

Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management http://www.jeffersoncountywv.org/county-government/departments/homeland-security-and-emergency-management

April 2023

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From the Director's Chair

Hello and welcome to our April 2023 edition of the Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's (JCOHSEM) newsletter.

This newsletter contains information about various topics including this month's READY.GOV topics of National Financial Capability Month, Severe Weather Safety, and #SafePlaceSelfie Day. We also have news on this year's Regional Exercise Series.

We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.

National Financial Capability Month Financial Preparedness Tips

Americans at all income levels have experienced the challenges of rebuilding their lives after a disaster or other emergency. In these stressful times, having access to personal financial, insurance, medical and other records is crucial for starting the recovery process quickly and efficiently.

- 1. Gather financial and critical personal, household and medical information.
- 2. Consider saving money in an emergency savings account that could be used in any crisis. Keep a small amount of cash at home in a safe place. It is important to have small bills on hand because ATMs and credit cards may not work during a disaster when you need to purchase necessary supplies, fuel or food.

Financial Preparedness Tips (cont'd)

3. Obtain property (homeowners or renters), health and life insurance if you do not have them. Not all insurance policies are the same. Review your policy to make sure the amount and types of coverage you have meets the requirements for <u>all possible hazards</u>. Homeowners insurance does not typically cover flooding, so you may need to purchase flood insurance from the <u>National Flood Insurance Program</u>.

4. For more helpful financial preparedness tips, download the <u>Emergency Financial First Aid</u> <u>Kit (EFFAK)</u> to get started planning today.

Be Safe

- Be cautious about sharing personal financial information, such as your bank account number, social security number, or credit card number.
- Do not click on links in texts or emails from people you don't know. Scammers can create fake links to websites.
- Remember that the government will not call or text you about owing money or receiving economic impact payments.
- Be aware that scammers may try to contact you via social media. The government will not contact you through social media about owing money or receiving payments.
- Keep in mind that scammers may try to take advantages of financial fears by calling with workfrom-opportunities, debt consolidation offers, and student loan repayment plans.
- Contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ftc.gov/complaint if you receive messages from anyone claiming to be a government agent.

Emergency Financial First Aid Kit

The <u>Emergency Financial First Aid Kit</u> (EFFAK), a joint publication from <u>Operation HOPE</u> and FEMA, can help you prepare financially and provides tips to reduce the financial impact of disasters on you and your family.

For more information on the EFFAK visit the EFFAK Community Page.

For Organizations

Encourage people throughout your organization or workplace to prepare financially. Here are some ideas to promote financial preparedness in your organization:

- Hold a brown bag meeting.
- Make a presentation at an existing staff meeting using <u>Safeguard Critical Documents and Valua-</u> <u>bles</u> to support your discussion.
- Include financial preparedness information in the staff monthly newsletter.

At Home

Store important documents either in a safety deposit box, an external drive or on the cloud to make it easy to access during a disaster.

Take time now to <u>safeguard these critical documents</u>. Be cautious about sharing personal financial information, such as your bank account number, social security number, or credit card number.

Household Identification

- Photo ID (to prove identity of household members)
- Birth certificate (to maintain or re-establish contact with family members)
- Social Security card (to apply for FEMA disaster assistance)
- Military service
- Pet ID tags

Financial and Legal Documentation

- Housing payments (to identify financial records and obligations)
- Some individuals and households may experience financial difficulty because of the pandemic. If you do not think you can pay your loan payments on time, immediately contact your bank and discuss your options before skipping any payments or taking any other actions contrary to the terms of your loans.

Financial and Legal Documentation (cont'd)

- Insurance policies (to re-establish financial accounts)
- Sources of income (to maintain payments and credit)
- Tax statements (to provide contact information for financial and legal providers and to apply for FEMA disaster assistance)

Medical Information

- Physician information (in case medical care is needed)
- Copies of health insurance information (to make sure existing care continues uninterrupted)
- Immunization records
- Medications

Insurance Information

Having insurance for your home or business property is the best way to make sure you will have the necessary financial resources to help you repair, rebuild or replace whatever is damaged. <u>Document</u> <u>and insure your property now</u>.

Household Contact Information

- Banking institutions
- Insurance agents
- Health professionals
- Service providers
- Place of worship

Get Your Benefits Electronically

A disaster can disrupt mail service for days or weeks. If you depend on Social Security or other regular benefits, switching to electronic payments is a simple, significant way to protect yourself financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks. The U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safer ways to get federal benefits:

- Direct deposit to a checking or savings account. If you get federal benefits you can sign up by calling 800-333-1795 or <u>sign up online</u>.
- The **Direct Express**® prepaid debit card is designed as a safe and easy alternative to paper.

