

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



Resolve to be Ready in 2023 - DEMS Monthly Webinar on July 5, 2023, at 7 PM

Join us on Wednesday, July 5, 2023, at 7 PM to learn how to respond to an emergency. Will you evacuate (local or out of area), shelter-in-place, or lockdown? Join us: <https://youtube.com/live/hb81YUUEGR4>



Public Safety Open House – Rescheduled for August 26th

Join us at 4890 Alliance Dr, Fairfax on June 10th for a fun-filled Public Safety Day in the back parking lot of the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center! We hope to see you there!

Preparing for Summer Vacations

Summer is the time for adventure or relaxation on vacation. This July, many people will take advantage of the warm weather to travel far and wide. If you are planning a trip, it's important to plan ahead and think about how to be prepared. Are you going to a part of the country that is more susceptible to earthquakes, hurricanes, or coastal flooding? Are you traveling abroad to a country where you don't speak the language? Following these tips will help you stay safe and provide peace of mind so you can fully relax as you soak in some summer sunshine!



Make sure you have an emergency kit with you no matter where you decide to go. Think about the items you will need to be able to communicate, maintain your health, purchase supplies, and stay comfortable if you can't get back to your hotel or your luggage goes missing. If you are flying, it is a good idea to bring essential items with you in your carry-on bag, rather than packing them in your checked luggage.

Tell a trusted friend or family member your travel plans and update them if anything changes. That way, you will have someone who knows where you are in the event something happens.

If you are traveling to a part of the United States that is more susceptible to natural disasters, it is a good idea to brush up on what to do for different types of emergencies. You can learn more about what to do during different types of disasters at www.Ready.gov/be-informed.

Did you know that not all countries use 9-1-1 as their emergency number? If you are planning an international trip, it is a good idea to research the country you will be staying in and make sure you know what number to call if there is an emergency. It's also a good idea to learn how to say important words like "help" and "emergency" if you don't speak the native language of the country you will be visiting. To learn more about staying safe abroad, visit the State Department's website at: [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(state.gov\)](http://SmartTravelerEnrollmentProgram.state.gov)

Request an Emergency Preparedness Workshop

DEMS can conduct workshops (virtual or in person) to prepare your networks for an emergency. Submit your request today: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/presentation-requests. Workshop Topics:

- Personal Preparedness Using the Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG).
- 5 Step Neighborhood Guide Workshop – Learn how to prepare for where you live!
- Business Disaster Resilience Workshop – Learn how to prepare your business!
- Youth Preparedness (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, schools, etc.).

Preparing for Extreme Heat – Resources Are Available

Extreme heat, especially coupled with high humidity, can be deadly and requires the body to work harder to moderate its core temperature. Overexposure to heat can trigger a heat-related illness including heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and eventually heat stroke.

Heat Safety Tips

Before (Preparedness)


- Drink plenty of fluids. Know your body and know what is normal.
- Stay inside and out of the heat. Reschedule outdoor activities, if possible.
- Never leave children, the elderly, or pets alone in a car.
- Dress in loose-fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Lightweight, light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight and helps maintain normal body temperatures.

During (Response)

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to heat and sun.
- Visit indoor locations including libraries, community center, recreation centers, Fairfax County Government Center, and shelters.
- Drink plenty of water or electrolyte sports drinks and avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day. If you do, use a buddy system when working in extreme heat, have a phone handy, and take frequent breaks.
- If you must exercise, consider indoor activities. If you must exercise outside, do so during cooler parts of the day, drink extra fluids, use a buddy system, have a phone handy, and reduce your level of effort.
- If you feel woozy, overheated, or unwell, act immediately!
 - Stop any strenuous activity, get somewhere cool, and drink something if you can.
 - Cool your skin by taking a cold bath or holding anything cold against your body.
 - Call someone for help or call 911 - do this before your condition compromises your critical thinking skills.
 - Check on older neighbors and any neighbors without air conditioning.

After (Recovery)

- Consult a medical professional if a heat-related condition does not approve.
- Continue to drink plenty of water.

 **Know the symptoms of heat-related illness**

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
Faint or dizzy	Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating	No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin	Body temp above 103°
Nausea or vomiting	Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse	Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps	May lose consciousness

FAIRFAX COUNTY
VIRGINIA



Stay Hydrated and Choose Tap!

