



May 1, 2022

# From the Director's Chair

**Jefferson County Commissioners:**

- Caleb Wayne Hudson, President
- Steve Stolipher, Vice President
- Clare Ath
- Tricia Jackson
- Jane M. Tabb

Hello and welcome to the May 2022 edition of the Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's (JCOHSEM) newsletter.

This newsletter includes information on National Wildfire Awareness Month, National Building Safety Month, National Hurricane Preparedness Month, Don't Fry Day, and National Dam Safety Day.

This edition is full of details which we hope you find informative.

**Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management**

## National Wildfire Awareness Month

Wildfires are unplanned fires that burn in natural areas like forests, grasslands or prairies. These dangerous fires spread quickly and can devastate not only wildlife and natural areas, but also communities.

- John Sherwood, Chair, Chamber of Commerce Representative
- Ed Smith, Vice Chair, Fire and Rescue Representative
- Donald Grubb, Health Representative
- Jesse Hott, Mass Care Representative
- Paula Marrone-Reese, Non-Governmental Organization Representative
- Mason Carter, Jefferson County Department of Engineering Representative
- Jeffrey A. Polezynski, ENP, Jefferson County Emergency Communications Center Representative
- Tricia Jackson, County Commission Representative
- Kelly Parsons, Private Industry Representative
- Thomas H. Hansen, Sheriff, Law Enforcement Representative
- Thomas Butcher, Utilities Representative
- Lyn Goodwin, Jefferson County Development Authority Representative
- Holly Morgan Frye, Shepherd University, V. P. for Student Affairs, Education Representative
- Sanford "Sandy" Green, Region 3 Homeland Security Area Liaison

## Prepare for Wildfires

### Recognize Warnings and Alerts

Have several ways to receive alerts. [Download the FEMA app](#) and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. [Sign up for community alerts](#) in your area and be aware of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA), which requires no-sign up.

Pay attention to [air quality alerts](#).

### Make an Emergency Plan

Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands what to do if you need to quickly evacuate.

Don't forget a plan for the [office, kids' daycare and anywhere you frequent](#).

### Review Important Documents

Make sure your [insurance policies and personal documents](#), like ID, are up to date.

Make copies and keep them in a secure password-protected digital space.

### Strengthen your Home

Use fire-resistant materials to build, renovate or make repairs.

Find an outdoor water source with a hose that can reach any area of your property.

Create a [fire-resistant zone](#) that is free of leaves, debris or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.

Designate a room that can be closed off from outside air. Close all doors and windows. Set up a portable air cleaner to keep indoor pollution levels low when smoky conditions exist.

**JCOHSEM Staff:**

- Stephen S. Allen, Director
- Dick Myers, Deputy Director/ Planner/ Program Manager
- Vacant — Administrative Assistant/ Public Information Officer/Volunteer Coordinator

## Know your Evacuation Zone



You may have to evacuate quickly due to a wildfire. [Learn your evacuation routes](#), practice with household, pets and identify where you will go.

Follow the instructions from local authorities. They will provide the latest recommendations based on the threat to your community and appropriate safety measures.

### Gather Supplies

[Have enough supplies](#) for your household, including a first aid kit, in your go bag or car trunk.

Being prepared allows you to avoid unnecessary excursions and to address minor medical issues at home, alleviating the burden on urgent care centers and hospitals.

Remember that not everyone can afford to respond by stocking up on necessities. For those who can afford it, making essential purchases and slowly building up supplies in advance will allow for longer time periods between shopping trips.

Be cautious when carrying flammable or combustible household products that can cause fires or explosions if handled wrong, such as aerosols, cooking oils, rubbing alcohol and [hand sanitizer](#).

If available, store an N95 mask to protect yourself from smoke inhalation.

[Keep your cell phone charged](#) when wildfires could be in your area. Purchase backup charging devices to power electronics.

### Stay Safe During

Pay attention to emergency alerts and notifications for information and instructions.

