

November 2025

Monthly Newsletter



JEFFERSON COUNTY WV
**OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY
& EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Our mission is to reduce the loss of lives and property and protection of the environment from all types of hazards through a comprehensive emergency management program consisting of prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

From the Director's Chair

Hello and welcome to our November 2025 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 Thanksgiving Cooking Safety, Holiday Online Shopping Safety, and Winter Weather Safety. We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.

We would like to thank Jefferson County AARP for inviting us to speak with their members about emergency preparedness before a disaster. We would also like to thank Asbury United Methodist Church in Charles Town for providing a room for the presentation.

With the ongoing government shutdown, SNAP benefits have been temporarily delayed until the shutdown has ended. On this newsletter we have information on how you and your family can stay fed during these uncertain times.



A Thank you to Jefferson County AARP

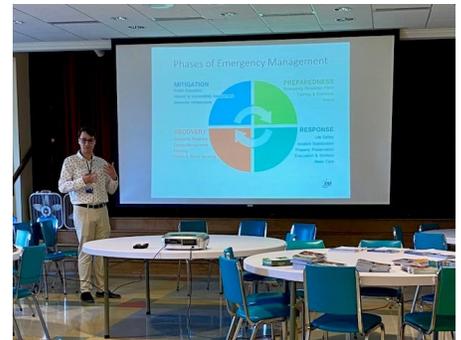
We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Jefferson County AARP for so generously hosting our presentation on October 9th, 2025. From the moment we arrived, we were met with warmth and a genuine spirit of interest that made the entire experience both enjoyable and impactful.

The opportunity to share our work with such an engaged and thoughtful audience was truly a highlight for us. The insightful questions, open dialogue, and active participation demonstrated the passion and dedication of your members and community. It was inspiring to connect with individuals who were engaged and interested in learning about the topics of emergency preparedness and safety.

We look forward to future opportunities for collaboration. Thank you once again for your generosity, enthusiasm, and support.

Warm regards,

The Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management



Food Assistance During Government Shutdown

Due to the ongoing federal government shutdown, USDA has directed all states—including West Virginia—to temporarily delay the issuance of November SNAP benefits.

If you or your family is affected by the temporary delay, please call 2-1-1, text your ZIP code to 898-211, or visit wv211.org to find help near you. WV 211 has a statewide database that offers up-to-date listings of food pantries, community meal sites, and emergency food programs across all 55 counties.

For questions about your SNAP case, contact the DoHS Office of Constituent Services at 1-877-716-1212



Jefferson County Emergency Alert Sign Up

The Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is encouraging Jefferson County residents to sign up for Everbridge, the county’s local emergency alerting system.

Everbridge provides critical information to residents on a variety of events, including severe weather, fires, floods, and other emergencies, as well as routine updates like road closures and utility maintenance. Alerts are delivered through your preferred contact method—whether by cell phone, text message, home phone, or email.

When registering, users can customize notification preferences to receive only the types of alerts most relevant to them. Signing up for Everbridge is free and easy—register online or through the mobile app.

To register online, [Click Here](#) or follow the instructions below:

- 1) Visit jeffersoncountywv.org
- 2) Click “Emergency Info / Weather & Emergency Alert Sign Up”.
- 3) Select “Visit Everbridge Here”.
- 4) Complete the online registration form.

To register through the mobile app:

- 1) Download the “Everbridge” app from your device's app store.
- 2) Open the app and select “Find an organization or subscription”.
- 3) Type “Jefferson County WV” in the search bar.
- 4) Select “Jefferson County WV HSEM”.
- 5) Complete the online registration form.

For questions about the Everbridge system or assistance with registration, contact the Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management by phone at 304-728-3329 or email at jchsem@jeffersoncountywv.org.



Thanksgiving Cooking Safety



Cooking Safety: Protect Your Home & Loved Ones

The kitchen is the heart of many homes—but it's also where most home fires start. A fire can become life-threatening in just two minutes. A residence can be engulfed in flames in five minutes.

Whether you're preparing a quick meal or hosting a big dinner, practicing good cooking safety can prevent accidents and save lives.



Learn About Fires:

- **Fire is FAST!** In less than 30 seconds a small flame can turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house or for it to be engulfed in flames.
- **Fire is HOT!** Heat is more threatening than flames. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs and melt clothes to your skin.
- **Fire is DARK!** Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness.
- **Fire is DEADLY!** Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy.

Smoke Alarms:

A working smoke alarm significantly increases your chances of surviving a deadly home fire.

- Replace batteries twice a year, unless you are using 10-year lithium batteries.
 - Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement.
- Replace the entire smoke alarm unit every 10 years or according to manufacturer's instructions.
 - Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking – it can be a deadly mistake.

Audible alarms are available for visually impaired people and smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light are available for the hearing impaired.

Thanksgiving Cooking Safety



Prevent Home Fires

Home fires can be preventable. The following are simple steps that each of us can take to prevent a tragedy.

Cooking

- 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.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking.
- Position barbecue grills at least 10 feet away from siding and deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep a fire extinguisher available.



