

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



DEMS Monthly Webinar on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at 7 PM

Join us on Wednesday, June 5, at 7 p.m. as we host Trice Burgess from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Office of the Fire Marshall who will talk about the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) Link: <https://youtu.be/WeAA2fK8YFw>

Hurricane Season Starts June 1st

The 2024 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.

- NOAA forecasts a range of 17 to 25 named storms (winds of 39 mph or higher).
- Of those, 8 to 13 are predicted to become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or higher).
- Additionally, 4 to 7 major hurricanes (category 3 or higher with winds of 111 mph or higher) are expected.



These numbers are above the 30-year average of 14 named storms, 7 hurricanes and 3 major hurricanes. However, it's important to note that these predictions are subject to change as the season progresses and new data becomes available.

Potential Impacts

While residents along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts are typically at greatest risk from 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 and 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: Monitor local news and weather reports for updates on potential storms and follow instructions from local authorities. And sign up for Fairfax Alerts.
5. Have a backup power source: 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 2024 Atlantic hurricane season.

Hurricane Hazard Page: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readymfairfax/hurricanestropicalstorms

Extreme Heat Preparedness

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses is essential for prompt treatment and prevention of severe complications.

The infographic is divided into two main columns: 'HEAT EXHAUSTION' (yellow background) and 'HEAT STROKE' (red background), separated by the word 'OR'. A central figure of a person is also split vertically, with the left half yellow and the right half red. Symptoms are listed on either side of the figure, with lines pointing to the corresponding half of the body. On the right side, there are two boxes: a yellow one with 'WHAT DO YOU DO?' and a red one with 'CALL 9-1-1'. At the bottom right is the 'READY FAIRFAX' logo.

HEAT EXHAUSTION	OR	HEAT STROKE
Faint or dizzy		Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating		No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin		Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin
Nausea or vomiting		Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse		Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps		May lose consciousness

WHAT DO YOU DO?

- Get to a cooler, air conditioned place
- Drink water if fully conscious
- Take a cool shower or use cold compresses

CALL 9-1-1

- Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives

READY FAIRFAX

Stay safe during extreme heat, follow these precautions and tips:

1. Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid sugary or alcoholic beverages, as they can contribute to dehydration.
2. Dress appropriately: Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing to help your body cool itself.
3. Seek air conditioning: If possible, stay in an air-conditioned place during the hottest hours of the day. If your home doesn't have air conditioning, visit a shopping mall, public library, or cooling center.
4. Limit outdoor activities: Reschedule strenuous outdoor activities for cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or evening.

5. Take breaks: If you must work outdoors, take frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
6. Never leave anyone in a parked vehicle: Cars can quickly become dangerously hot, even with the windows cracked open.
7. Check on vulnerable individuals: Check on elderly neighbors, young children, and those with chronic medical conditions, as they are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses.
8. Learn the signs of heat-related illnesses: Be aware of the symptoms and seek medical attention immediately if you or someone you know is experiencing them.

By following these precautions and raising awareness about the dangers of extreme heat, we can help prevent heat-related emergencies and save lives. Have a plan in place before excessive heat strikes and prioritize safety for yourself and those around you.

Resources:

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

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

Extreme Heat – Vulnerable Populations

Extreme heat events pose significant risks to individuals with disabilities, who may be disproportionately affected due to unique vulnerabilities. For example, people with spinal cord injuries often have impaired sweating responses, which compromises their ability to regulate body temperature. This makes them more susceptible to heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke, and they can experience adverse reactions more quickly than those without such injuries.



Similarly, individuals with cognitive or developmental disabilities might not recognize the signs of overheating or be able to communicate their discomfort effectively. This can result in delayed response to dangerous heat exposure, increasing their risk of heat-related health issues.