Evacuate immediately if authorities tell you to do so!

Check with local authorities for the latest information about public shelters or check open locations on the FEMA app. You can also download the free [Red Cross Emergency app](#) for a list of [open Red Cross shelters](#) in your area.

Consider making plans with friends or family to shelter with them where you may be safer and more comfortable.

If trapped, call 9-1-1 and give your location, but be aware that emergency response could be delayed or impossible. Turn on lights to help rescuers find you.

Use an N95 mask to protect yourself from smoke inhalation or limit your exposure to smoke by doing the following:

Choose a room to close off from outside air and set up a portable air cleaner or filter to keep the air in this room clean even when it's smoky in the rest of the building and outdoors.

Use high efficiency filters in your central air conditioning system to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has fresh air intake, set the system to "recirculate" mode and close the outdoor intake damper.

If you are not ordered to evacuate but smoky conditions exist, stay inside in a safe location or go to a community building where smoke levels are lower.

If you are sick and need medical attention, contact your healthcare provider for further care instructions and shelter in place, if possible.

## Returning Home After a Wildfire

Do not return home until authorities say it is safe to do so.

Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris and live embers. The ground may contain heat pockets that can burn you or spark another fire.

When cleaning, wear protective clothing – including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves and sturdy thick-soled shoes – during clean-up efforts.

Use a respirator to limit your exposure, and wet debris to minimize breathing dust particles. People with asthma, COPD and/or other lung conditions should take precautions in areas with poor air quality, as it can worsen symptoms.

Document property damage with photographs. Conduct an inventory and contact your insurance company for assistance.

Send text messages or use social media to reach out to family and friends. Phone systems are often busy following a disaster. Make calls only in emergencies.

## National Building Safety Month

Building Safety Month is an international campaign that takes place in May to raise awareness about building safety. This campaign reinforces the need for the adoption of modern, regularly-updated building codes, and helps individuals, families and businesses understand what it takes to create safe and sustainable structures.

The International Code Council, its members, and a diverse partnership of professionals from the building construction, design and safety communities come together with corporations, government agencies, professional associations and nonprofits to promote building safety through proclamations, informational events, legislative briefings and more. We come together to support Building Safety Month because we understand the need for safe and sustainable structures where we live, work and play.

All communities need building codes to protect their citizens from disasters like fires, weather-related events and structural collapse. Building codes are society's best way of protecting homes, offices, schools, manufacturing facilities, stores and entertainment venues. Code officials work day in and day out to keep the public safe.

**Building Safety Month is an international campaign celebrated in May to raise awareness about building safety. [Learn more.](#)**



# National Hurricane Preparedness Week

## Prepare for Hurricanes

### Know Your Hurricane Risk

Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem. Find out how rain, wind, water and even tornadoes could happen far inland from where a hurricane or tropical storm makes landfall. [Start preparing now](#).

### Make an Emergency Plan

Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands [your hurricane plans](#). Include the [office, kids' day care, and anywhere else you frequent](#) in your hurricane plans. Ensure your business has a [continuity plan](#) to continue operating when disaster strikes.

### Know your Evacuation Zone

You may have to evacuate quickly due to a hurricane if you live in an evacuation zone. [Learn your evacuation routes](#), practice with your household and pets, and identify where you will stay.

Follow the instructions from local emergency managers, who work closely with state, local, tribal, and territorial agencies and partners. They will provide the latest recommendations based on the threat to your community and appropriate safety measures.

### Recognize Warnings and Alerts

Have several ways to receive alerts. [Download the FEMA app](#) and receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations nationwide. [Sign up for community alerts](#) in your area and be aware of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA), which require no sign up.

### Those with Disabilities

Identify if you may need additional help during an emergency if you or anyone else in your household is an [individual with a disability](#).

### Review Important Documents

Make sure your [insurance policies and personal documents](#), such as ID, are up to date. Make copies and keep them in a secure password-protected digital space.

