



November 2023

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From the Director's Chair

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

This newsletter contains information about various topics including Thanksgiving Cooking Safety, Holiday Online Shopping Safety, and Winter Weather Safety.

We also have information on the 2023 Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan and the "GridLock" regional full scale exercise. We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.

Thanksgiving Cooking Safety



- Keep a fire extinguisher available.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. Turn off the stove if you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time.
- Keep cooking appliance cords up on the counter, out of the reach of children
- Keep pot handles turned inward to avoid scalding accidents.
- Keep young children away from the cooking area.
- Keep the cooking area clean of grease.
- Relocate items you use often from the cabinet or shelf above the shelf above the stove.
- Never use water or flour to extinguish a grease fire. Use the lid to the pan or a fire extinguisher
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking.
- In outdoor cooking, position barbecue grills at least 10 feet away from siding and deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

Holiday Online Shopping Safety



Cyberattacks are malicious attempts to access or damage a computer or network system. Cyberattacks can lead to the loss of money or the theft of personal, financial and medical information. These attacks can damage your reputation and safety.

Cybersecurity involves preventing, detecting and responding to those cyberattacks that can have wide-ranging effects on individuals, organizations, the community and the nation.

Cyberattacks can occur in many ways, including:

- Accessing your personal computers, mobile phones, gaming systems and other internet- and Bluetooth-connected devices.
- Damaging your financial security, including identity theft.
- Blocking your access or deleting your personal information and accounts.
- Complicating your employment or business services.
- Impacting transportation and the power grid.

Protect Yourself Against Cyberattacks

You can avoid cyber risks by taking steps in advance:

- Limit the personal information you share online. Change privacy settings and do not use location features.

Holiday Online Shopping Safety, cont'd

- Keep software applications and operating systems up-to-date.
- Create strong passwords by using upper and lower case letters, numbers and special characters. Use a password manager and two methods of verification.
- Watch for suspicious activity that asks you to do something right away, offers something that sounds too good to be true, or needs your personal information. Think before you click. When in doubt, do NOT click.
- Protect your home and/or business using a secure Internet connection and Wi-Fi network, and change passwords regularly.
- Don't share PINs or passwords. Use devices that use biometric scans when possible (e.g. fingerprint scanner or facial recognition).
- Check your account statements and credit reports regularly.
- Be cautious about sharing personal financial information, such as your bank account number, Social Security number or credit card number. Only share personal information on secure sites that begin with https://. Do not use sites with invalid certificates. Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that creates a more secure connection.
- Use antivirus and anti-malware solutions, and firewalls to block threats.
- Back up your files regularly in an encrypted file or encrypted file storage device.
- 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, text or contact you via social media about owing money.
- Keep in mind that scammers may try to take advantage of financial fears by calling with work-from-home-opportunities, debt consolidation offers and student loan repayment plans.

During a Cyberattack

- Check your credit card and bank statements for unrecognizable charges.
- Check your credit reports for any new accounts or loans you didn't open.
- Be alert for emails and social media users that ask for private information.
- If you notice strange activity, limit the damage by changing all of your internet account passwords immediately.
- Consider turning off the device that has been affected. Take it to a professional to scan for potential viruses and remove any that they find. Remember: A company will not call you and ask for control of your computer to fix it. This is a common scam.

Holiday Online Shopping Safety, cont'd

- Let work, school or other system owners know what happened.
- Run a security scan on your device to make sure your system is not infected or acting more slowly or inefficiently.
- If you find a problem, disconnect your device from the Internet and perform a full system restore.

After a Cyberattack

Let the proper federal, state and local authorities know if you believe you have been a victim of a cyberattack.

- Contact banks, credit card companies and other financial services companies where you hold accounts. You may need to place holds on accounts that have been attacked. Close any unauthorized credit or charge accounts. Report that someone may be using your identity.
- File a report with the [Office of the Inspector General \(OIG\)](#) if you think someone is using your Social Security number illegally.
- File a complaint with the [FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#). They will review the complaint and refer it to the appropriate agency.
- File a report with the local police so there is an official record of the incident.
- Report identity theft to the [Federal Trade Commission](#)
- Contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ftc.gov/complaint if you receive messages from anyone claiming to be a government agent.
- Contact additional agencies depending on what information was stolen. Examples include contacting:
 - The [Social Security Administration](#) (800-269- 0271) if your Social Security number was compromised, or
 - The Department of Motor Vehicles if your driver's license or car registration has been stolen.
- Report online crime or fraud to your local United States Secret Service (USSS) [Electronic Crimes Task Force](#) or the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).

Winter Weather Safety



Winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion. Winter storms including blizzards can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice and high winds.

A winter storm can:

- Last a few hours or several days.
- Cut off heat, power and communication services.
- Put older adults, children, sick individuals and pets at greater risk.

