

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter

Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



National Preparedness Month

The 2023 theme is “Take Control in 1, 2, 3”. This theme empowers everyone, especially older adults, to 1) assess their needs, 2) make a plan and 3) engage their support network to stay safe when disaster strikes. The campaign will focus on preparing older adults for disasters, specifically older adults from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the all-hazard events, which continue to threaten the nation.

During week 3, we will cover several topics listed below!

Week 3: Technology (September 11th – September 15th)

- Emergency alerts.
- Older adults with disabilities (medical tag and add medical info to your devices).
- Have a radio and other ways to receive alerts if you don't have internet?
- Cyber preparedness.
- Having insurance saves you money.



9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance – Meet Your Neighbors!

It's been more than two decades since 9/11. Honor and commemorate the sacrifices made that day by remembering the heroes, armed forces, first responders, and countless others' acts of service to defend our nation's freedom.

On the September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, Americans of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to join community service projects to honor the lives and service of those we lost on September 11.

During week 3 of National Preparedness Month, one of the topics is to meet your neighbors! Use this week as an opportunity to find out what you can do to help make your neighborhood better able to meet disasters head on and bounce back afterwards. Use the 5 Steps to Neighborhood Preparedness guide and accompanying toolkit in the CERG to build a disaster plan for your neighborhood.

Remember, you are not on your own. Fairfax County and its partner agencies and organizations have plans and resources ready to help! But, with over 1.1 million people in the County, rescuers may not be able to provide immediate support to every neighborhood in need. Neighbors should be prepared to help themselves for several days to weeks depending on the size of the disaster.

5 Step Neighborhood Guide: [Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Guide](#)



**Honor.
Serve.
Unite.**



NEIGHBORHOOD DISASTER PLANNING IN 5 EASY STEPS

- 1. DEFINE YOUR AREA.**
Identify a manageable area, your apartment building, one city block, a few small surrounding streets, etc., that you can organize with relative ease.
- 2. RECRUIT LEADERS.**
Develop a team of leaders who can help build the plan and carry out emergency support activities when the time comes.
- 3. SCOUT YOUR AREA.**
Get to know the lay of the land: what resources you have, what the landscape is, and disasters or other emergencies common to your area.
- 4. BUILD YOUR TEAM.**
Find out who lives in your area, how they can help in a disaster, and who may need extra help.
- 5. PLAN YOUR APPROACH.**
Create a plan that outlines what your neighborhood will do before, during, and after a disaster!

Reston

Personal Preparedness for People with Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs

When it comes to planning for emergencies, those with disabilities, whether permanent or temporary, often have unique needs that require more planning in the event of a disaster. Because of this, it is essential that you have a plan that will support your daily needs – even if you are unable to leave your house. One of the best ways is to ensure that you have an emergency kit specified to your needs.

Mobility Disability

- If you have a mobility disability and use a wheelchair, consider keeping tools in your emergency kit to repair your wheelchair, whether that be due to a flat tire or a powered wheelchair needing a replacement battery.



Vision Impaired

- If you are blind or have low vision, consider labeling your emergency preparedness supplies with either large print or braille labels.

Hearing Impaired

- If you have a disability that affects your speech, ensure that you have a backup way to communicate with others if your assistive technology fails.
- If you take daily medication, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how you can create an emergency supply of medication.

For more information emergency preparedness visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg

Please Take the Annual Emergency Preparedness Survey

Fairfax County is also launching 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>

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Stay Informed!

Fairfax County is susceptible to many different hazards, both natural and manmade. When disaster strikes, you may have only a short time to make what might be a life-or-death decision. For this reason, it is imperative that you have multiple ways to receive warning information.