### Strengthen your Home

De-clutter drains and gutters, bring in outside furniture, and consider hurricane shutters.

### Get Tech Ready

[Keep your cell phone charged](#) when you know a hurricane is in the forecast and purchase backup charging devices to power electronics.

### Help your Neighborhood

Check with neighbors, [senior adults](#), or those [who may need additional help](#) securing hurricane plans to see how you can be of assistance to others

### Gather Supplies

[Have enough supplies](#) for your household, include medication, disinfectant supplies and [pet supplies](#) in your go bag or car trunk. You may not have access to these supplies for days or even weeks after a hurricane.

## Stay Safe During a Hurricane

### Stay Informed

Pay attention to emergency information and alerts.

If you live in a mandatory evacuation zone and local officials tell you to evacuate, do so immediately.

## Dealing with the Weather

Determine how best to protect yourself from high winds and flooding.

Take refuge in a designated storm shelter or an interior room for high winds.

Go to the highest level of the building if you are trapped by flooding. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising flood water.

Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Turn Around. Don't Drown! Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away

## Returning Home After a Hurricane

Pay attention to local officials for information and special instructions.

Be careful during clean up. Wear protective clothing, use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning [mold or other debris](#). People with [asthma and other lung conditions](#) and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled, even if these individuals are not allergic to mold. Children should not help with disaster cleanup work.

Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.

Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.

Do not wade in flood water, which can contain dangerous pathogens that cause illnesses. This water also can contain debris, chemicals, waste and wildlife. Underground or downed power lines also can electrically charge the water.

Save phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems often are down or busy after a disaster. Use text messages or social media to communicate with family and friends.

Document any property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company for assistance.

## Don't Fry Day

### The Friday before Memorial Day is *Don't Fry Day!*

The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention designated the Friday before Memorial Day as *Don't Fry Day*. The Council's goal is to encourage sun safety awareness by reminding everyone to protect their skin while enjoying the outdoors on *Don't Fry Day* and every day.





# National Dam Safety Awareness Day

National Dam Safety Awareness Day occurs each year on May 31 to commemorate the failure of the South Fork Dam in Johnstown, Pennsylvania on May 31, 1889.

National Dam Safety Awareness Day was created to encourage and promote individual and community responsibility and best practices for dam safety, and what steps people can take to either prevent future catastrophic dam failures or lessen the impact if a failure was to occur. Another important goal of National Dam Safety Awareness Day is to promote the benefits that dams offer.

Learn More: <https://damsafety.org/NDSAD>

Dams provide a life-sustaining resource to people in all United States regions; however, they are innately hazardous structures. Failure or mis-operation can result in the release of the reservoir contents - this includes water, mine wastes, or agricultural refuse - causing negative impacts upstream or downstream or at locations remote from the dam. Dam failures have caused loss of human life, economic loss, including property damage, lifeline disruption and environmental damage.

Recent crises like the [failure of the Oroville Dam](#) spillway in California or the [failure of the Edenville and Sanford dams](#) in Michigan, have made major headlines, highlighting the poor condition of many of the nation's dams. Without proper maintenance, routine inspection, necessary upgrades, and coordinated emergency planning, the risks associated with dams become greater. And for those living around dams or in dam-inundation areas, the risk may be great. It is therefore of the utmost importance that those living near dams know their risks. Communication helps increase knowledge, understanding, and awareness of dams and the risks dams pose.



Photo: Wreckage after the flood in Johnstown, Pennsylvania (via Library of Congress). The issue of dam safety was not widely recognized until 1889 when the failure of South Fork Dam claimed more than 2,200 lives. As we observe the 132nd anniversary of this tragedy on May 31, we encourage you to understand the importance of dam safety, the role various parties play, and current dam safety issues. For a technical look at this failure, view the [South Fork Dam case study](#) on DamFailures.org.

