

February 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 February 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 National Canned Food Month. This newsletter also includes information on American Heart 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.

We would also like to thank all of the first responders, Fleet & Facilities team members, the WVDOH road crews, and our partners at the American Red Cross for their hard work and dedication during Winter Storm Fern.



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.



Thank you Letter



Thank You to Our Winter Storm Fern Response Teams

During Winter Storm Fern, our community was supported by an extraordinary group of professionals who worked tirelessly under challenging and often dangerous conditions.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to our first responders, Fleet and Facilities team members, WVDOH road crews, and our partners at the American Red Cross for their dedication, coordination, and commitment throughout this storm. From maintaining emergency response and critical facilities, to clearing and treating roadways, to providing care and assistance to those affected, your combined efforts helped keep our residents safe and supported when it mattered most.

Many of you worked long hours behind the scenes, starting early and staying late, so others could rely on essential services when they needed them most. Your commitment, professionalism, and service during Winter Storm Fern did not go unnoticed.

Thank you for all you do—especially when it matters most.

Dick Myers, Emergency Management Director





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

National Canned Food Month



The Importance of Canned and Dry Foods

Following a disaster there may be power outages that could last for several days. Stock canned foods, dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils.

Suggested Emergency Food Supplies

Consider the following things when putting together your emergency food supplies:

- Store at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Choose foods your family will eat.
- Remember any special dietary needs.

We suggest the following items when selecting emergency food supplies. You may already have many of these on hand. Download the [Recommended Supplies List](#) (PDF).

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, vegetables and a can opener
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Dried fruit
- Canned juices
- Non-perishable pasteurized milk
- High-energy foods
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods



Cooking

To heat food in a can:

1. Remove the label
2. Thoroughly wash and disinfect the can.
3. Open the can before heating



National Canned Food Month



Food Safety and Sanitation

Without electricity or a cold source food stored in refrigerators and freezers can become unsafe. Bacteria in food grow rapidly at temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit and if these foods are consumed you can become very sick. Thawed food usually can be eaten if it is still “refrigerator cold.” It can be re-frozen if it still contains ice crystals. Remember “When in doubt, throw it out.”

Do:

- Keep food in covered containers.
- Keep cooking and eating utensils clean.
- Throw away food that has come into contact with contaminated flood water.
- Throw away any food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- Throw away any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

Don't:

- Eat foods from cans that are swollen, dented or corroded, even though the product may look safe to eat.
- Eat any food that looks or smells abnormal, even if the can looks normal.
- Let garbage accumulate inside, both for fire and sanitation reasons.



Managing Food Without Power

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
- The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours if it is unopened.
- Refrigerated or frozen foods should be kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below for proper food storage.
- Use a refrigeration thermometer to check temperatures.
- Refrigerated food should be safe as long as the power was out for no more than four hours.
- Discard any perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs or leftovers that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two hours or more.

For more information visit: [Ready.gov | Food](https://www.ready.gov/food)

American Heart Month



Raising Awareness on Heart Health

February is American Heart Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about heart health and the steps we can all take to reduce the risk of heart disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, but many heart-related conditions are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices.

This month, we encourage everyone to take time to focus on heart health, support one another in making positive changes, and learn more about ways to keep your heart strong. Small steps today can lead to a healthier heart tomorrow.

Caring About your Heart Health

Simple actions - such as staying physically active, eating a balanced and heart-healthy diet, managing stress, getting quality sleep, and knowing key health numbers like blood pressure and cholesterol - can have a powerful impact on heart health.

To help reduce the chance of heart disease take steps such as:

- **Preventing High Blood Pressure** - Having a healthy plan with a variety of foods, keeping a healthy weight, and not smoking can help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range, which lowers your risk for heart disease and stroke.
- **ABCS of Heart Health** - A: Take Aspirin as directed by your health care professional, B: Control your Blood pressure, C: Manage your Cholesterol, and S: Don't Smoke
- **Get Moving** - Staying physically active will help you control your weight and strengthen your heart. Try walking for 10 minutes, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.



How you can Help

Every year, over 350,000 cardiac arrests happen outside of a hospital, with most happening at home. Sadly, only 10 % survive. By giving someone CPR you can double or even triple their chances of survival. Learn CPR and become part of the Nation of Lifesavers.

You can sign up for classes today! Locally, the Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency offers CPR/First Aid courses every month for free, click [here](#) to view the available classes.

For More information visit: [American Heart Month | February is American Heart Month](#)

Keeping Children Safe During the Winter



Winter can be a fun and exciting time for children, filled with snow days, outdoor play, and seasonal activities. However, cold temperatures, snow, and ice also bring added safety risks. Taking a few simple precautions can help ensure children stay healthy, warm, and safe all winter long.

Dress for the Weather

Children should wear layers of warm clothing, including hats, gloves or mittens, scarves, and waterproof boots. Since children can lose body heat quickly, covering exposed skin is especially important. Wet clothing should be changed as soon as possible to prevent chills and frostbite.



Practice Safe Outdoor Play

Outdoor winter activities like sledding, skating, and playing in the snow are great ways for children to stay active—but supervision is key. Children should wear helmets when appropriate, sled only in designated areas away from roads, and avoid frozen ponds or lakes unless they are clearly marked as safe.

Prevent Slips and Falls

Ice and snow can make walking surfaces slippery. Encourage children to walk carefully, wear boots with good traction, and avoid running on icy sidewalks or steps. Clearing snow and ice from play areas and walkways can also help prevent injuries.

Limit Exposure to Extreme Cold

In very cold or windy conditions, limit the amount of time children spend outdoors. Watch for signs of cold-related illness such as shivering, numbness, pale skin, or unusual tiredness, and bring children indoors if symptoms appear.



Flood Preparedness



What to Do Before a Flood

Understand your flood risk:

- Learn about the types of flooding that can impact your home and community. Types of flooding include flash floods, river floods, storm surges, coastal floods, burn scars, debris flow, ice/debris jams, snowmelt, dry wash, dam breaks, and levee failures.
- Know your home and community's flood risk. Look up the West Virginia Flood Tool and search for your home using your address.

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.



What to Do During a Flood

Turn Around! Don't Drown!

- Never walk, swim, or drive through floodwater. Just 6 inches of fast-moving floodwater can knock you over, and 12 inches can carry your vehicle away.

What to do After the Flood

Prevent Injuries

- Understand the dangers you may face and keep your loved ones safe.
- If you evacuated, wait for officials to say it is safe before going home.
- Avoid fallen power lines, poles, and wires. They can electrocute you.
- Watch out for fallen trees and other debris.
- Use flashlight or battery powered lanterns, rather than candles, to reduce fire risk.

For more information visit: [American Red Cross | Flood](#)

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 - Refresher	02/09-20/2026	Citizens Fire Company
Lost Person Behavior	02/28/2026 - 03/01/2026	Capon Bridge VFD
Fire Officer I and II	03/28-29/2026 and 04/4-25/2026	Burlington VFD

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 First Aid	02/10/2026	JCESA
Community CPR and First Aid	03/10/2026	JCESA
Community First Aid	03/17/2026	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

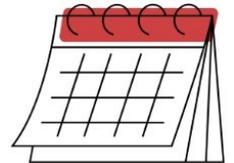
For more information contact: Eva Godbey at (304) 766-0011 ext. 22 or Jeff Cunningham (304) 414-7682



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.

FEBRUARY 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.
- Counter-Terrorism Committee Meeting on February 10 at the JCHSEM EOC at 2:00 pm
- Jefferson County LEPC Meeting on February 18 at the Hospice of the Panhandle at 8:15 am

STAFF:

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