Have Barriers Around the Pool:** Having barriers, such as a fence, will prevent young children from accessing the pool while unattended, helping to ensure their safety.
4. **Lay Down Some Ground Rules:** Putting in place some basic rules for your kids, such as no running, rough housing, etc. will help to ensure they are safe when swimming and reduce the risk of accidents, such as falls or drowning.
5. **Learn CPR and First-Aid:** Learning basic CPR and first-aid skills will help you to respond if there is an emergency at the pool, so that you can minimize the negative effects of the emergency situation.

By following some of these tips, you and your family will be able to have fun at the pool, while staying safe this summer.

Summer Pet Safety Tips

With pets being such a big part of our lives, we want to make sure that you are looking out for the safety of your pets just as much as you are looking out for our own safety. Below are some basic things that you can do to make sure your pet stays safe this summer.

1. **Protect Your Pet from the Heat:** Just like humans, pets can suffer from heat exhaustion and heat stroke so make sure your pet stays cool in the summer by giving them plenty of time indoors or in shaded areas. Also, never leave your pet in a locked car, even with a cracked window as it will heat up very quickly and can lead to heat exhaustion and be very dangerous for them.
2. **Hydrate Your Pet:** Pets can dehydrate just like humans, so make sure they always have access to water and are drinking plenty, especially when spending time outdoors or doing strenuous activity like going with you for a hike.
3. **Sun Protection:** Your pets can get sunburn too, so make sure you buy some pet safe sunscreen from the pet store and apply it to their bellies, nose, ears, etc. to protect them from sunburn.
4. **Protect Your Pet's Paws:** The ground can get very hot in the summertime and has the ability

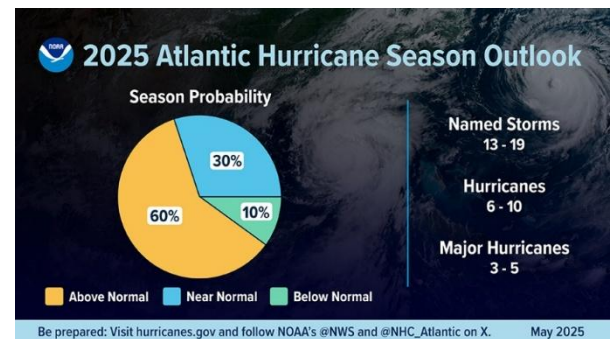
to burn your pet's paws. Make sure you are always walking your pet on cooler ground, such as grass, or get some protective shoes for your pet, so they can walk without hurting their paws.

5. **Swim Safety:** If you're going to let your pet get in the water, make sure they know how to swim. If they don't know how to swim or are not comfortable in the water, you can get them a pet friendly floatation device so they can enjoy the water on a hot summer day without facing any safety risks, such as drowning.
6. **Emergency Kit:** Just like we have emergency kits for humans you can make one for your pet. It's always good to carry a bag for your pet with items like a drinking bowl and water, extra food, sunscreen, a cooling vest or towel, first-aid supplies, such as pet safe bandages, flea meds, etc., should you need it.

By following these pet safety tips, you will be able to ensure the safety and happiness of your pet, as you go through the summer.

Hurricane Season is Here!

The 2025 [Atlantic hurricane season is expected to be an active one](#), according to forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). With warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic Ocean and favorable atmospheric conditions, the stage is set for the development of numerous tropical storms and hurricanes.



Potential Impacts

While residents along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts are typically at the greatest risk for hurricanes, inland areas like Fairfax County and Northern Virginia can also experience significant potential threats to be aware of:

- **Heavy rainfall and flooding:** Hurricanes and tropical storms can bring torrential downpours, leading to flash floods and river flooding.
- **High winds:** Even if the storm's center remains offshore, strong winds can cause widespread power outages and damage to trees and structures.
- **Tornadoes:** Hurricanes can spawn tornadoes, particularly in their outer rain bands, posing a threat to inland areas.