Holiday Safety

Use the following steps to prevent fires during the holiday season:

- Turn off holiday lights at night or when you leave the house.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from flammable materials or consider using flameless candles.
- Water your Christmas tree daily and don't let it dry out. A dry tree is more flammable.
- Make sure your tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights, and not blocking an exit.
- Don't overload extension cords and outlets.



Holiday Online Shopping Safety



Stay Safe Online: What You Need to Know About Cyberattacks

For Cybersecurity Awareness Month we are focusing on the topic of holiday online shopping safety. As the holiday season approaches, millions of shoppers are turning to their devices for the best deals, gifts, and last-minute purchases.

As online holiday shopping ramps up, so do cyberattacks. These malicious attempts to access your devices or steal personal, financial, or medical information can lead to fraud, identity theft, or worse — all while damaging your privacy and peace of mind.

That's where cybersecurity comes in. It's the practice of preventing, detecting, and responding to these threats, protecting not just individuals and organizations, but also our communities and national infrastructure.



Protect Yourself Against Cyberattacks

You can avoid cyber risks and become more cyber secure by taking these steps in advance:

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

For more tips and resources on safe online shopping, visit [Ready.gov | Cybersecurity](https://www.ready.gov/cybersecurity).

Winter Weather Safety



Winter Weather

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.

- 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.

Stay Safe During Winter Weather

- 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



How to Protect Yourself from Winter Weather

If you are under a winter storm warning, find shelter right away

Know your winter 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.

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. Do not massage or use a heating pad.



Hypothermia is an unusually low body temperature.

- **Signs:** Shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech or drowsiness.
- **Actions:** Warm the center of the body—chest, neck, head and groin.

Flood Preparedness



Know Your Risk for Floods

Visit [FEMA's Flood Map Service Center](#) to know types of flood risk in your area. However, remember that flooding doesn't follow lines on a map. Where it can rain it can flood. 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. The [National Risk Index](#) is an easy-to-use, interactive tool that shows which communities are most at risk to natural hazards like flooding.



Preparing for a Flood

[Make a plan](#) for your household, including [your pets](#), 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.

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. [Get flood coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#).



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.



Disaster Exercise Series 2025



Functional Exercise has been Postponed

The Functional Exercise has been postponed until further notice due to the government shut-down. We will send out any information as to when the exercise will be rescheduled when we receive it. Please stay tuned. Thank you.

This is the operational phase of our 2025 regional exercise program. The 'To Hot to Handle' scenario is based upon a train car explosion at a local industrial plant after a brownout caused by extreme heat. The extreme heat mixed with dry gusty winds causes the plant along with other trains carrying toxic chemicals to catch fire. 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 drought-like conditions, extreme heat, and catastrophic fire.

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



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.

FEMA Independent Study Courses:

Course	Date	Location
IS-700.B An Introduction to the National Incident Management System	N/A	Online
IS-800.D National Response Framework, An introduction	N/A	Online
IS-100.C Introduction to the Incident Command System	N/A	Online
IS-200.C Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response	N/A	Online
IS-907 Active Shooter: What Can You Do	N/A	Online
IS-908 Emergency Management for Senior Officials	N/A	Online



WV Public Service Training



Course	Date	Location
Drones for First Responders	11/03-05/25	Bridgeport, WV
Rope Rescue Technician	11/14-16/2025	Blue Ridge Mountain VFD
Introduction to Drone Mapping	12/01-02/2025	Lewisburg, WV
Emergency Medical Technician—Initial—	12/08/2025	Berkeley County EAA

For more information contact: Jamie Weller at (304) 596-2653 or Steven Harris at (304) 596-2652

Local Training

Course	Date	Location
Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	11/18/2025	JCESA
Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	12/09/2025	JCESA
Child and Babysitting Safety (CABS)	12/11/2025	JCESA

All classes are being held at the Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency (JCESA) located at 419 Sixteenth Avenue, Ranson, WV 25438 @ 6:00 pm.

State Training

Course	Date	Location
N/A	N/A	N/A

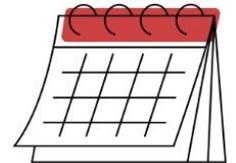
For more information contact: Eva Godbey at (304) 766-0011 ext. 22 or Jeff Cunningham (304) 414-7682



The Jefferson County 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 an Emergency Services Council that acts as an advisory group.

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

NOVEMBER MEETINGS & EVENTS



- Sterling National Weather Service call every Monday and Friday at 10:30a.m.
- WV State weather calls on Mondays and Fridays at 10a.m.
- The Counter-Terrorism Committee meeting on November 11 at the JCHSEM EOC at 2:00pm

STAFF:

- **Stephen Allen, Director**
 - ⇒ Office: 304-728-3290
 - ⇒ Email: sallen@jeffersoncountywv.org
- **Dick Myers, Deputy Director/ Planner/ Program Manager**
 - ⇒ Office: 304-728-3329
 - ⇒ Email: dmyers@jeffersoncountywv.org
- **Brandon Wonder, Public Affairs Coordinator**
 - ⇒ Office: 304-724-8914
 - ⇒ Email: bwonder@jeffersoncountywv.org

28 Industrial Blvd., Suite 101, Kearneysville, WV 25430