Apply for government-funded unemployment, healthcare, and food and nutrition benefits to supplement your income or savings.

Consider using online and mobile banking services, if you are able. These services enable you to practice social distancing and conduct banking transactions at the same time.

Associated Content

- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Worksheet (PDF)
- Financial Emergency Information Sheet (PDF)
- Financial Preparedness Toolkit
- <u>Be Prepared for a Financial Emergency</u> (PDF)
- <u>Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK)</u> (PDF)
- Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) checklists and forms (PDF)
- Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) Large Print (PDF)
- <u>Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) in Various Languages</u> (PDF)
- Prepare your Finances for a Natural Disaster (Video)
- Safeguard Critical Documents and Valuables (PDF)
- Operation HOPE
- Download the FEMA mobile app
- National Flood Insurance Program
- <u>DisasterAssistance.gov</u>
- Financial Literacy Education Commission
- <u>MyMoney.gov</u>
- <u>ConsumerFinance.gov</u>
- Get Tech Ready

Severe Weather

Severe weather can happen anytime, in any part of the country. Severe weather can include hazardous conditions produced by thunderstorms, including damaging winds, tornadoes, large hail, flooding and flash flooding, and winter storms associated with freezing rain, sleet, snow and strong winds.

Know your Risk

Understand the type of hazardous weather that affects you and your family where you live:

<u>Tornadoes</u>

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air that extend from a thunderstorm to the ground.

Tornadoes can destroy buildings, flip cars, and create deadly flying debris. A tornado can:

- Happen anytime and anywhere.
- Bring intense winds, over 200 miles per hour.
- Look like funnels.
- Go to <u>NOAA Weather Radio</u> and your local news or official social media accounts for updated emergency information. Follow the instructions of state, local and tribal officials.
- Go to a safe shelter immediately, such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar or a small interior room on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- Do not go under an overpass or bridge. You're safer in a low, flat location.
- Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.
- Use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- If you can't stay at home, make plans to go to a public shelter.

Preparing for a Tornado

- Know your area's tornado risk. In the U.S., the Midwest and the Southeast have a greater risk for tornadoes.
- Know the signs of a tornado, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar like a freight train.
- **Sign up for your community's warning system.** The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NO-AA Weather Radio also provide <u>emergency alerts</u>. If your community has sirens, then become familiar with the warning tone.

Tornadoes (cont'd)

Preparing for a tornado (cont'd)

- **Pay attention to weather reports.** Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.
- Identify and practice going to a safe shelter such as a <u>safe room built using FEMA criteria</u> or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards. The next best protection is a small, interior, window-less room or basement on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- <u>Plan for your pet</u>. They are an important member of your family, so they need to be included in your family's emergency plan.
- **Prepare for long-term stay at home or sheltering in place** by gathering <u>emergency supplies</u>, cleaning supplies, non-perishable <u>foods</u>, <u>water</u>, medical supplies and medication.

Staying Safe During a Tornado

- Immediately go to a safe location that you have identified.
- Pay attention to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.
- **Protect yourself** by covering your head or neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around or on top of you.
- **Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle** if you are in a car. If you are in a car or outdoors and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible.

Staying Safe After a Tornado

- Save your phone calls for emergencies and use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.
- Pay attention to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.
- Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you are sick and need medical attention. Wait for further care instructions and continue to shelter in place.
- Wear appropriate gear during clean-up such as thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves, use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning mold or other debris.

Tornadoes (cont'd)

Associated Content

- <u>National Weather Service Tornado Safety</u>
- Protective Actions Research for Tornado
- <u>Tornado Information Sheet (PDF)</u>
- Taking Shelter from the Storm: Building a Safe Room Inside Your House (PDF)
- <u>American Red Cross</u>

FLOODS

Flooding is a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. Floods are the most common natural disaster in the United States. Failing to evacuate flooded areas or entering flood waters can lead to injury or death.

Floods may:

- Result from rain, snow, coastal storms, storm surges and overflows of dams and other water systems.
- Develop slowly or quickly. Flash floods can come with no warning.
- Cause outages, disrupt transportation, damage buildings and create landslides.

If you are under a flood warning:

- Find safe shelter right away.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Turn Around, Don't Drown!
- Remember, just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.
- Depending on the type of flooding:
- Evacuate if told to do so.
- Move to higher ground or a higher floor. Stay where you are.

Floods (cont'd)

• Stay where you are.

