

March 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.

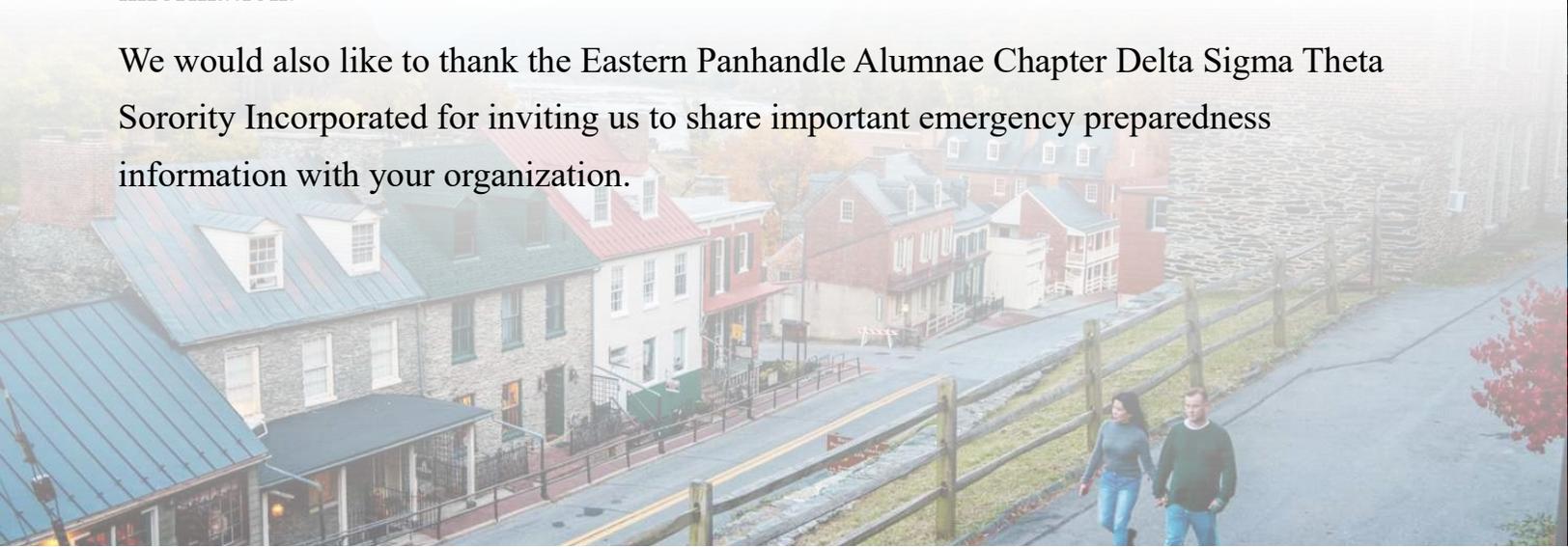
From the Director's Chair

Hello and welcome to our March 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 Flood Preparedness. This newsletter also includes information on National Poison Prevention Week, Daylight Savings Time, Ladder Safety Month, snowmelt flooding preparedness, and ice jam flooding preparedness. 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 the Eastern Panhandle Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated for inviting us to share important emergency preparedness information with your organization.



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 the Eastern Panhandle Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated

The Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management would like to extend our sincere thank you to Eastern Panhandle Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated for inviting us to present emergency preparedness information to your members.

We truly appreciate the opportunity to share information with your members about how to prepare for emergencies, stay informed, and protect themselves and their families during unexpected events. The insightful questions, open dialogue, and active participation demonstrated the passion and dedication of your members and community.

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

Warm regards,

Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management





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 Poison Prevention Week



March 15–21 marks **National Poison Prevention Week**, a nationwide effort established by Congress in 1961 to raise awareness about preventing and responding to poisoning incidents. This important observance highlights the risks that poisons pose to individuals of all ages and encourages families, caregivers, and communities to take an active role in prevention. By promoting education, safe practices, and preparedness, National Poison Prevention Week aims to reduce accidental poisonings and protect lives.

Poison Prevention Tips

- Store medications and chemicals safely: Keep them locked up and out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- Read labels carefully: Follow usage instructions and never mix chemicals unless directed.
- Use child-resistant packaging properly and re-secure containers after use.
- Dispose of unused or expired medications at approved take-back locations.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Change the batteries every year.

What to Do in a Poison Emergency

If you suspect poisoning, act quickly. Call poison control immediately at 1-800-222-1222. The Poison Control hotline is free, confidential, and available 24/7, offering expert guidance for poison exposures involving medications, chemicals, plants, or gases.



