

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter



Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



DEMS Monthly Webinar on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at 7 PM

Join our Department of Emergency Management and Security on Wednesday, November 1, at 7 p.m. to learn all about mitigation and what steps you can take to eliminate or reduce future risk to people and property from disasters! Link: <https://youtube.com/live/lK5Jtr7g4F8>

Mitigation – What's That?

Mitigation is any sustained action taken to eliminate or reduce future risk to people and property from disasters. Mitigation can take place anytime, but the intent is always to reduce risk from future hazards.

What mitigation activities should you do? Mitigation requires looking at the risks faced by the region and your particular property, identifying vulnerabilities, and taking steps to address them. Here are some examples:

Flooding

- Seal your basement walls.
- Use flood resistant material.

Insurance

- Get insurance (renters' or homeowners'). *Flood insurance is a separate policy!
- Inventory your home and write down your contents.

Utilities

- Have backup power, like a generator.
- Use surge protectors.

To learn more, join our webinar (information above). It is also recorded if you miss the live session!

A study by the National Institute of Building Sciences shows that investments in hazard mitigation (by exceeding local building code requirements) save \$4 for every \$1 spent.



Fairfax County Public Safety Agency Overview with Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold 11/1/23 at 7 PM

Link to register for webinar: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

**FAIRFAX COUNTY
PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY
OVERVIEW**

EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1
FROM 7 P.M TO 8:30 P.M.**

Deputy County Executive
for Safety and Security
Tom Arnold

REGISTER NOW

<https://bit.ly/ffxcopublicsafety23>

COMMUNITIES OF TRUST
COMMUNITY
PUBLIC SAFETY
WORKING TOGETHER

1742

DEMS

9-1-1

Occoquan Dam Siren Test 11/14/23 at 10:00 AM

The Occoquan Dam Siren system exists to alert persons below the Occoquan Dam of a structural failure of the Occoquan dam (an extremely unlikely event). If the siren sounds, seek higher ground if you live/work/are visiting inside the Impact Zone. The Impact Zone is a small area adjacent to the banks of the Occoquan River between the Town of Occoquan and Belmont Bay that will flood if the Occoquan Dam experiences a structural failure.

Background - Fairfax Water owns and operates the Occoquan Dam which forms the Occoquan Reservoir as a drinking water source for Northern Virginia. The Occoquan Reservoir holds approximately 8.3 billion gallons of water. The Occoquan Dam was built in the early 1950s to create the Occoquan Reservoir. The dam is inspected and maintained on a routine basis. The structural integrity of the Occoquan Dam is very sound. In fact, through rigorous maintenance and improvements, it is even stronger today than when it was constructed. As a precaution in the extremely unlikely event of a structural failure, Fairfax Water has installed a siren warning system to alert persons downstream of the dam in the event of dam failure. The sirens will only sound for two reasons:

- 1) Testing of the system (11/14/23 at 10:00 AM)
- 2) The Occoquan Dam has failed in a non-weather related event.

Who's impacted? The impact zone includes areas in Prince William County & Fairfax County located immediately adjacent to the Occoquan River from the Town of Occoquan to Belmont Bay. This includes the town, marinas, Occoquan Regional Park, and other residences and businesses adjacent to the river.

What does the siren sound like? The siren is a loud whooping noise. You can hear what it sounds like by [clicking here](#).

How do I know if I'm in the impact zone? Just because you hear the siren does not mean you are in the impact zone. Find out whether or not you are in the impact zone or the noise zone by typing in your address in the search bar on the [webpage](#). If you are located within the red boundary then you are within the impact zone.

What should I do? During the siren test, there is no need to seek higher ground. Any other time, if you hear the siren and are in the impact zone, seek higher ground immediately! If you are not in the impact zone, no action is necessary.

How Prepared Are You?

Fairfax County launched the 2023 Emergency Preparedness Survey to assess the culture of personal disaster preparedness and resilience in Fairfax County. How prepared are you? Here is your chance to tell us!

Survey link:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/fd34b75072184e5daf72eb338421b3b9?portalUrl=https://Fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com>

Fairfax Water

This is only a test!

There will be an audible test of the **Occoquan Dam Siren** on Nov. 14, 2023, at 10 am.

Visit occoquandamsiren.com to learn more.



Emergency Preparedness Survey

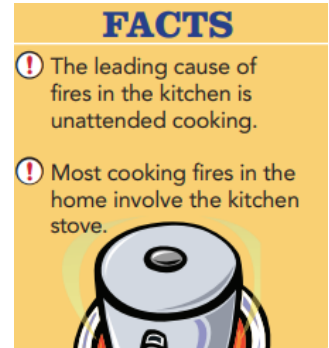
Fairfax County is launching the Emergency Preparedness Survey to assess the culture of personal disaster preparedness and resilience in Fairfax County.