Preparing for a Flood

Know Your Risk for Floods

<u>Visit FEMA's Flood Map Service Center</u> to know types of flood risk in your area. Sign up for your community's warning system. The <u>Emergency Alert System (EAS)</u> and <u>National Oceanic and At-mospheric Administration (NOAA)</u> Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.

Purchase Flood Insurance

Purchase or renew a flood insurance policy. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover flooding. It typically takes up to 30 days for a policy to go into effect so the time to buy is well before a disaster. <u>Get flood coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)</u>.

Preparing for a Flood

<u>Make a plan</u> for your household, including <u>your pets</u>, so that you and your family know what to do, where to go, and what you will need to protect yourselves from flooding. Learn and practice evacuation routes, shelter plans, and flash flood response. Gather supplies, including non-perishable foods, cleaning supplies, and water for several days, in case you must leave immediately or if services are cut off in your area.

In Case of Emergency

Keep important documents in a waterproof container. Create password-protected digital copies. Protect your property. Move valuables to higher levels. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves. Consider a sump pump with a battery.

Staying Safe During a Flood

- Evacuate immediately, if told to evacuate. Never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.
- Contact your healthcare provider If you are sick and need medical attention. Wait for further care instructions and shelter in place, if possible. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 9-1-1.

Floods (cont'd)

Staying Safe During a Flood (cont'd)

- Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions regarding flooding.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Turn Around. Don't Drown!
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water. Fast-moving water can wash bridges away without warning.
- Stay inside your car if it is trapped in rapidly moving water. Get on the roof if water is rising inside the car.
- Get to the highest level if trapped in a building. Only get on the roof if necessary and once there signal for help. Do not climb into a closed attic to avoid getting trapped by rising floodwater.

Staying Safe After a Flood

- Pay attention to authorities for information and instructions. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Avoid driving except in emergencies.

Wear heavy work gloves, protective clothing and boots during clean up and use appropriate face coverings or masks if cleaning mold or other debris.

People with <u>asthma and other lung conditions and/or immune suppression</u> should not enter buildings with indoor water leaks or mold growth that can be seen or smelled. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work.

- Be aware that snakes and other animals may be in your house.
- Be aware of the risk of electrocution. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. Turn off the electricity to prevent electric shock if it is safe to do so.
- Avoid wading in floodwater, which can be contaminated and contain dangerous debris. Underground or downed power lines can also electrically charge the water.

Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machinery ONLY outdoors and away from windows.

Floods (cont'd)

Associated Content

- Flood Information Sheet (PDF)
- Protective Actions Research for Flood
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
- Flood Safety Social Media Toolkit
- National Weather Service Weather Ready Nation Spring Safety Outreach Materials
- Flood Insurance Facts
- <u>Six Things to Know Before a Disaster</u> (Video)
- When the Cloud Forms (Video)
- How to Prepare for a Flood File A Flood Insurance Claim
- Your Homeowners Insurance Does Not Cover Flood (PDF)
- American Red Cross

Thunderstorms & Lightning

Lightning is a leading cause of injury and death from weather-related hazards. Although most lightning victims survive, people struck by lightning often report a variety of long-term, debilitating symptoms.

Thunderstorms are dangerous storms that include lightning and can create or cause:

- Powerful winds over 50 mph
- Hail
- Flash flooding and/or tornadoes

Prepare for Thunderstorms & Lightning

Know Your Risk

Know your area's risk for thunderstorms. In most places they can occur year-round and at any hour. Sign up for your community's warning system. The <u>Emergency Alert System (EAS)</u> and <u>National</u> <u>Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio</u> also provide emergency alerts.

Strengthen Your Home

Cut down or trim trees that may be in danger of falling on your home. Consider buying surge protectors, lightning rods or a lightning protection system to protect your home, appliances and electronic devices.

Thunderstorms & Lightning (cont'd)

Make an Emergency Plan

Create an <u>emergency plan</u> so that you and your family know what to do, where to go and what you will need to protect yourselves from the effects of a thunderstorm. Identify sturdy buildings close to where you live, work, study and play.

Stay Safe During Thunderstorms & Lightning

If you are under a thunderstorm warning:

- When thunder roars, go indoors! Move from outdoors into a building or car with a roof.
- Pay attention to alerts and warnings.
- Avoid using electronic devices connected to an electrical outlet.
- Avoid running water.
- **Turn Around. Don't Drown!** Do not drive through flooded roadways. Just six inches of fastmoving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.

Stay Safe After Thunderstorms & Lightning

- Pay attention to authorities and weather forecasts for information on whether it is safe to go outside and instructions regarding potential flash flooding.
- Watch for fallen power lines and trees. Report them immediately.

