

December 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 December 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 National Influenza Vaccination Week and Holiday Fire Safety. This newsletter will also include information on Safe Toys and Gifts Month. We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.

The Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management wishes everyone a happy and healthy Christmas Holiday.



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.



National Influenza Vaccination Week



December 4–10 marks National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) — a nationwide observance that highlights the importance of flu vaccination and reminds everyone that there’s still time to get protected this season.

Each year, millions of people get sick with the flu, leading to hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths in the United States alone. The flu virus can spread easily through coughing, sneezing, and even talking, but getting your annual flu shot is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent illness.



How to Protect Yourself

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that *everyone 6 months and older* receive an annual flu vaccine, with rare exceptions. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe flu complications, including:

- Adults aged 65 and older
- Young children and infants
- Pregnant individuals
- People with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease
- Healthcare workers and caregivers

Even if you haven’t gotten your flu shot yet, it’s not too late! Flu activity often peaks between December and February, but it can continue well into the spring. Getting vaccinated now can still help protect you and your loved ones for the remainder of the flu season.

Flu vaccines are available at most doctor’s offices, clinics, pharmacies, and local health departments. Many locations also offer convenient walk-in appointments or community vaccination events.

For more information visit [CDC | Influenza](#)

Holiday Fire Safety



Stay Safe This Season: Holiday Fire Safety Tips

The holidays are a time for family, celebration, and cozy gatherings—but they're also one of the most common times of year for home fires. Between decorative lights, candles, and festive cooking, it's important to keep fire safety top of mind.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, holiday decorations and candles cause hundreds of home fires each year

Winter Holiday Fire Facts

- U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 832 home structure fires per year that began with decorations, excluding Christmas trees. These fires caused an annual average of 3 civilian fire deaths, 28 civilian fire injuries and \$17 million in direct property damage.
- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in more than two in five (43%) home Christmas tree fires.
- Nearly one in four (24%) Christmas tree fires were started by lamps or bulbs. Twelve percent were started by candles.
- Roughly two of every five (42%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room. • Candle fires peak in December and January with 12 percent of candle fires occurring in December and 10 percent of candle fires occurring in January.
- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.
- Year round, one-third (33%) of home decoration fires were started by candles. This jumped to half in December when candles started 50% of such fires. Cooking started one-fifth (20%) of decoration fires.



Holiday Fire Safety



Holiday Decoration Safety

- **Check your lights:** Inspect all string lights for frayed wires or broken bulbs before use. Replace damaged sets immediately.
- **Water your tree:** A dry Christmas tree can ignite quickly—keep it well-watered and away from heat sources.
- **Turn off decorations:** Always unplug lights and blow out candles before going to bed or leaving home.

Kitchen & Cooking Safety

- **Stay in the kitchen:** Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires—keep a close eye on what’s on the stove or in the oven.
- **Keep flammables away:** Dish towels, oven mitts, and paper products should be kept clear of burners and open flames.
- **Have a fire extinguisher nearby:** Know how to use it and ensure it’s easily accessible.

Candle & Fireplace Safety

- Use sturdy, non-flammable holders and place candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Never leave candles or fireplaces unattended, especially if children or pets are nearby.
- Consider battery-operated candles for a safer glow.

For more information visit: [U.S. Fire Administration | Holiday Fire Safety](#)

Put a **FREEZE** on *Winter Holiday Fires*

Did you know? More than **1 in every 5** Christmas tree fires were caused by a heat source too close to the tree.

As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart. Read manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.

Make sure your tree is **at least 3 feet** away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators and space heaters.

Logos: U.S. Fire Administration, Fire is Everyone's Fight, NFPA

Safe Toys and Gifts Month



Too often, accidents involving children and toys occur and may result in eye injuries. Each year, thousands of children age 14 and younger suffered serious eye injuries, even blindness, from toys.

There are three important ways you can protect your child's eyes from injuries while playing with toys:

1. Only buy toys meant for their age
2. Show them how to use their toys safely
3. Keep an eye on them when they play



Before you Purchase a Toy

- Read all warnings and instructions on the box.
- Ask yourself if the toy is right for your child's ability and age.
- Avoid purchasing toys with sharp or rigid points, spikes, rods, or dangerous edges.
- Check the lenses and frames of children's sunglasses; many can break and cause injuries.
- Buy toys that will withstand impact and not break into dangerous shards.
- Look for the letters "ASTM." This means the product meets the national safety standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).
- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off.