Tips from Fairfax Water on how to drink more water and reduce your use of single-use plastics:

- July is "Plastic Free July!" Join the challenge and carry a reusable water bottle with you and refill it throughout the day. This will help you stay hydrated and reduce waste. Visit plasticfreejuly.org to learn more.
- Freeze some freezer-safe containers of water. Take one with you for ice-cold water all day long.
- Choose water over sugary drinks.
- Opt for water when eating out. You'll save money and reduce calories.
- Make sure your kids and pets are getting enough water too.



Fairfax Water

www.fairfaxwater.org




Community Connect - Help Emergency Responders Help You

Community Connect is a free, secure, and easy to use platform that allows Fairfax County residents and business owners to share critical information with first responders and public safety personnel. The platform has made it easy for you to know what may be important by organizing the secure portal into buckets of information you can enter. Residents who sign up for Community Connect may enter information on the layout of their home or business, where the utility shutoffs are located, who resides in the home, information on disabilities or access and functional needs, and important information about pets (such as their name and favorite hiding place). This information is stored by the address you enter and will only be available to first responders when emergency personnel are dispatched to your registered address.



Any information you provide through Community Connect is completely voluntary and based on what you are comfortable sharing. Data that you provide Community Connect is secure and is used only for the purpose of better serving you during emergency situations. Your information is never used for any other purpose. Follow this link to sign up for Community Connect: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/alerts-and-emails.



 <p>Your Property</p> <p>Understanding critical information such as your residence type, whether or not you have fire sprinklers, or designated family meeting places, improves our ability to respond and make decisions during an emergency.</p>	 <p>Your People</p> <p>Let us know who is best to contact in case of an emergency. Your contacts can help us with everything from access, to how to deal with potential hazards or locate occupants. Getting in touch helps us better communicate at the time when it's needed most.</p>	 <p>Your Needs</p> <p>If you or members of your family have mobility or other types of functional needs that may require additional assistance, letting us know means we can plan accordingly and respond more quickly to those needs.</p>	 <p>Your Pets</p> <p>Your pets are part of the family too. We want to make sure that we are able to evacuate pets and best handle them as best we can during an incident. Tell us about any type of pet at your residence - even take a photo so we can spot them easily!</p>
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Fairfax County Annual Hurricane Seminar

On June 5, 2023, the DEMS Training and Exercise Division hosted its annual Hurricane Seminar, an event for preparing county employees for the hurricane season which kicked off on June 1st. The seminar was well attended with 23 local, state, and non-profit agencies. During the event, the National Weather Service (NWS) Baltimore/Washington gave a presentation on the official 2023 hurricane season outlook as well as a mini session on the science behind hurricanes. Emergency Operations Center (EOC) procedures and emergency plans were reviewed, and Fairfax County agencies were encouraged to review and update their internal emergency plans and checklists. This collaboration between Fairfax County and the NWS demonstrates the commitment to disaster preparedness and response and ensuring the safety of the community.



Volunteer with the Emergency Management Volunteer Corps

The Department of Emergency Management and Security's (DEMS) Volunteer Corps volunteers are trained in emergency preparedness and emergency management principles to help inform the public by staffing public events, leading presentations, and participating in trainings. Interested in answering the call?



Visit here for more info: [Volunteering in Emergency Preparedness | Emergency Management \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/em/volunteering).

Home Fire Safety



According to the U.S. Fire Administration, home fires are responsible for 1,151 deaths so far this year. Most home fires result from cooking and smoking food, malfunctions in electrical, lighting, and heating equipment, and intentional fire setting. Follow these tips to prevent fires in and around your home:

Outdoor hazards

- If you have torches, firepits, or citronella candles in your yard, never leave them unattended, and keep a fire extinguisher nearby.
- Remember to turn off any string lights or plug-in outdoor light sources before you return indoors.
- Place grills and meat smokers away from your house and other combustible materials and keep a fire extinguisher close by while they are being used.