Related Content

- Thunderstorms Information Sheet (PDF)
- Protective Actions Research for Thunderstorm, Lightning, and Hail
- NOAA Watch
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Lightning
- <u>American Red Cross</u>

#SafePlaceSelfie

Join Us On April 5, 2023!

If there was one extreme weather preparedness action you want your loved ones to take, what would it be? For many, that one action is to know ahead of time where their safe place is located. Thank you for joining the National Weather Service and its Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors to take a "selfie" and posting with the hashtag **#SafePlaceSelfie**. For more information Go to: <u>#SafePlaceSelfie</u>



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.

State-Sponsored Training Courses

	Course	Date/s	Location
•	WV – Specific Auxiliary Communications Course	4/22- 4/23/23	Berkeley Springs, WV

To register for the above course, go to the State's Coursemil training site listed below.

•	Demystifying Cyber Attacks	4/4/23	Charleston, WV
٠	Cybersecurity Resiliency in Industrial Control Systems	4/5/23	Charleston, WV
٠	Demystifying Cyber Attacks	5/16/23	Morgantown, WV
•	Cybersecurity Resiliency in Industrial Control Systems	5/17/23	Morgantown, WV
٠	Fundamentals of Grants Management Course	4/18-20/23	Charleston, WV

The courses above are available by contacting Brent Burger directly at the email address listed below. The Cyber Security courses are available through Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service.

Check back frequently to the State's CourseMil site at <u>https://www.onlinelearning.wv.gov/</u> <u>dmapscm6/home.html</u> for updates of the training available or contact Brent Burger at brent.a.burger@wv.gov with any questions in regards to these courses.

Upcoming Local Training

	Course	Date/s	Location
•	Amtrak Passenger Train Emergency Responder (PTER) Training 3-hour course 2 - separate classes will be offered - 1- daytime	04/05/23	Harpers Ferry

1- evening

Online FEMA Training

FEMA offers a number of online courses at <u>https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx</u>. From this training portal, anyone can take their online independent study courses for free. There are over a hundred courses to that are available. 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: 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: <u>FEMA - Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Course | IS-100.C: Introduction to</u> <u>the Incident Command System, ICS 100</u>

IS-230: Fundamentals of Emergency Management

Course Description: The goal of this course is to provide all FEMA employees with basic information to prepare them for incident management and support activities. Additionally, this course will provide an overview of FEMA; introduce basic emergency management concepts; and provide a high-level look at how FEMA meets its mission.

Primary Audience: This entry-level course is designed for individuals new to the field of emergency management or persons with a desire to understand the fundamentals of emergency management.

Course Length: Approximately 6 hours

Course Link: <u>FEMA - Emergency Management Institute (EMI) Course | IS-230.E: Fundamentals of</u> <u>Emergency Management</u>

Disaster Exercise Series 2023 Table Top is scheduled

Typically, over the course of the year, a table top, a functional, and a full scale exercise will be held. An effective exercise program is an essential component of our preparedness as it validates our county emergency operations plan, tests operational plans and capabilities, maintains our leadership effectiveness, and examines ways to utilize the whole community. An exercise program management involves a collaborative approach that integrates all of our resource's, organizations, and individuals in order to identify gaps and achieve program priorities.

The WV Homeland Security Region 3 Table top exercise is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, 2023. This year's Tabletop Exercise will be held here in Jefferson County at the Ranson Civic Center located at 432 W 2nd Ave, Ranson, WV 25438. We will start at 0900 and should be done before 1500. Many thanks to the City of Ranson for allowing the use of this great resource for meeting.

We will be making arrangements for some electrical cords, but you may want to bring any extension cords, and/or power strips, and whatever else you'll need to get connected.

The WV Emergency Management Division will be making arrangements for food, but we will need to present some numbers of participants so that we have enough. Please let us know if you are going to participate.

Please consider what you wish to test during the 2023 program and reply to us with your testing needs so that we can make this a successful exercise experience.



JCOHSEM 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, the 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. We are in the process of updating the plan at this time.

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 <u>sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org</u> If you have questions, call the JCOHSEM office at (304) 728-3290. Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

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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 welcomed. 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.

April Meetings & Events

- National Weather Service Sterling 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.
- April 5 AMTRAK passenger train emergency response training Harpers Ferry
- April 11 Counter Terrorism Committee Meeting at Jefferson County Sheriffs Dept.
- April 18 Emergency Management presentation City of Ranson Council meeting
- April 19 Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting Hospice of the Panhandle