

Emergency Preparedness Newsletter



Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS)



DEMS Monthly Webinar on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 7 PM

Join our Department of Emergency Management and Security on Wednesday, December 6, at 7 p.m. to about making an emergency preparedness plan for your neighborhood using our Five Step Neighborhood Guide. Link: <https://youtube.com/live/iZekXEMdiA8>

Are you #WinterReady?

Santa doesn't just bring the presents you asked for; wherever his sleigh takes him, you can be sure that cold weather and possibly snow is to follow! Be sure you, your family, and your home are ready for any unexpected presents this year. Prepare ahead of time by winterizing your home with weatherproof and safety measures. Regardless of if you're naughty or nice, following the tips below will ensure you're ready for whatever Santa might bring:



- Drain outdoor pipes and hoses to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. If indoor pipes become too cold due to a power outage or extreme cold temperatures, periodically keep a small amount of water running from each faucet to prevent indoor plumbing from freezing.
- Have your home heating system inspected by a professional to ensure it is functioning properly and reduce the risk of fires.
- If you have a fireplace or woodstove, ensure the flue and chimney are free of buildup and debris prior to use.
- Remember never to leave vehicles, generators, or other appliances that omit exhaust running in enclosed spaces like a garage or shed.
- Do not place space heaters in small, confined rooms and never use a generator indoors.
- Check the batteries in your smoke and carbon dioxide detectors.
- Make sure you have a snow shovel and ice melt on hand before snow starts to fall.
- Keep an eye on pets when they are outdoors. They are also susceptible to cold temperatures and should not be left outside for extended periods of time.
- Ensure you know how to access weather information and alerts in your area. You can sign for Fairfax Alerts for free at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts/>

For more information on winter safety from the National Safety Council, visit <https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/winter-safety/winter>

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.

Vehicle Preparedness

Christmas isn't complete without a little bit of snow! However, the secondary impact winter weather causes are the greatest threat for motorists. Carrying items such as blankets or portable chargers is a great way to prepare for common winter-driving related emergencies. Be sure to review the winter driving kit below and add some of the items to your Christmas list:

- Jumper cables
- Flares or reflective triangle
- Ice scraper
- Shovel
- Winter hat and winter gloves
- Sand (For tire traction)



It's also a good idea to keep family and emergency phone numbers, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company in your phone!

Visit our Community Emergency Response Guide for more information! Link: [Community Emergency Response Guide | Emergency Management \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency-management/community-emergency-response-guide)

Care Provider Preparedness

Emergency preparedness and emergency planning can be stressful for anyone, but it can be especially stressful for those who oversee the wellbeing of individuals who may struggle with voicing their needs. Because of this, it is very important that care providers prepare for a variety of emergencies ahead of time, as there likely will not be time to figure out a plan once the emergency has started. While every person's needs vary, here are some ways you as a care provider can get started:

- If the person has mobility issues, discuss the best procedure/route for leaving the house in an emergency. Include two ways out of every room, if possible.
- Keep an up-to-date list of special equipment and where they are kept when not in use – dentures, hearing aids, glasses, walker. Include model numbers.
- Keep an up-to-date list of all current medications, and mark ones that require special handling, such as refrigeration. Always have at least a week's worth of medication on hand, if possible.



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 \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency-management/volunteering-in-emergency-preparedness).



Holiday Decorations

According to the National Fire Protection Association, more than one-third of decorating fires are started by candles, and more than two of every five decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source. Knowing this, it makes sense that an increase in fires is seen during the holiday season.

Thankfully, there are things that we can do to lessen a chance of fires this holiday season:

- Place your menorah on a sturdy, non-flammable surface.
- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of reach of children and pets.
- Keep lit candles away from anything that can burn, including decorations.
- Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.



If you will have a Christmas tree in your home this holiday season, you need to care for your tree to lessen the chances of fire:

- If you are shopping for a real tree, choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Always keep your Christmas tree at least three feet away from all heat sources, including fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Never use lit candles to decorate your tree.
- Dried-out trees are a fire danger. Add water to your tree stand daily.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.
- Never overload extension cords.



The holiday season is a fun time for everyone, filled with friends, family, and loved ones. As you deck the halls this season, thank you for being fire smart.

Community Connect

Community Connect is a free, secure, and easy to use platform that allows you to share critical information about your household that will aid first responders and emergency response personnel when responding to your residence. Community Connect is based off the address the call is dispatched to via 9-1-1. You can share information about:

- Your property - critical information such as your residence type, whether or not you have fire sprinklers, or designated family meeting places.
- Your people - who is the best to contact in case of an emergency? Your contacts can help provide information about access, to how to deal with potential hazards, or locate occupants.
- **Your needs – identify if you or members of your family have a mobility or other type of functional needs that may require additional assistance. This information will help responders plan accordingly and respond more quickly to those needs.**
- Your pets – provide information about the type of pet(s) at your residence – include photos.