Fireworks

- Never throw fireworks or light them while in your hand. Bystanders should stand at least 25 feet away.
- Sparklers can be very dangerous, reaching temperatures of 1800 degrees. Pieces may break off and burn bystanders, especially if they are waived back and forth.

Indoor Considerations

- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby, they are suitable for oil or grease fires.
- Always stay in the kitchen when preparing food on the stovetop.
- Make sure you have a smoke alarm on each level of your home and in each bedroom or sleeping area. If you or someone in your home is deaf or hard of hearing, make sure you have audio and visual smoke alarms which emit sound and flashes of light to alert occupants of a fire emergency.
- Create a fire evacuation plan and practice it with the whole family, including children and pets! Use the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) has a fillable [Home Fire Safety Survey](#).



For more information and resources on fire safety, visit Fairfax County FCFRD's website at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/educational-topics>.

Stay Safe in the Sun

Spending time outside is a great way to be physically active, reduce stress, and get vitamin D. You can work and play outside without raising your skin cancer risk by protecting your skin from the sun.

Reduce your risk of Ultraviolet (UV) rays damaging you skin by:

- Limit your time in the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when the sun's rays are the most intense.
- Sunscreen wears off. Remember to reapply if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.
- Check your sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than 3 years.

It's easy to protect yourself from UV exposure...



Long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat offer the best protection. If you're wearing a baseball cap or short-sleeved shirt, make sure to put sunscreen on your ears, neck, and arms.



Use a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 on any exposed skin, and don't forget to re-apply it every two hours, as well as after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.



Seek shade as much as possible between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., which are peak times for sunlight. Avoid indoor tanning.

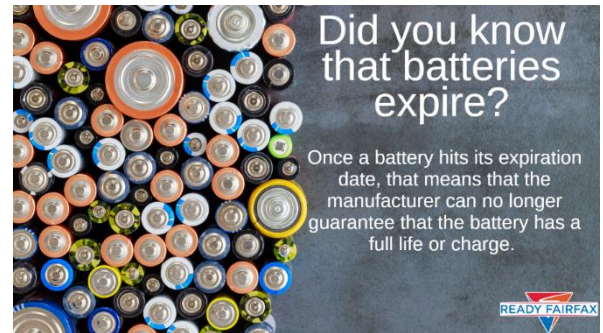


If you work outdoors, ask about sun protection at your job, like wearing sun-protective clothing.

Power Outages

Power outages can be frustrating and troublesome when they last a short while, but they can be dangerous if they last days or longer – especially in very cold or hot weather, or for individuals with specialized medical needs. Outages can also be costly, especially if all your food spoils.

Outages may occur on their own, but more often they are a secondary effect of tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms, winter storms, extreme heat (from system overload), or even deliberate acts of violence. Some recent large-scale power outages were the result of grid-management software glitches, with no physical damage to components. Depending on the primary hazard, damage unrelated to the outage may slow power restoration primarily due to downed trees or floodwaters blocking access.



Before a power outage takes place, it is beneficial to do the following:

- Sign up for Fairfax Alerts and have a battery or crank powered radio available.
- Back up all critical files on your computer.
- Unplug electrical equipment. Spikes and surges could occur as power is restored, damaging equipment.
- Charge cell phones and battery-powered devices you use regularly.



When a power outage is taking place:

- Report your outage. Never assume a neighbor has reported it.
- Unplug electrical equipment until a steady power supply returns.
- Do not open your refrigerator or freezer – they will remain cold longer this way.
- If water pressure fails, a bucket of water dumped manually into a toilet will cause it to flush.

REPORT YOUR OUTAGE

Dominion Virginia Power:
1-866-DOM-HELP (1-866-366-4357)

Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative (NOVEC):
1-888-335-0500 or 703-335-0500

It is not uncommon for individuals to use generators during a power outage, but it is important that they are used in a safe manner:

- Generators and fuel should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows, doors and attached garages.
- Never use a generator inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace, or any partially enclosed area. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Keep the generator dry and protected from rain or flooding. Touching a wet generator or devices connected to one can cause electrical shock.

After a power outage:

- If power is restored, be certain it is steady before you plug equipment into it.
- **When in doubt, throw it out!** Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

For more information, visit our CERG Power Outage Hazard Page:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/poweroutageblackout