How to Protect Yourself from Winter Weather

IF YOU ARE UNDER A WINTER STORM WARNING, FIND SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

Know your winter weather terms:

Winter Storm Warning

Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

Winter Storm Watch

Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.

Winter Weather Advisory

Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet which will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to life-threatening situations.

Winter Weather Safety, Cont'd

Know Your Risk for Winter Storms

Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms. Listen for emergency information and alerts. Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Weather Radio](#) also provide emergency alerts.

Preparing for Winter Weather

Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups. Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days without power. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Remember the needs of your pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights. If you are unable to afford your heating costs, weatherization or energy-related home repairs, contact the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) for help.

In Case of Emergency

Be prepared for winter weather at home, at work and in your car. Create an emergency supply kit for your car. Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water and non-perishable snacks. Keep a full tank of gas.

Stay Safe During Winter Weather

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.

- Stay off roads if at all possible. If trapped in your car, then stay inside.
- Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, then wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Reduce the risk of a heart attack by avoiding overexertion when shoveling snow and walking in the snow.

Winter Weather Safety, Cont'd

Learn the signs of, and basic treatments for, frostbite and hypothermia.

Frostbite causes loss of feeling and color around the face, fingers and toes.

- **Signs:** Numbness, white or grayish-yellow skin, firm or waxy skin.
- **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Soak in warm water. Use body heat to warm. Do not massage or use a heating pad.

Hypothermia is an unusually low body temperature. A temperature below 95 degrees is an emergency.

- **Signs:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech or drowsiness.
- **Actions:** Go to a warm room. Warm the center of the body first—chest, neck, head and groin. Keep dry and wrapped up in warm blankets, including the head and neck.

Generator Safety

- Generators can be helpful when the power goes out. It is important to know how use them safely to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and other hazards.
- Generators and fuel should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows, doors and attached garages.
- **Install working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.** Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can kill you, your family and pets.
- Keep the generator dry and protected from rain or flooding. Touching a wet generator or devices connected to one can cause electrical shock.
- Always connect the generator to appliances with heavy-duty extension cords.
- Let the generator cool before refueling. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts can ignite.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions carefully.

Jefferson County 2023 Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Natural and man-made hazards may cause loss of life, property loss, and threats to public health and safety. During a disaster event, essential services including access to healthcare, fire/EMS, utilities, etc., may be affected. A hazard mitigation plan is maintained to serve as guidance to emergency management professionals.

The purpose of a hazard mitigation plan is to:

- (1) Increase awareness around threats and vulnerabilities;
- (2) Build partnerships for risk reduction;
- (3) Identify long-term strategies for risk reduction;
- (4) Align risk reduction with state and community objectives; and
- (5) Identify approaches that focus resources on greatest risk and vulnerability.

Third Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee Meeting (in person) - July 26 from 1PM to 4PM

The focus of this meeting was to have the committee members review and update plan goals, review mitigation actions and add new actions, and develop specific project sheets. Committee members were then asked to review the 2018 hazard mitigation plan goals. The groups were instructed to keep remove or modify existing goals and add new goals.

2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan Goals:

GOAL 1: Improve communication resiliency through planning, partnerships, and infrastructure development.

GOAL 2: Enhance resiliency of county and municipal water resources to reduce flood damage by limiting development in floodplains, effectively managing stormwater, and reducing the possibility of source water contamination.

GOAL 3: Promote all-hazards preparedness, awareness, education, and training to the public, responders, and officials.

GOAL 4: Reduce the vulnerability of populations by creating and integrating programs and projects that are designed to reduce hazards in risk areas.

GOAL 5: Promote hazard mitigation as a local community value in recognition of its importance to the health, safety, and welfare of the population

GOAL 6: Improve operating systems and backup servers to enhance cyber security measures.

GOAL 7: Enhance hazardous materials response planning and response operations.

A total of seventy three (73) mitigation action from the 2018 plan were evaluated during this workshop. Committee members had the opportunity to review each action and determine if it should be carried over into the 2023 plan. Committee members reported top action items and whether or not they added any new mitigation projects. Fourteen (14) new action items were developed during the workshop.

Following the workshop, an online prioritization survey was provided to HMPC members to determine “high”, “medium”, and “low” priority projects. Results of this survey indicated six “high” priority mitigation projects. High priority projects include the following:

Project 4: Snow Removal MOU and Debris Management Plan

Project 5: Dark Grid Training & Exercises

Project 13: Citizen Preparedness Training and Outreach

Project 14: Hazard Materials Response Plan and Training

Draft Plan Review & Public Open House - August 29 from 1PM to 5PM

The purpose of this final HMPC meeting was to provide general findings in the Jefferson County draft plan. The meeting was an open house format where committee members were provided a briefing on the results of the mitigation strategy workshop for both County-wide projects and municipal specific priority projects. Results of the public survey were presented and compared to how committee members rated hazards and capabilities. During the meeting committee members were able reviewed an electronic copy of the draft plan and a question-and-answer period was used to gain feedback on plan details, process and next steps.