# Need Training?

Emergency management is a constantly-changing field. Whether it is keeping up with the latest technology, to working with stakeholders to develop plans, conducting successful floodplain management, performing damage assessments, managing debris after a disaster, helping our communities to recover, or just learning the fundamentals, there are plenty of options available to you. Here are some great opportunities for training that you may or may not know about.

**\*\*Due to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, many of the previously scheduled courses have been cancelled. Please check <http://www.onlinelearning.wv.gov/dmapscm6> or contact Chuck Bennett at [charles.w.bennett@wv.gov](mailto:charles.w.bennett@wv.gov) with any questions in regards to cancelled or rescheduled courses.\*\***

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## Upcoming Local Training

None Scheduled at this time.

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## Disaster Exercise Series 2021/2022



Discussions over the past several months in our LEPC meetings, have taken place resulting in the scheduling of the upcoming tabletop exercise “Smoking Mountains”. It is a continuance of the exercise we participated in in 2019 and has been postponed over the past 2 years due to COVID and the inability to meet in-person with a large group. The scenario was a series of fires intentionally set in a mountainous environment in protest, with additional needs for investigations and securing of the scenes. It involved the evacuations of residences and the need for sheltering and feeding of the evacuees and the first responders. I also recall some hazardous materials being involved in an accident. There were many needs for assistance and mutual aid to cover the unmet needs.

The exercise for Jefferson County will be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 starting promptly at 10AM. The U.S. EPA and its START contractors will be coordinating the exercise and will be in the Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) in each of the 7 counties in our region to take notes and pass along the injects for us to react to. Jefferson County will be operating out of Hospice of the Panhandle, located at 330 Hospice Lane in Kearneysville. Hospice has offered us the use of their training/meeting room and we are fortunate to have a partner as willing as them to assist us. Their facility offers a very large room, complete with all of the internet and power capabilities to make the exercise a success! A lunch meal is also being provided to us by Hospice.

We are making the exercise available on-line in order to enable those of you who cannot participate in-person to engage with your respective EOC’s as well.

A list of participating agencies who are interested in being part of the exercise has been compiled and sent to the U.S. EPA and its START contractors. It is important that we get as many agencies as possible to work with us in this training event to make it a success.

We are excited to finally be able to get together again to utilize our training, equipment, and experience to simulate the mitigation of these situations. Come join us in this endeavor!

If you or your organization is interested in participating in the 2021/22 tabletop exercise, please contact Stephen Allen at: [sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org](mailto:sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org).

## Online FEMA Training

FEMA offers a number of online courses at <https://training.fema.gov/is/>. From this training portal, anyone can take their online independent study courses for free. There are over 100 courses to choose from. You can also browse the schedules and information about their on-campus resident courses for those who are involved in emergency management in the federal, state, local or tribal governments.

JCOHSEM recommends the following FEMA Independent Study Courses. These courses are free and available online. After the course is completed an online test can be taken. Once the test is passed you will receive a completion certificate.

### **IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System**

**Course Overview:** ICS 100, Introduction to the Incident Command System, introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the Incident Command System. It also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

**Primary Audience:** The target audience includes persons involved with emergency planning, and response or recovery efforts.

**Course Length:** 2 hours

**Course Link:** <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c>

### **IS 200.C - Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response**

**Course Overview:** Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, reviews the Incident Command System (ICS), provides the context for ICS within initial response, and supports higher level ICS training. This course provides training on, and resources for, personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within ICS.

**Primary Audience:** The intended audience (s) are response personnel at the supervisory level who are involved with emergency planning, response, or recovery efforts.

**Course Length:** 4 hours

**Course Link:** <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.c>

### **IS 908 - Emergency Management for Senior Officials**

**Course Overview:** The purpose of this course is to introduce senior officials to the important role they play in emergency management. The responsibility for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from incidents, both natural and manmade, begins at the local level – with individuals and public officials in the county, city, or town affected by the incident. This course presents:

- Simple steps official can take to become acquainted with their emergency management role, authorities, and team members.
- Video presentations sharing lessons learned from officials of the City of Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana.