For more information visit [HRSA | National Poison Prevention Week](#)



Changing your Clocks, and your Batteries



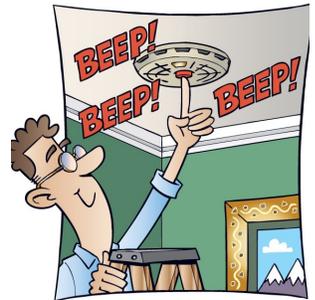
Daylight Savings Time and Smoke Alarms

When you set your clocks forward for Daylight Saving Time, take a moment to protect your home and family by changing the batteries in your smoke alarms.

On Sunday, March 8, 2026, states across the U.S. will move their clocks ahead one hour. This seasonal time change is also a perfect reminder to check your home's smoke alarms, replace old batteries, and test each unit to ensure it's working properly. Using Daylight Saving Time as a twice-a-year cue helps make fire safety a simple and consistent habit for every household.

What you Should Do

- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable 10-year batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Smoke alarms with any other type of battery need a new battery at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- When replacing a battery, follow manufacturer's list of batteries on the back of the alarm or manufacturer's instructions. Manufacturer's instructions are specific to the batteries (brand and model) that must be used. The smoke alarm may not work properly if a different kind of battery is used.



For more information visit: [NFPA | Changing Clocks and Batteries](#)



**Spring forward!
Test your smoke alarms.**

Change replaceable batteries at least once a year.



Ladder Safety Month



March is Ladder Safety Month

Ladder Safety Month is observed each year to raise awareness about ladder related injuries and to promote safe climbing practices at home and in the workplace. In the United States the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death is falls. In 2023 alone, 47,026 people died in falls at home and at work, that's 21% of all preventable injury-related deaths in the U.S.



Falls are 100% Preventable

Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risks and use the right equipment.

- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top.
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use

Fall Hazards at Home

If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare yourself for physical exertion, especially if you've been sedentary through the winter months, and take extra precautions to prevent falls.

Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't always worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall.

Fall risks do not come just from ladders, tripping hazards in and around your home can be just as dangerous, thousands of injuries occur each year from individuals falling in their homes. Taking extra precautions like moving electrical cords out of high foot traffic areas or installing handrails can help prevent in home falls, especially for older adults.

For more information visit [NSC | Slips, Trips and Falls](#)

Snowmelt Flooding and Ice Jams



What is a “snowmelt flood”?

A flood is considered a snowmelt flood when melting snow is a major source of the water involved. Unlike rainfall, which reaches the soil almost immediately, snow stores the water for some time until it melts, delaying the arrival of water at the soil for days, weeks, or even months. Once it does reach the soil, the water either soaks into the ground or runs off. If more water runs off than soaks in, flooding occurs.

What Causes Snowmelt Flooding?

High soil moisture conditions prior to snowmelt, frozen ground, heavy snow cover, widespread heavy rain during the melt period, and rapid snowmelt.

How Common are Snowmelt Flood? Are they Severe?

Snowmelt typically occurs every year in the northern United States, with most snowmelt events being minor and localized. Eight of the most significant floods of the 20th century were related to snowmelt.

What are “Ice Jams”?

Ice jams are a buildup of water behind ice on a body of water. Ice jam floods can occur because of snowmelt flooding adding to the amount of water in the river or lake.



How Quickly do Ice Jam Floods Occur

The rates of water level rise can vary from feet per minute to feet per hour during ice jam flooding. This means some communities have as little as one hour before flooding occurs after ice breakup to many hours.

What Kind of Problems do Ice Jams Cause?

Ice jams are responsible for loss of life, approximately \$125 billion in damages annually, and disrupt commercial navigation and hydropower operations. Ice jams also scour streambeds and may adversely affect fish and wildlife.

For more information visit [Weather.gov | Flooding Factsheet](https://www.weather.gov/factsheets)

Flood Preparedness



How to Prepare for Ice Jam Flooding

Being proactive is the best way to reduce risk during ice jam season. Understanding the unique dangers that ice jams present is a great first step. Because ice jam flooding does not occur as frequently, many people are unfamiliar with the warning signs and how quickly conditions can change.

An ice jam forms when large sheets or chunks of river ice break apart and pile up, blocking the normal flow of water. As water backs up behind the blockage, it can cause flooding upstream. When the jam suddenly breaks loose, the water that has been held back is released all at once, sending a powerful surge downstream. This rapid rise in water can happen with little to no warning and move with intense speed.

If you live in a low-lying area or near a river or creek, it's important to understand your flood risk, stay alert to changing conditions, and have a plan in place before flooding occurs.