To ensure the well-being of individuals with disabilities during extreme heat, it is important to have preventative measures. These measures include:

- Water Breaks: Encourage regular water breaks, especially when spending time outdoors.
- Watch for Changes: Pay close attention to any changes in behavior that may indicate heat discomfort or distress. Behavioral changes can be subtle, such as irritability, confusion, or lethargy, and require prompt attention.
- Environment Control: Ensure access to cool, shaded, or air-conditioned environments during peak heat periods.
- Education and Awareness: Educate caregivers and individuals with disabilities about the signs of heat-related illnesses and the importance of taking preventive actions.

By recognizing and addressing the specific needs of individuals with disabilities during extreme heat, communities can better protect these vulnerable groups and prevent heat-related illnesses effectively.

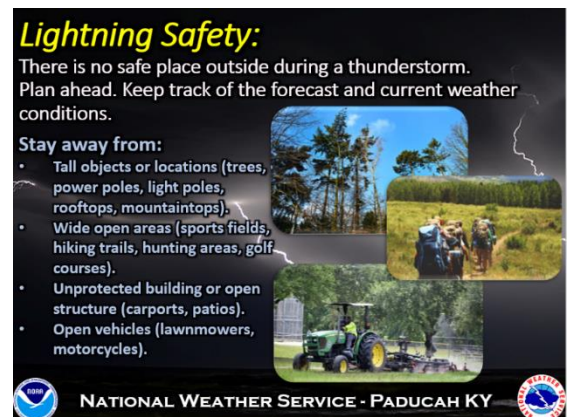
- Sparklers can be very dangerous and account for most injuries. Pieces can break off and burn bystanders.
- Young children should not use sparklers as these can attain a temperature as high as 1800 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.

Please have a safe summer and stay away from dangerous and illegal fireworks. Remember, there are many public displays available that offer a safe way to view fireworks. For more information on this or other safety issues, please contact the Fire Departments' Public Affairs and Life Safety Education at 703-246-3801 or visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/fire-marshal/community-risk-reduction>.

Lightning Safety Awareness Week: June 23rd – 29th

Lightning poses a significant threat to life and property. Lightning Safety Awareness Week is from June 23-29 to educate and prepare us for the dangers associated with lightning. Follow these tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Upon seeing lightning or hearing thunder, head indoors immediately.
- Remain inside until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder.
- Sign up for Fairfax Alerts to get weather alerts and have a battery or crank powered weather radio to receive emergency information.



By staying informed, seeking shelter, and following safety guidelines, we can significantly reduce the risk of injury and property damage from lightning strikes. Let's commit to spreading awareness and ensuring our communities are prepared to stay safe during thunderstorms. Remember, when thunder roars, go indoors!

Volunteer Emergency Team (VET) – JOIN TODAY!

Do you have a calling to make a difference in your community during disasters? Then consider joining the Volunteer Emergency Team (VET)! VET members can serve in two different roles within the team.

VET Members:

VET members are ready to be called upon to volunteer when an emergency happens. Volunteers will be signed up in Fairfax County's Volunteer Management System (VMS) and will be the first ones called on when volunteers are needed. Volunteers will have the opportunity (but are not required) to participate in training and exercises year-round, as well as outreach events to educate residents on how to prepare for emergencies.

VET Leaders:

A VET Leader is the next step if you want to take on more of a leadership position during an emergency. A VET Leader will be trained to help Volunteer Fairfax set up and staff key positions at a physical Volunteer Reception Center (VRC). VET Leaders will be invited to help create, design, and facilitate drills and exercises for the Volunteer Emergency Team. Some of the expected functions of a VET member are:

- Serve in leadership position to help facilitate the opening and management of a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) to help coordinate spontaneous or unaffiliated volunteers during emergencies.
- During non-emergency times help educate and train residents how to prepare for emergencies and disasters.

Interested? Apply today: <https://bit.ly/FairfaxVET>

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 \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://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.

- 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.).
- Online Trainings - <https://bit.ly/DEMS-Training>
 - Introduction to Preparedness
 - Introduction to Business Preparedness

Where Will You Be This Month?

While we attend several community events and conduct presentations on a regular basis, please stop by our table at the following community events:



June 15 – Fairfax County Library - Friends of Fairfax Library Children's Summer Reading Festival (Woodrow Wilson Library in Falls Church)

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