May 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 May 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 Fire Weather Awareness Month and National Hurricane Preparedness Week. This newsletter also includes information on Older Americans Month and EMS Week. We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.



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.

everbridge

National Wildfire Awareness Month

Wildfires are unplanned fires that burn out of control in natural areas like forests, grasslands, or prairies. These fires spread quickly and can devastate wildlife, natural areas and communities.

Prepare for Wildfires

Recognize Warnings and Alerts

- Have several ways to receive alerts. Sign up for Everbridge and be aware of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA).
- Pay attention to air quality alerts.



Make an Emergency Plan

- Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands what to do if you need to quickly evacuate.
- Don't forget a plan for the office, kids' school or daycare, and anywhere you frequent.

Review Important Documents

- Make sure your insurance policies and personal documents, like ID, are up to date.
- Make copies and keep them in a secure password-protected digital space.

Strengthen your Home

- Use fire-resistant materials to build, renovate or make repairs.
- Create a fire-resistant zone that is free of leaves, debris or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.

Know your Evacuation Zone

- You may have to evacuate quickly due to a wildfire. Learn your evacuation routes, practice with pets and identify where you will go.
- Follow the instructions from local authorities. They will provide the latest recommendations based on the threat to your community and appropriate safety measures.

Gather Supplies

- Have enough supplies for your household, including a first aid kit, in you go bag or car trunk.
- Keep your cellphone charged when wildfires could be in your area. Purchase backup charging devices to power electronics.

National Wildfire Awareness Month

Stay Safe During



- Pay attention to emergency alerts and notifications for information and instructions.
- Evacuate immediately if authorities tell you to do so.
- If trapped, call 911 and give your location, but be aware that emergency response could be delayed or impossible.
- Use an N95 mask to protect yourself from smoke inhalation or limit your exposure to smoke.
- If you are sick and need medical attention, contact your healthcare provider for further care

Returning Home After a Wildfire

- Do not return home until authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Avoid hot ash, charred trees, smoldering debris, and live embers. The ground may contain hot pockets that can burn you or spark another fire.
- When cleaning, wear protective clothing—including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves, and sturdy thick-soled shoes—during clean-up efforts.
- Use a respirator to limit your exposure, and wet debris to minimize breathing dust particles. People with asthma, COPD and/or other lung conditions should take precautions in areas with poor air quality, as it can worsen symptoms.
- Document property damage with photographs. Conduct an inventory and contact your insurance company for assistance.
- Send text messages or use social media to reach out to family and friends. Phone systems are often busy following a disaster. Make calls only in an emergency.

For more information visit Ready.gov | Wildfires



National Hurricane Preparedness Week

National Hurricane Preparedness Week is May 3-9, 2026

Hurricanes are powerful and potentially devastating storms that can bring a range of hazards, including storm surge, destructive winds, rip currents, and widespread flooding. These storms can impact any U.S. coastline, as well as U.S. territories in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Historically, the Eastern Panhandle does not get directly hit with hurricanes or tropical storms, however many times our region can get hit by the remnants of these storms. While the remnants might not be the full strength of these deadly storms, they can still bring dangerous conditions like flooding rains, high winds, and tornadoes.

Preparedness is essential when facing hurricanes or tropical storms. Regardless of their strength at landfall, these storms can be extremely dangerous and potentially deadly.

Prepare for Hurricanes and Typhoons

Know Your Hurricane Risk

Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem. Rain, wind, and even tornadoes could happen far inland from where a hurricane or tropical storm make landfall.

Those with Disabilities

Identify if you may need additional help during an emergency or anyone else in your household is an individual with a disability.

Make an Emergency Plan

Make sure everyone in your household knows and understands your hurricane plans.



Recognize Warnings and Alerts

Have several ways to receive alerts. Sign up for Everbridge, and ensure your phone volume is turned up so you can hear NWS alerts.

Know Your Evacuation Zone

You may have to evacuate quickly due to a hurricane if you live in an evacuation zone. Learn your evacuation routes, practice with your family members and pets.

Gather Supplies

Have enough supplies for your household, include medication, disinfectant supplies and pet supplies in your go bag or car trunk.

National Hurricane Preparedness Week

The Different Hurricane Seasons



Eastern Pacific Hurricane Season: May 15—November 30



Atlantic Hurricane Season: June 1—November 30



Central Pacific Typhoon Season: June 1—November 30

Stay Safe During a Hurricane

Stay Informed

- Pay attention to emergency information and alerts.
- If you live in a mandatory evacuation zone and local officials tell you to evacuate, do so immediately.

Dealing with Weather

- Take refugee in a designated storm shelter or an interior room for high winds.
- Go to the highest level of the building if you are trapped by flooding. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising flood water.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Turn around, don't drown!

Returning Home After a Hurricane

- Pay attention to local officials for information and special instructions.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water.
- Do not wade in flood water, which can contain dangerous pathogens that cause illness. Underground or downed power lines also can electrically charge the water.
- Save phone calls for emergencies.

For more information visit: Ready.gov | Hurricanes

Older Adults Month

Prevent Falls

Falls account for one-third of all non-fatal injuries in the U.S., according Injury Facts. For some people, falls result in embarrassment, skinned knees, or broken bones. For others, falls can signal the beginning of lifestyle changes—or even lead to death.