**Primary Audience:** Senior officials, including mayors, city managers, and county managers.

**Course Length:** 1 hour

**Course Link:** <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-908>



# **Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management-Committees**

## **Steering Committee, John Sherwood, Chair**

The Steering Committee works with the JCOHSEM director to guide the activities of JCOHSEM. A fourteen-member Steering Committee is made up of public and private representation. JCOHSEM is a department within the Jefferson County Commission, who has overall responsibility for the department and its employees. The Jefferson County Commission appoints all members to the steering committee. This committee meets following the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Meetings held on the third Wednesday of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Please call the office for exact dates, locations, and times.

## **Public Awareness, Education and Training Committee, Paula Marrone-Reese, Chair**

Any interested person can serve on this committee. The Public Awareness, Education and Training Committee is responsible to communicate the organization's activities to the public and to build support for JCOHSEM's programs. They work with the director and other staff to keep the entire community focused on the objectives of JCOHSEM, the opportunities for additional involvement and support by updating citizens and businesses about what the partners are doing and how the community will and is benefiting from these efforts. This committee is responsible in assisting the director in setting up speaking engagements and public awareness events. This committee meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 0830 in the EOC at 28 Industrial Blvd., Kearneysville, unless otherwise announced.

## **All Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee, Mason Carter, Chair**

Any interested person may serve on this committee. The All Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee examines the community's risks and vulnerability to all hazards and assess the community's vulnerability to those risks. An All Hazards Mitigation Plan was completed and adopted by the Jefferson County Commission, all Jefferson County municipalities, West Virginia Emergency Management Division of the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security (WVEMD) and FEMA in July 2003. The plan was updated in 2008 and 2013. The 2013 plan was approved by WVEMD and FEMA in June 2013 and the 2018 plan was approved in November 2018.

## **Counter Terrorism Committee, Stephen Allen, Chair**

Membership to this sub-committee of the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Planning Committee is limited to members of law enforcement, emergency management, homeland security, emergency communications, Red Cross, schools, health care, fire companies, ambulance authority/EMS, and government, due to sensitive homeland security issues. The committee works on issues of planning and training for counterterrorism or human-caused disasters. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the EOC at 28 Industrial Blvd., Kearneysville, unless otherwise announced.

If you are interested in joining any of our committees,  
contact Stephen Allen at [sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org](mailto:sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org)

Times, dates, and places may need to be changed due to inclement weather, scheduling conflicts, or Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation. If you have questions, call the JCOHSEM office at (304) 728-3290.

Jefferson County Office of  
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**PUBLIC SAFETY;  
PUBLIC TRUST**



The Jefferson County Commission's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (JCOHSEM) is responsible for the coordination of preparedness, , response, recovery and mitigation of disasters and large emergencies in Jefferson County, West Virginia. Volunteer and community participation is encouraged and welcome. We currently have committees on All Hazards Mitigation Planning; Public Awareness, Education and Training; Counter Terrorism; and, a Steering Committee that acts as an advisory group.

We are responsible for the Citizen Corps/CERT, StormReady, Community Rating System, Resilient Neighbor Network and Project Impact programs. JCOHSEM is also responsible for the Jefferson County R.A.C.E.S. group.

## May Meetings & Events

- Sterling National Weather Service calls every Monday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m.
- WV State weather calls on Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m.
- WV Emergency Management Council calls each Tuesday at 9 a.m.
- The Public Awareness and Counter Terrorism Committee meetings have been cancelled for the month of April,. **We expect to resume all committee meetings in June 2022 barring no uptick in COVID.**
- PLAN AHEAD!!! Bark In The Park Saturday, June 4, 2022 Jefferson Memorial Park
- PLAN AHEAD!!! Next LEPC meeting Wednesday, June 15 at 8:15 a.m. at Hospice of the Panhandle