Before Letting Children play with Toys

- Inspect toys for safe, sturdy construction.
- Explain how to use the toy.
- Fix or throw away broken toys.



Always:

- Keep young children away from toys meant for older children.
- Supervise your children while playing.
- Store toys properly after play to avoid risks or falls.
- Supervise children's craft projects (scissors and glue can be extremely dangerous to a child's eyesight).
- Have children wear the right eye protection for sports (face shields, helmets, eyeguards).

For more information visit: [Prevent Blindness](#) | [Safe Toy Checklist](#)

Flood Preparedness



What's the Difference Between a Flood Watch and a Flood Warning

- A flood/flash flood watch means a flood or flash flood is possible.
- A flood/flash flood warning means flooding or flash flooding is already occurring or will occur soon. TAKE IMMEDIATE PRECAUTIONS!



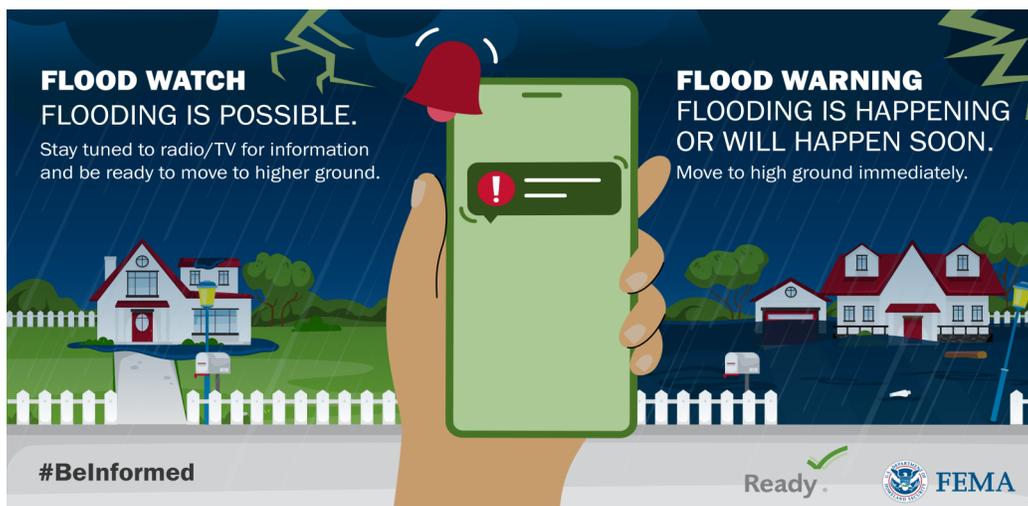
Make Plans to Stay Safe

- Flash floods can be sudden and violent. You may have little to no warning. Designate a place on higher ground that you can get to quickly. Plan to move to higher ground before flooding begins.
- **River floods:** Know if you are in an area that is prone to river floods. Review your evacuation plan so that you can leave quickly if officials advise you to evacuate.
- **Storm surge:** Be prepared to evacuate immediately if local officials advise. A storm surge can cause water levels to rise quickly and flood large areas in just minutes.
- **Coastal flooding:** Be prepared to evacuate immediately if local officials advise. Move inland before flooding begins.

Take Care of Yourself



- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text 1-800-985-5990.



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



FEMA

WV Public Service Training



Course	Date	Location
Introduction to Drone Mapping	12/01-02/2025	Lewisburg, WV
Emergency Medical Technician—Initial—	12/08/2025	Berkeley County EAA

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

Local Training

Course	Date	Location
Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	12/09/2025	JCESA
Child and Babysitting Safety (CABS)	12/11/2025	JCESA
RIDE Bus Training	12/09/2025	Community Building, Ranson, WV
Ride Bus Training for First Responders (Pre-Registration Required)	12/10/2025	Citizens Fire Company

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

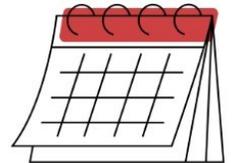
For more information contact: Eva Godbey at (304) 766-0011 ext. 22 or Jeff Cunningham (304) 414-7682



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 December 9 at the JCHSEM EOC at 2:00pm

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