Falls are the leading cause of injury death for adults 65 and older, and millions of older adults are injured in falls every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC data indicates:

- More than one in four older adults fall every year; fewer than half tell the doctor.
- 3 million older adults are treated in emergency departments each year for fall injuries.
- About 1 million patients are hospitalized each year because of injuries due to a fall.
- Falls are the cause of most traumatic brain injuries.

Make Your Home Safer

While falls can occur anywhere, they most often occur at home. Be sure to:

- Clear your floors: Remove clutter, small furniture, pet gear, electrical cords, throw rugs, and everything else that might cause someone to trip.
- Arrange or remove furniture so there is plenty of room for walking.
- Put essential items where they are easy to reach.
- Add grab bars inside and outside of your bathtub or shower and next to the toilet.
- Put railings on both sides of the stairs, and make sure stairs and hallways have good lighting.
- Make sure outdoor areas are well lit and walkways are smooth and free of hazards.

For more information on how to prevent falls for older adults visit: NSC | Prevent Falls



Older Adults Month

Driving can Present Challenges for Older Adults

Similar to new teen drivers, older adult drivers are likely to feel more independent with a driver's license and access to a vehicle. As we age, however, it is important to realize that mental reaction, situational awareness, vision, and motor controls may not be as sharp as they once were. Driving in heavy traffic or work zones, and during inclement weather or at night may become more challenging for the older driver.

More than 9,000 older adults were killed in traffic incidents in 2021. Avoiding distracted driving and understanding physical limitations, as well as the effects of any prescription medication that may cause impairment, is important.

Older adults should plan ahead before driving trips and, if necessary, consider alternative transportation, such as family and friends, ride sharing, public transportation, or community provided transportation services.

Physicians can be a resource in helping older adults decide when it is time to start curtailing driving activities, but in many cases, family members are the first they turn to. The perceived loss of independence may be difficult for older drivers to accept.

For more information visit: NSC | Older Adult Drivers



National EMS Week



Improving Outcomes, Together

National EMS week, May 17-23, 2026, is a time to show our gratitude toward EMTs and paramedics who provide lifesaving care across the nation every day. EMS Week is also a time to educate the public about EMS, and the essential service provided to communities.

This year's theme, Improving Outcomes, Together, highlights the shared responsibility of delivering high-quality emergency care. Through this commitment, Jefferson County residents receive the most efficient , effective, and compassionate care possible when it matters most.

Theme Days

Throughout EMS Week, each day features a special theme to recognize different aspects of emergency medical services.

- Sunday - Health, Wellness, and Resilience Day
- Monday - EMS Education Day
- Tuesday - Safety Tuesday
- Wednesday - EMS for Children Day
- Thursday - Save-A-Life Day (CPR & Stop the Bleed)
- Friday - EMS Recognition Day
- Saturday—EMS Remembrance Day

Each of these themes are designed to highlight the vital role EMS professional's play and to promote the importance of emergency medical services in keeping our communities safe and healthy.

For more information visit: EMSWeek.org

Flood Preparedness

How to be Prepared?

Step 1: Understand your risk

Step 2: Get flood insurance

Step 3: Prepare your home and documents

Step 4: Start a claim - recover fast



What is Flood Insurance?

Flood insurance covers losses directly caused by flooding. Flood insurance is specific to flooding since most homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage.

What is covered?

In the event of a flood, you National Flood Insurance Program policy covers direct physical losses to your structure and belongings.

The NFIP offers two types of coverage; building coverage and contents coverage.

There are many circumstances that factor into what is covered, such as where you live, the kind of house you live in, the age of your home, and how it's built and arranged.



Why Get Flood Insurance?

- Homeowners insurance doesn't cover floods.
- 32% of claims - Almost one-third of NFIP flood insurance claims come from outside high-risk flood areas.
- It might be required - Many property owners, particularly those in high-risk flood areas, may be required to have flood insurance.
- Why get flood insurance? - Everyone has some risk. Flooding can happen anywhere at any time. Poor drainage systems, summer storms, melting snow, neighborhood construction, and broken water mains can cause flooding.
- Faster recovery - Rebuilding after flood can be difficult. If you have flood insurance, you don't have to go through it alone.
- Peace of mind - No home is completely safe from potential flooding. Flooding is the most common and the most costly natural disaster. 90% of all presidentially declared U.S. natural disasters involve flooding.

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
Emergency Vehicle Operations	05/09 & 16/2026	Jefferson County ESA
Volunteer & Donations Management	05/13-14/2026	Hampshire Co. HD
SIRN Sponsored Training	05/15/2026	Jefferson County ECC

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	05/05/2026	JCESA
Community First Aid	05/19/2026	JCESA
Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	06/09/2026	JCESA

All Community CPR, Stop the Bleed, and First Aid courses are held at the Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency (JCESA) located at 419 Sixteenth Avenue, Ranson, WV 25438 @ 6:00 pm.

State Training

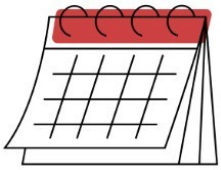
Course	Date	Location
N/A	N/A	N/A

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.

MAY 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.
- National Weather Service Community Engagement Meeting on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, from 10 am to 12 pm.

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