The committee determined that a 2-week review period should be allowed for members to provide comment and feedback on the final draft plan. A draft version of the plan will be circulated to committee members during the first week of September and comments collected and discussed on a September 18 virtual meeting. The meeting space was then opened to the public for a 3-hour period, during which a running slide show summarizing the elements of the plan, committee meetings and results of the plan played and large hazard maps were displayed for the public to view.

Public input was also solicited through an online **hazard mitigation survey** composed by Jefferson County and disseminated on Jefferson County agency websites. The survey collected demographic data of respondents, had respondents assess hazard risks, asked for mitigation action ideas, and gauged respondents’ participation in public hazard mitigation efforts. About 56 residents participated, a large increase from the 2018 survey. Participants were most concerned about utility interruption, hazardous materials, and severe thunderstorms. Hazards that were rated as lowest concern included landslide, dam failure, and earthquake. Most participants felt that their county and municipality ability to handle a hazard event was average. Overall, residents agreed that cell phone alerts are the most effective way for the community to alert and advise them during a hazard event.

Participants were most concerned with not having access to clean water, not having electrical power for extended time, not having police or fire protection, not having access to medical services and required medicine, and not being able to get warning messages or other information regarding the hazard.

The “draft” plan has been sent to the State of WV and the Regional FEMA office for review. Once the review is completed and any suggested corrections or additions made by the contractor, the plan will then be forwarded to the County Commission and all municipalities for their approval.

Disaster Exercise Series 2023

Full Scale Exercise will be held in December

The Full Scale Exercise will be held on either Friday, December 8 or Saturday, December 9, 2023 from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM EDT depending on whether we have the participation of Fire/EMS and law enforcement. As our FD's are volunteer-based, we will be checking to see if the VFD's are willing to participate in the exercise, if it is held on Saturday.

This is the third and final phase of our 2023 regional exercise program. The 'GridLock' scenario is based upon terrorist attacks on local electrical substations and water treatment plants that take down power for large sections of the region, while dumping toxic transformer coolants on the ground and releasing chlorine in the air. Multiple challenges spanning the list of Emergency Support Functions - <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-esf-intro.pdf> - from law enforcement, to hazmat containment and clean-up, to mass care and beyond, come into play.

This will be a challenge for emergency management, LE, fire and EMS, along with all the other stakeholders in the community due to infrastructure outages brought about by the terrorist attacks.

This will be a Full Scale Exercise. As events unfold within each module, all phone calls, text messages, radio traffic and other communications will be executed, based upon the injects and your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This includes putting boots on the ground, this will be as real as it gets.

Lunch will be provided in the EOC and we hope to be able to provide box lunches for the first responders on-scene.



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
• ICS-300 Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents	11/28-30	Charleston, WV
• PER 340 Active Threat Integrated Response	11/30-12/2	Parkersburg, WV

To register for the above courses, contact Brent Burger at brent.a.burger@wv.gov or phone number (304) 414-4605 Office or (304) 941-9532 Cell with any questions in regards to these courses.

Upcoming Local Training

Course	Date/s	Location
• Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	11/15/23	JCESA
• Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	12/13/23	JCESA

All classes are being held at the Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency (JCESA) located at 419 Sixteenth Avenue, Ranson, WV 25438. Classes start at 6PM.

FEMA On-line Training

FEMA offers a number of online courses at <https://training.fema.gov/emi.aspx>. 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: [FEMA - Emergency Management Institute \(EMI\) Course | IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100](#)

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 county commissioners, mayors, city managers, and county managers.

Course Length: 1 hour

Course Link: [FEMA - Emergency Management Institute \(EMI\) Course | IS-908: Emergency Management for Senior Officials](#)

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 sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org
If you have questions, call the JCOHSEM office at (304) 728-3290.

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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 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.

November 2023 Meetings & Events

- WV EMD weather calls, on Mondays and Fridays—10AM
- National Weather Service - Sterling calls, every Monday and Thursday -10:30AM
- WV Emergency Management Council calls every other Tuesday - 9AM
- November 2 - Monthly AARL Amateur Radio Emergency Network Testing - 6PM
- November 9 - Hazard Mitigation Team bi-weekly meeting - on-line - 11AM
- November 10 - Veterans Day Holiday - Office closed in observance
- November 14 - Monthly Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting - EOC - 2PM
- November 15 - Rt. 340 Detour - First Responder meeting with DoH – Ranson Civic Center - 10:30AM
- November 18 - Bi-Monthly LEPC meeting - Hospice of the Panhandle - 8:15AM
- November 23-24 - Thanksgiving Holiday - Office closed in observance