

January 2026

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 January 2026 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 topic of Resolve to be Ready and Stay Safe During Winter Travel. This newsletter also includes information on National Radon Action Month. We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.

In the News section of this Newsletter, there is an announcement from the West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Properties explaining that there is 97 pallets available for State Agencies and other non-profit organizations. Please see page 3 of this newsletter for more information.

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





LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

Nearly 100 Pallets of Bottled Water Available for Donation

The West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP) is pleased to **announce the availability of 97 pallets of Aquafina-brand bottled water** by the **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** through the General Services Administration (GSA). These pallets of water can be requested by state agencies and eligible non-profit organizations, including but not limited to municipalities, churches, fire departments, and other homeless/impooverished provider programs, through the WVSASP. If you or an organization you know is interested in obtaining some of this water, please contact Assistant Surplus Manager Mark Fox at **304-356-2428** or Mark.S.Fox@wy.gov at your earliest convenience.

The entire inventory of water is currently stored at a facility in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. While the property itself is donated on behalf of the federal government, the WVSASP is available to travel to and transport the water back to West Virginia for a small administrative fee. Additionally, the WVSASP can store the inventory in its warehouse for a short period of time until the receiving entity can obtain it.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you know of other eligible organizations who may be interested, please help us in spreading the word.

Product Details:

- **Brand:** Aquafina
- **Quantity Available:** 97 full pallets
- **Configuration Per Pallet:** 60 cases containing 32 bottles each
- **Bottle Size:** 16.9 fluid ounces (standard individual size)
- **Expiration Date:** The water has a remaining shelf life until April 2026, providing ample time for distribution and use in emergency preparedness or immediate relief efforts

Resolve to be Ready



Resolve to be Ready for the New Year!

As we turn the page to a new year, there's no better time to strengthen our commitment to preparedness. Emergencies can happen anytime, anywhere—and often without warning. By taking a few practical steps now, you can protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community throughout the year ahead.

Why “Resolve to be Ready”?

The start of a new year gives us a fresh opportunity to build habits that enhance our safety and resilience. Whether it's preparing for severe weather, power outages, or unexpected disruptions, readiness empowers us to respond confidently, reduce risk, and recover faster.



Make a Resolution

- Make an emergency plan: choose a safe place to meet, learn evacuation routes, and establish out-of-town contact.
- Take a current photo of you and your pet together in case you get separated during a disaster.
- Set up group text lists so you can communicate with friends and family during emergencies.
- Keep and update emergency supplies; remember to include cash.

For more information visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) | [Resolve to be Ready](#)



National Radon Action Month



Test Your Home. Protect Your Health.

JANUARY IS NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

What is Radon and Why Should you Care?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that forms when uranium breaks down in soil and rock. It can seep into homes through cracks in foundations, walls, or floors. You can't see, smell or taste Radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in America and claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year. Exposure to Radon is a preventable health risk and testing radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure.

Things you can do during National Radon Action Month

- **Test your home** - EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General recommend that all homes in the U.S. be tested for Radon. Testing is easy and inexpensive. Do-it-yourself kits can be purchased online, at hardware stores, or through local health departments (if available). The EPA recommends you take action if the radon levels are 4 picocuries per liter or higher.
- **Radon Mitigation** - Radon mitigation systems are effective, often reducing levels by up to 99%. Common solutions include: sub-slab depressurization systems, improved ventilation, sealing entry points. These systems can be installed in a day and can significantly improve indoor air quality and long-term health outcomes.
- **Spread the Word** - Protecting your community start with awareness. This month: Encourage friends and family to test their homes, share information on social media, and ask local schools, workplaces, and organizations to participate in radon education.
- **Make a Plan** - Make a plan with friends and family on what to do if deadly Radon levels are detected. Have a go-kit prepared in case of evacuation from the home.

For more information visit: [EPA | National Radon Action Month Information](#)

Stay Safe During Winter Travel



Know Before you Go

Travel during the winter has unique risks, especially if you travel by car. Being prepared can help you “expect the unexpected” so your trip isn’t ruined by common problems travelers face in the winter.

- From blizzards, to [avalanches](#), to ice storms, be aware of the [winter risks](#) in places you visit. Check the local weather forecasts and warnings before heading out. Visit [National Weather Service](#) for up to date forecasts and download the FEMA App for alerts in up to five locations.
- If your roads are not in good shape, consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. If you do have to go out, make sure you are prepared in case you become delayed while traveling.
- Tell others your route and anticipated arrival time.



On the Road

- Make sure your vehicle is in good working condition before you travel.
- Keep your gas tank as full as you can. A full tank will also keep the fuel line from freezing.
- Install good winter tires and make sure they have enough tread, or any chains or studs required in your local area.
- When driving, increase your following distance from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds. It takes longer to slow down and stop on icy roads.
- Every vehicle should have an [emergency supply kit](#) in the trunk. Kits should be checked every six months and expired items should be replaced regularly.
- Keep family and emergency phone numbers, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company in your phone.
- Consider keeping a power bank for your phone in your car in case your car loses power.
- If stranded, run the engine for about 10 minutes per hour to run the heater and charge your cellphone. Open a window slightly to let fresh air in and avoid [carbon monoxide \(CO\) poisoning](#).

For More information visit: [Ready.gov](#) | [#Winter Ready](#)



Flood Preparedness



Always have different ways to get informed during an emergency.



#BeInformed



Keep Yourself and your Loved ones safe by Planning Ahead

- Are you in a flash-flood prone area? Contact the local county geologist or county planning department to find out if your home is located in a flash-flood-prone area or landslide-prone area.
- Make a [communication plan](#) and a [disaster plan](#) for your family.
- Plan and practice a flood evacuation route with your family. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be the "family contact" in case your family is separated during a flood. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name, address, and phone number of this contact person.



Create an Emergency Supply Kit

- An emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, etc.
- Rubber boots, sturdy shoes, and waterproof gloves.
- [Insect repellent](#) containing DEET or Picaridin, screens, or long-sleeved and long-legged clothing for protection from mosquitoes which may gather in pooled water remaining after the flood.

Disaster Exercise Series 2025



Functional Exercise has been Postponed

The Functional Exercise has been cancelled. “Too Hot to Handle” will conclude with the Tabletop exercise that was done on June 10, 2025. The EPA/START team will provide an AAR/IP for the tabletop.

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
Emergency Medical Technician - Initial	01/05/2026	Jefferson County ESA
Emergency Medical Technician - Initial	01/05/2026	Romney Rescue Squad
Fire Officer I and II	01/10-31/2025 and 02/01/2026	EPIC Office
Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC)	01/17-18/2025	Martinsburg Fire Department

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

Local Training

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

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

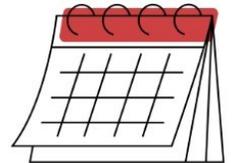
For more information contact: Eva Godbey at (304) 766-0011 ext. 22 or Jeff Cunningham (304) 414-7682



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.

JANUARY 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.

STAFF:

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