How to Prepare for Snowmelt Flooding

Snowmelt flooding can sneak up on people because it doesn't always come with heavy rain, it's that slow build as temperatures rise and all that snow has to go somewhere. In Jefferson County we have low-lying roads and creeks that can flood fast, so a little prep goes a long way.

Here's how you can stay ahead of it:

Around your home

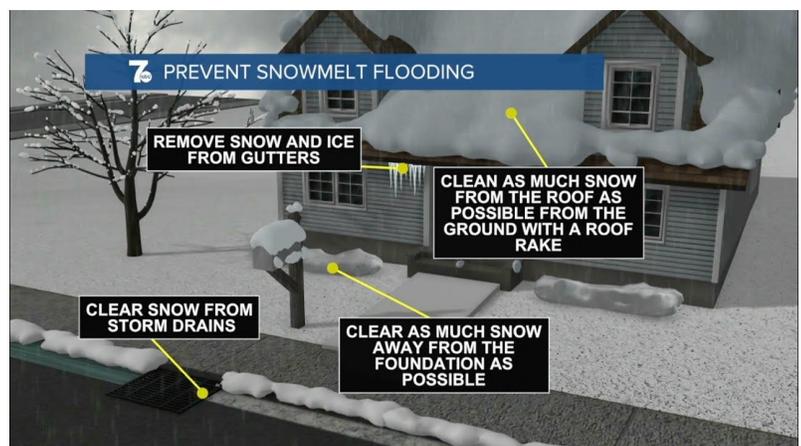
- Clear storm drains and gutters—Remove leaves, ice, and debris so melting snow has somewhere to go.
- Clean as much snow from the roof as possible from the ground with a roof rake.
- Shovel snow away from your foundations, especially near basement windows and doors.

Outside and Property

- Create drainage paths; break up ice dams carefully and channel meltwater away from your home.
- Know your flood risk; if you're in a flood-prone area, have sandbags ready before you need them.

For more information visit

[Reynolds Restoration | Snowmelt Prep](#)



Disaster Exercise Series 2025-26



Functional Exercise has been Rescheduled

The Functional Exercise has been rescheduled for Thursday April , 2026 at 0900. The exercise will be held at the Jefferson County EOC at 28 Industrial Boulevard, Kearneysville, WV 25430.

This is the operational phase of our 2025-26 regional exercise program. The 'To Hot to Handle' scenario is based upon multiple challenges stemming from extreme heat, severe drought, and gusty winds. The scenario will span the list of Emergency Support Functions - <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-esf-intro.pdf> - from law enforcement, to haz-mat 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
PHTLS	03/07-08/2026	Hampshire County HD
Firefighter I	03/09/2026	Romney VFC
Fire Officer I and II	03/28-29/2026 and 04/4-25/2026	Burlington VFD
Emergency Vehicle Operations	03/28-29/2026	Hampshire County ESA
IFSAC Rope Rescue Awareness, Operation, Technician	Aware. Ops. 03-04/31- 02/2026 Tech. 04/27-29/2026	Martinsburg Fire Department
Driver Operator Pumper	04/10, 11, 12, 17, 18,19/2026	Capon Bridge VFD

Local Training

Course	Date	Location
Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	03/10/2026	JCESA
Community First Aid	03/17/2026	JCESA
NWS Skywarn	03/18/2026	County Commission Meeting Room
NWS 2026 Hydrological Summits	03/26/2026	Fredrick County PSB

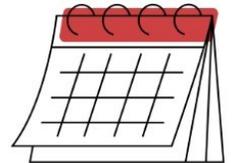
All classes are being held at the Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency (JCESA) located at 419 Sixteenth Avenue, Ranson, WV 25438 @ 6:00 pm.



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.

MARCH MEETINGS & EVENTS



- WV State weather calls on Mondays and Fridays at 10a.m.
- Sterling National Weather Service call every Monday and Friday at 10:30a.m.
- Army Corps of Engineers—Jennings Randolph Lake and Dam tabletop exercise: March 5, 2026; National Park Service, Harpers Ferry, WV
- C&O Canal National Park Service Dam 4 & 5 tabletop exercise: April 1, 2026 0800; 142 Potomac Street, Williamsport, MD

STAFF:

- **Dick Myers, Deputy Director/ Planner/ Program Manager**
 - ⇒ Office: 304-728-3329
 - ⇒ Email: dick.w.myers@jeffcowv.gov
- **Brandon Wonder, Public Affairs Coordinator**
 - ⇒ Office: 304-724-8914
 - ⇒ Email: brandon.j.wonder@jeffcowv.gov

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