April 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 April 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 Severe Weather Preparedness. This newsletter also includes information on National Public Health Week, and Power Outage Preparedness. We hope you find the topics in this month's edition informative and helpful.

We would also like to extend a sincere thank you to all the members of the public who attended the SKYWARN training. It was a pleasure meeting so many engaged community members and partners, and we truly appreciate your commitment to staying informed and prepared.



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

Thank you Letter

Thank You for a Great SKYWARN Class!

The Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended the NWS SKYWARN course on Wednesday, March 18, 2026.

We were thrilled by the incredible turnout and encouraged to see so many community members take an active interest in learning more about severe weather and how they can help keep our community safe through storm reporting.

We would also like to offer a special thank you to Kevin Rodriguez and the National Weather Service for leading an engaging and informative course, and for their continued dedication to public safety and weather education.

Being informed is the first step toward being prepared and together we are building a stronger, more resilient community.

Warm regards,

Jefferson County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management





Severe Weather Preparedness

Severe weather can happen anytime, in any part of the country. Severe weather can include hazardous conditions produced by thunderstorms, damaging winds, tornadoes, large hail, flooding, flash flooding, and winter storms.

Know your Risk

Tornado



- Know your area's tornado risk. In the U.S., the Midwest and the South-east have a greater risk for tornadoes.
- Know the signs of a tornado, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar like a freight train.
- Sign up for Everbridge, Jefferson County's alert system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Pay attention to weather reports. Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.
- Identify and practice going to a safe shelter such as a small, interior, windowless room or basement on the lowest level of a sturdy building.
- Plan for your pet. They are an important part of your family, so they need to be included in your family's emergency plan.
- Prepare for long-term stay at home or sheltering in place by gathering emergency supplies, cleaning supplies, non-perishable foods, water, medical supplies and medications.

Flood

- Know your risk for floods. Visit WV Flood Tool to know the types of flood risk in your area. However, remember that flooding doesn't follow lines on a map. Where it can rain it can flood.
- Preparing for a flood. Make a plan with your household, including your pets, so that you and your family know what to do, where to go, and what you will need to protect yourselves from flooding. Learn and practice evacuation routes, shelter plans, and flash flood response.
- In case of emergency. Keep important documents in a water-proof container. Create password-protected digital copies.



Severe Weather Preparedness

Thunderstorm and Lightning



- Know your area's risk for thunderstorms. In most places they can occur year-round and at any hour.
- Sign up for Everbridge, Jefferson County's alert system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Strengthen your home. Cut down or trim trees that may be in danger of falling on your home. Consider buying your surge protectors, lighting rods or a lightning protection system to protect your home, appliances and electronic devices.
- Make an emergency plan. Create an emergency plan so that you and your family know what to do, where to go and what you will need to protect yourselves from the effects of a thunderstorm. Identify sturdy buildings close to where you live, work, study and play.

Winter Weather

- Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing.
- Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.
- Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days without power. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication.



Take Action

Make a Plan

- Step 1: Put a plan together by discussing the questions below with your family, friends, or household to start your emergency plan.
- Step 2: Consider specific needs in your household.
- Step 3: Create a family emergency plan.
- Step 4: Practice your plan with your family/household.



For more information visit Ready.gov | Severe Weather

National Public Health Week

Ready. Set. Action!

As we observe Public Health Week on April 6-12, take a moment to recognize how public health has improved our lives, safeguarded out families, expanded our life spans, and strengthened our communities. This week is also a chance to honor the public health workers who show up everyday—and to advocate for policies and practices that promote good health for all.