Below is a list of methods you can use to stay informed:



- **Fairfax Alerts:** The county’s emergency notification system allows you to customize your alerts for free! Register, [Alerts | Topics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts).
- **Emergency Alert System (EAS):** National warning system that uses radio, television, and satellite channels to broadcast important public safety information.
- **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):** Part of the EAS program which enables cellphones to receive alerts for severe weather emergencies, imminent threats to life or property, AMBER alerts, and Presidential alerts. **NOTE:** Check your phone settings to make sure these alerts are enabled!
- **Weather Radio:** an automated 24-hour network of weather radio stations in the United States that broadcast weather information directly from a nearby National Weather Service office.
- **Social Media:** Some important Twitter and Facebook accounts to follow are @FairfaxCounty and @ReadyFairfax
- **Fairfax County’s Emergency Blog:** www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
- **Radio Station:** www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicaffairs/radio
- **Channel 16:** www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/stream

Receiving timely emergency notifications for severe weather, emergency incidents, and information during a disaster is critical to staying safe. Every family should have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts, including one with an audible alert to wake you in the middle of the night.

Insurance Check Up

When was the last time you gave your home some TLC by reviewing your insurance policies? Whether you rent or own your home, it’s important to make sure you reevaluate your insurance policy from time to time to ensure you are prepared for a disaster and understand everything that your policy does and does not cover.

The first step to beginning your insurance check-up is to evaluate what types of hazards may impact your area and understand how they could affect you. For more information on the types of hazards that may impact the residents of Fairfax County, visit <http://bit.ly/3Sj5fL3> to watch the Department of Emergency Management and Security’s webinar on “What Hazards Could Affect Fairfax County”.

Another great resource for those who are unsure of what type of flood insurance they need is the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services’ Flood Plain Viewer. This interactive map will allow you to look at your area and see if it falls in one of Fairfax County’s historic flood plain areas:
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/flood-information>

The second step is documenting any valuables or important property you own (including medical equipment) by taking pictures and storing them in a safe place. This may help you prove the value of your belongings and speed up the claim process in the event of a disaster.

Lastly, speak with an insurance professional about the types of hazards you may be affected by and review what would be covered for each scenario. It’s important to ask them to differentiate between natural and human-caused disasters as these may be covered differently under your policy. For example, a flood from a broken pipe may be covered, but flooding from heavy rains in your area may not be.

Insurance Coverage Form: www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/business-insurance-discussion-form.pdf

Ready Business. Insurance Discussion Form

Open for Business Worksheet
Insurance Coverage Discussion Form

Use this form to discuss your insurance coverage with your agent. Having adequate coverage now will help you recover more rapidly from a catastrophe.

Insurance Agent: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

INSURANCE POLICY INFORMATION

Type of Insurance	Policy No.	Deductibles	Policy Limits	Coverage (General Description)

Do you need Flood Insurance? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you need Earthquake Insurance? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you need Business Income and Extra Expense Insurance? Yes ___ No ___

Other disaster-related insurance questions:

<http://www.ready.gov/business>

Cyber Security Preparedness

Unlike physical threats that prompt immediate action, cyber threats and attacks are often difficult to identify or comprehend. Cybersecurity involves preventing, detecting, and responding to cyber incidents. Virtually all modern organizations – including governments, hospitals, corporations, banks, and utilities – rely on computer systems for their operations and data management and are therefore vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

The so-called “attack surface” that may be vulnerable to bad actors can include computer hardware, tablets, phones, and many other web-enabled devices and appliances in the so-called “internet of things.” Among the dangers of cyber-attacks are intruders erasing entire systems, holding data, or operating systems for ransom, stealing confidential or personal information, breaking into systems, and altering files, or using a computer or device to access contact lists and attack or infect others.



Know your cyber basics. Here are four things you can do now:

- **Think Before You Click: Recognize and Report Phishing:** If a link looks a little off, think before you click. It could be an attempt to get sensitive information or install malware.
- **Update Your Software:** Don't delay -- If you see a software update notification, act promptly. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- **Use Strong Passwords:** Use passwords that are long, unique, and randomly generated. Use password managers to generate and remember different, complex passwords for each of your accounts. A passwords manager will encrypt passwords securing them for you!
- **Enable Multi-Factor Authentication:** You need more than a password to protect your online accounts, and **enabling MFA makes you significantly less likely to get hacked.**

Cyber Attack Hazard Page: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/cyberattack

Cyber Attack Preparedness Video: <https://youtu.be/agbTDJG-kvM>

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 \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/presentation-requests).