Cooking Safety Tips for the Holiday Season

With the holiday season fast approaching, many kitchens will become busy and crowded as holiday treats are prepared. Traditional holiday foods bring joy and help create cherished memories in our homes. However, cooking accidents are also the leading causes of home fires. To ensure a safe and enjoyable holiday, it is important to observe safe practices when preparing meals in kitchens which are bustling with more activity than usual. Follow these tips to prevent accidents from ruining your holiday:

- Prepare your kitchen by keeping an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. The extinguisher should be classified as suitable for oil or grease fires.
- Always stay in the kitchen when preparing food on the stovetop.
- Keep an eye on what you fry! Fried foods are responsible for many kitchen fires.
- Make sure you know how to handle a grease fire! Grease fires occur when oil becomes too hot. If oil begins to smoke, immediately turn off your heat source and never use water to extinguish a grease fire - this only cause the fire to grow.
- Only use turkey fryers out of doors. Make sure that the surface underneath the fryer is sturdy and not flammable.
- If you use a gas stove, make sure the burner dials are completely turned off when you are finished. Stove tops which are left on when no flame is burning can cause explosions due to excess gas escaping.
- Make sure your sleeves, scarves, and other clothing is not loose or dangling in your way while cooking.
- If there is fire inside the oven, turn the oven off and do not open the door. Oxygen feeds fire, so it is best to keep the oven closed until the fire is completely out.
- Keep children and pets away from hot cooking surfaces and utensils. When possible, use the back burners of the stove to keep dangerous items out of the reach of small children.



For more information and resources cooking safety from the National Fire Prevention Association, visit: [Safety with cooking equipment | NFPA](#)

Request an Emergency Preparedness Workshop

DEMS conducts 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.).

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 \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#).



Online Shopping – Be Prepared!

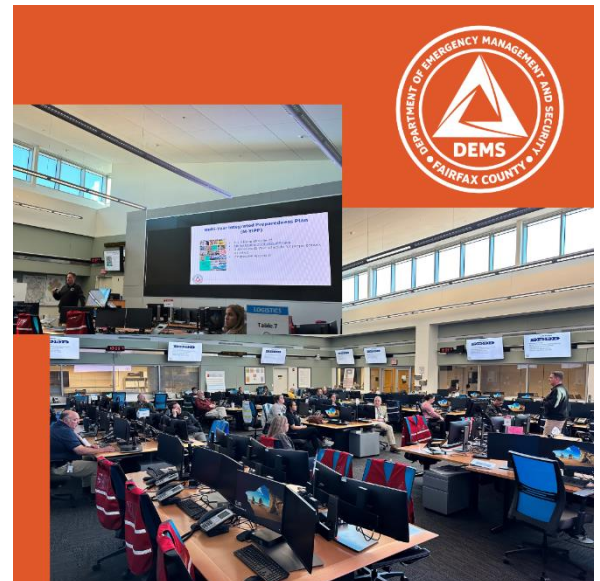
The holiday season is a prime time for hackers, scammers, and online thieves. While millions of Americans will be online looking for the best gifts and Cyber Monday deals, hackers will be looking to take advantage of unsuspecting shoppers by searching for weaknesses in their devices or internet connections or attempting to extract personal and financial information through fake websites or charities. The best defense against these threats is awareness. Here are some tips:

1. Check your devices – Before making any online purchases, make sure the device you're using to shop online is up to date. Next, look at your accounts and ask, do they each have strong passwords? And even better, if two-factor authentication is available, are you using it?
2. Only shop through trusted sources - Before making any online purchases, make sure the device you're using to shop online is up to date. Next, look at your accounts and ask, do they each have strong passwords? And even better, if two-factor authentication is available, are you using it?
3. Use Safe methods for purchases - If you're going to make that purchase, what information are you handing over? Before providing personal or financial information, check the website's privacy policy. Make sure you understand how your information will be stored and used.



Annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop

The Training and Exercise Division recently conducted the county's annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW). The IPPW is a critical step in updating the county's Multi-Year Integrated Preparedness Plan (MY-IPP) that guides training and exercise priorities over the next three years. Ten county agencies and Volunteer Fairfax gathered in our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to recap the current year and update our priorities based on our gaps and emerging needs. This collaborative effort will strengthen our ability to respond to emergencies and disasters effectively. We look forward to updating our MY-IPP and having it ready to kick off 2024 with another packed year of emergency preparedness training and exercises. Stay tuned for future training initiatives for our residents!