Why Public Health Matters



Public health impacts every aspect of our lives. It helps:

- Prevent chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes
- Reduce the spread of infectious illnesses
- Promote mental health and well-being
- Ensure safe food, water, and air quality
- Strengthen emergency preparedness and response efforts

Recent years have shown just how critical a strong public health system is. Whether responding to severe weather events, disease outbreaks, or other emergencies, coordinated public health efforts help communities recover faster and stay resilient

What you can do

National Public Health Week is also a great opportunity for individuals and families to take action. Consider:

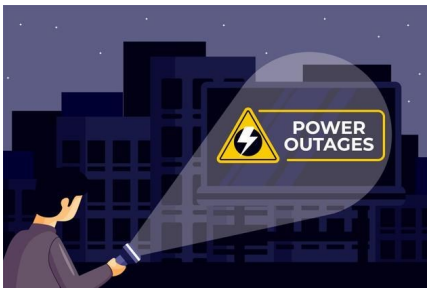
- Scheduling routine health check-ups and screenings.
- Staying up to date on recommended vaccinations.
- Building or reviewing your emergency preparedness plans.
- Practicing good hygiene, such as regular handwashing.
- Supporting local health initiatives and programs.

For more information visit APHA | National Public Health Week

Power Outage Preparedness

Staying Safe When the Lights Go Out

Power outages can happen at any time due to severe weather, equipment failure, or other unexpected events. While outages are often unavoidable, being prepared can help you stay safe, minimize disruptions, and protect your home and family. Taking a few simple steps now can make a significant difference during an outage.



Power Outage Tips

- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.
- Use a generator, but **only** outdoors and away from windows.
- Do not use a gas stove or oven to heat your home. It increases your risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Using an oven or stovetop can also increase the risk of fires, burns, and could damage the appliance.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines or using power-dependent medical devices.
- Check Everbridge or social media messages from our office about heating and cooling locations open in the county.

Build an Emergency Kit

Every household should have a basic emergency kit that is easy to access. Include items such as flashlights with extra batteries, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, portable phone chargers, bottled water, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, and essential medications.



Use Generators Safely

If you use a portable generator, always operate it outdoors and far away from windows, doors, and vents to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Never run a generator inside a home, garage, or enclosed space. Follow manufacturer instructions and ensure it is properly grounded and connected.

For more information visit Ready.gov | Power Outages

Flood Preparedness

Power of Water

- Don’t underestimate the power of water.
- 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock over and carry away an adult.
- 12 inches of fast-moving water can carry away a small car.
- 18-24 inches of fast-moving water can carry away most large SUVs, vans and trucks.

Prepared for Flooding Before it Happens

- Are you located in a flood plain?
- What is the fastest way to higher ground?
- What roads nearby are the most likely to flood?



3 Simple Steps for Flash Flood Safety

1. **Get to higher ground:** Get out of the areas subject to flooding
2. **Do not drive into water:** Do NOT drive or walk into flooded areas. It only takes 6” of water to knock you off your feet.
3. **Stay Informed:** Monitor local radar, television, weather radio, internet, or social media for updates. Sign up for Everbridge to receive notifications about flooding or any roads closed due to flooding.



Disaster Exercise Series 2025-26

Functional Exercise has been Rescheduled

The Functional Exercise has been rescheduled for Thursday April 16, 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 hazmat 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
Fire Officer I and II	04/4-25/2026	Burlington VFD
Driver Operator Pumper	04/10, 11, 12, 17, 18,19/2026	Capon Bridge VFD
IFSAC Rope Rescue Awareness, Operation, Technician	Tech. 04/27-29/2026	Martinsburg FD

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	04/14/2026	JCESA
Community CPR and Stop the Bleed	05/05/2026	JCESA
Community First Aid	05/19/2026	JCESA

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

State Training

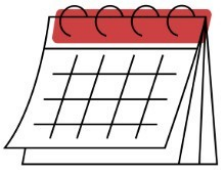
Course	Date	Location
N/A	N/A	N/A

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.

APRIL 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.
- Counter Terrorism Meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 1400; JCOHSEM EOC
- LEPC Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 0800; Rockwool, 665 Northport Avenue, Kearneysville, WV 25430
- Disaster Exercise Series 2025-26: Thursday, April 16, 2026 0900; JCOHSEM EOC

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