Preparedness Tips

Although our residents may not experience the direct impacts of a hurricane, it's crucial to be prepared for potential threats. Here are some tips to help you stay safe:

1. Create an [emergency kit](#): Assemble a kit with essential supplies, including non-perishable food, water, medications, first-aid supplies, a battery-powered radio, and flashlights.
2. Develop an evacuation plan: Identify safe evacuation routes and a meeting place for your family in case you need to leave your home. [Learn more on creating a plan for you and your family](#).
3. Secure your home: Trim trees and shrubs, clear rain gutters and secure loose outdoor objects that could become projectiles in high winds.
4. Stay informed: Ensure you have several ways to receive alerts. Monitor local news and weather reports for updates on potential storms and follow instructions from local authorities.

You can also [sign up for Fairfax Alerts](#) to get traffic alerts and weather alerts.

5. Have backup power sources: Consider investing in a portable generator or power bank to keep essential devices charged in case of power outages.
6. Protect important documents: Store important documents, such as insurance policies and personal identification, in a waterproof container or secure location.

Remember, even if a hurricane or tropical storm doesn't make landfall in our area, the impacts can be widespread and long-lasting. By taking proactive steps to prepare, you can help ensure the safety of your family and minimize potential damage to your property.

Stay vigilant, stay informed and stay safe during the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season.

Visit the Hurricane Hazard Page in the Community Emergency Response Guide for more tips: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/hurricanestropicalstorms

Back to School Preparedness

As we get closer to the beginning of the school year, it's important to start thinking about how you and your family can prepare for a safe transition back to school. Below are some preparedness tips to help you and your family get ready for this school year:

Update Emergency Contact Information: Ensure your child's school has the most current emergency contact details, including your phone number, address, and any alternate contacts. This helps the school reach you quickly in case of an emergency.

1. **Create Pocket-Sized Emergency Information Cards:** Prepare small cards that include your emergency contact information and any important details about your child, such as medical conditions, allergies, or medications. These cards can be invaluable if an emergency occurs and you're not there to provide the information yourself.
2. **Establish a Daily Meeting Point:** Choose a specific spot where your child will meet you after school each day. This helps prevent confusion and ensures they don't leave with the wrong person. Remind your child who is authorized to pick them up—such as parents, grandparents, or siblings—and reinforce that they should never go home with someone they don't know.
3. **Create a Shared Family Calendar/Schedule:** Use a shared calendar that everyone in your family can access to keep track of schedules and activities. This helps ensure everyone stays informed and reduces confusion during the busy school year. It also makes it easier to spot if something seems off so you can respond promptly.

Following these back-to-school tips will help make sure that you and your family are able to stay safe and have a successful school year.

Emergency Preparedness Interactive Material Made for Kids

The Department of Emergency Management and Security has several books for kids! Take the time before you go back to school to prepare your kids for any emergency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also has several "Prepare with Pedro" publications including topics on extreme heat, hurricanes, and more!



DEMS Kid's Books: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax

FEMA's Prepare with Pedro: www.ready.gov/kids/prepare-pedro

Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) Functional Exercise

On June 5, 2025, the Department of Emergency Management Security (DEMS) conducted a functional exercise of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), as part of the four-day FEMA Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC). The exercise simulated a complex transportation accident involving hazardous materials.

During the exercise, 19 Fairfax County agencies worked together to respond in real time to multiple challenges, including a large number of injured people, hazardous material spills, fires, building damage, evacuations, and communication issues. Personnel from two neighboring jurisdictions also supported the conduct and evaluation of the exercise.

This hands-on scenario helped participants better understand how the EOC operates during emergencies, clarified individual roles, and improved coordination and information sharing. The exercise concluded with a press conference led by the Office of Public Affairs to update the community on the simulated event.

Functional exercises like this are critical to ensuring Fairfax County is prepared to protect residents' health and safety during emergencies. They provide staff an opportunity to practice coordinated communication, decision-making, and operational procedures in a realistic yet controlled setting—helping identify strengths and areas for improvement. DEMS will use lessons learned from this exercise to refine emergency plans and enhance readiness for real-life incidents.

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.).



Fairfax County
IEMC
2025



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