Cold and Flu Season

As the weather gets colder and the days get shorter, we're highlighting preparedness tips for navigating cold and flu season. For most of us, this means extra sniffles and a cough, but for others, viruses like the flu can be serious business. Influenza causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations each year. Mitigation is a key to staying healthy during cold and flu season. Things like sneezing and coughing into our sleeves or staying home when we're sick are tried and true methods of stopping the spread of germs. Let's learn more!



Colds	
What is a “cold”?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common colds, or simply “colds,” are usually quite harmless and go away again on their own. The symptoms of a cold such as a cough, sore throat and a runny nose can be really annoying. • A severe cold can make you feel weak and ill. • Occasionally, colds are mistaken for the flu. But flu symptoms are usually much worse. • The flu doesn't develop gradually. Instead, it generally starts very suddenly with a high fever, chills, and aching muscles and joints. • Colds can be caused by various viruses. They lead to inflammations in the lining of the nose and throat but are otherwise harmless.
Cold Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people get colds in the winter and spring, but it is possible to get a cold any time of the year. Symptoms usually include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sore throat ○ runny nose ○ coughing ○ sneezing ○ headaches ○ body aches
Cold Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no cure for a cold. To feel better, you should get lots of rest and drink plenty of fluids. • Over-the-counter medicines may help ease symptoms but will not make your cold go away any faster. Always read the label and use medications as directed. • Antibiotics will not help you recover from a cold caused by a respiratory virus. They do not work against viruses, and they may make it harder for your body to fight future bacterial infections if you take them unnecessarily. • When people are ill, they typically see their family doctor.
Cold Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often with soap and water. Wash them for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Viruses that cause colds can live on your hands, and regular handwashing can help protect you from getting sick. • Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Viruses that cause colds can enter your body this way and make you sick. • Stay away from people who are sick. Sick people can spread viruses that cause the common cold through close contact with others.
Protect Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home and keep children out of school or daycare while sick. • Avoid close contact with others, such as hugging, kissing, or shaking hands. • Cough and sneeze into a tissue, then throw it away, or cough and sneeze into your upper shirt sleeve, completely covering your mouth and nose. Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. Move away from people before coughing or sneezing. • Disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toys, doorknobs, and mobile devices. • There is no vaccine to protect you against the common cold.

Flu	
What is the “flu”?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. • It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. • The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.
Flu Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenza (flu) can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. • Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly. • People who have flu often feel some, or all, of these symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fever or feeling feverish/chills (not everyone with the flu will have a fever) ○ cough ○ sore throat ○ runny or stuffy nose ○ muscle or body aches ○ headaches

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fatigue (tiredness) ○ some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.
Flu Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take Antiviral Drugs, if prescribed by a health care provider. ● Take everyday precautions to protect others while sick. ● Stay home until you are better. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
Flu Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The best way to reduce your risk from seasonal flu and its potentially serious complications is to get vaccinated every year. ● Follow the same preventative measures and actions as you would with the common cold, like sneezing into your sleeve, avoiding contact with those that are sick, cleaning and disinfecting, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. ● Stay home if you're sick. Stop the spread.

Winter Preparedness

You always want to be prepared for the winter, especially if you are driving. You just never know when you will get stuck on the road and need supplies! An emergency kit for your car might come in handy when you least expect it! Keep your gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.

While you are putting together, or updating, your emergency kit for your car, you should also consider winterizing your car. Winterizing your car can take time and money, so plan ahead with this winter checklist for vehicles. Here are some actions to consider:

- Check your tire tread. When getting your car ready for winter, be sure to inspect your tires for tread wear and rotate them during every oil change.
- Fill up your tires. Low air pressure in your tires can be potentially dangerous on winter roads.
- Consider snow tires. Switching to snow tires, especially if you are traveling up north or to mountain areas that get heavy snow on rough terrain, can help driving on snowy and slippery roads.
- Change your oil and antifreeze. Regular maintenance of your vehicle can only but help to prevent any car troubles during months involving winter driving.
- Inspect your battery. Your vehicle's battery capacity lessens in cold weather. Be sure your car is prepared for the winter and have a professional inspect your battery's fluid and cables.

Below are some items to consider putting in your emergency bag. You can also check out our emergency kit checklists in the Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG) at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg.



Car Winter Survival Kit Checklist



- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Flashlight & Extra Batteries | <input type="checkbox"/>  Blankets/Sleeping Bag | <input type="checkbox"/>  Extra Clothing
Hats, Mittens, Parkas, Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  First Aid Kit | <input type="checkbox"/>  Non-Perishable Food
Granola Bars, Dried nuts, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/>  Sand/Kitty Litter
Used for Traction |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Snow Shovel | <input type="checkbox"/>  Bottled Water | <input type="checkbox"/>  Cell Phone & Charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Ice Scraper with Brush | <input type="checkbox"/>  Booster Cables | <input type="checkbox"/>  Flares/Triangles & other Bright Objects |