Registration Link: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/alerts-and-emails

Until Help Arrives Training 12/9/23 1 – 4 PM – ONLY 5 SEATS LEFT

Life-threatening emergencies can happen fast, and emergency responders aren't always nearby. You may be able to save a life by taking simple actions immediately. You Are the Help Until Help Arrives.

The Until Help Arrives program was developed to educate and empower civilian bystanders to take action and provide life-saving care when they are the first on the scene during an emergency.

Confidence comes through preparation. The Until Help Arrives training course creates confident first responders by teaching scene safety principles, how to stop severe bleeding, and how to perform hands-only CPR.

Date: December 9, 2023

Time: 1 – 4 PM

Where: Patrick Henry Library

Registration: [Until Help Arrives Workshop - Fairfax Library Calendar - Library Home \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

DEMS Internship – Accepting Applications for Spring 2024 until 12/20/23

The Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security will be accepting applications for the Spring 2024 semester. The Spring internship will run from January 29, 2024 to May 1, 2024.

The emergency management internship with Fairfax County DEMS provides an opportunity for students or recent graduates to explore career options, apply academic knowledge and skills to the workplace, gain career skills, build resumes and network with emergency management professionals throughout the National Capital Region. While working in DEMS, interns will:

- Complete National Incident Management System (NIMS) training and the Professional Development Series through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Complete at least one community outreach or engagement activity.
- Participate in at least one planning activity.
- Attend regional emergency management meetings and network with other state and federal emergency management and homeland security professionals.
- Prepare for and/or participate in at least one exercise (tabletop, functional, or full-scale).
- Work toward the Virginia Emergency Management Association's (VEMA) Emergency Management Assistant Certification (EMA).
- Learn about the role of local government as it relates to state, regional and federal partners.
- Gain real world experience with public safety.

The primary duty of the emergency management intern will be to provide technical and administrative assistance on emergency management projects. These projects may involve exercise design and development, preparing incident action plans, editing critical emergency management documents, and conducting public information and outreach. Duties may also include assisting staff with day-to-day operations in DEMS, researching assignments and special projects, working in the Emergency Operations Center, and attending meetings or community events that may occur outside normal work hours.

Time Commitment: Interns are required to commitment at least 15 - 20 hours per week during regular business hours of Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Interns may be asked to work outside of normal business hours for special events or during a disaster response when the Emergency Operations Center is activated.

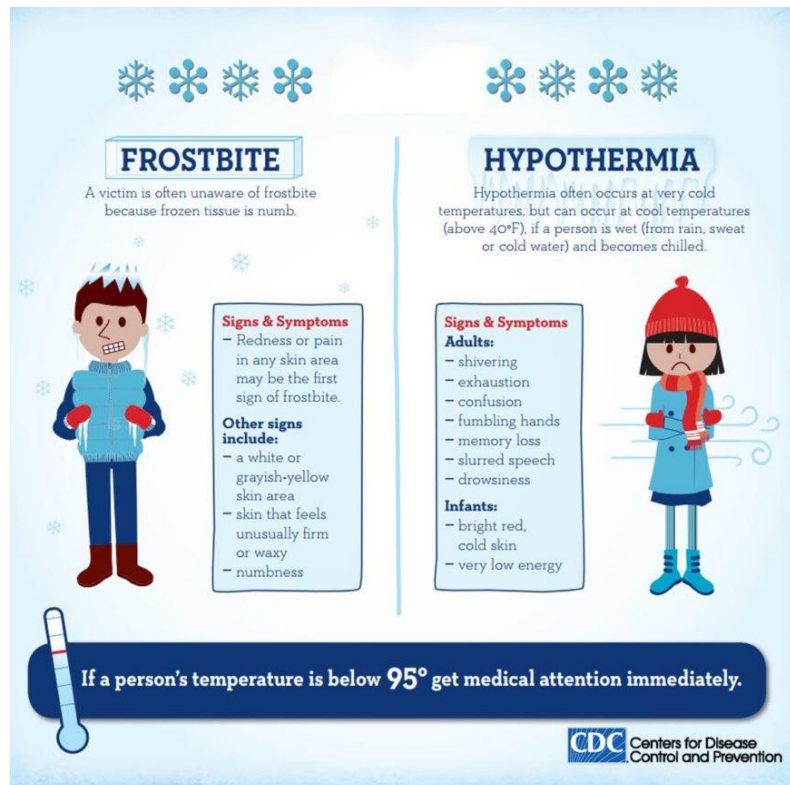
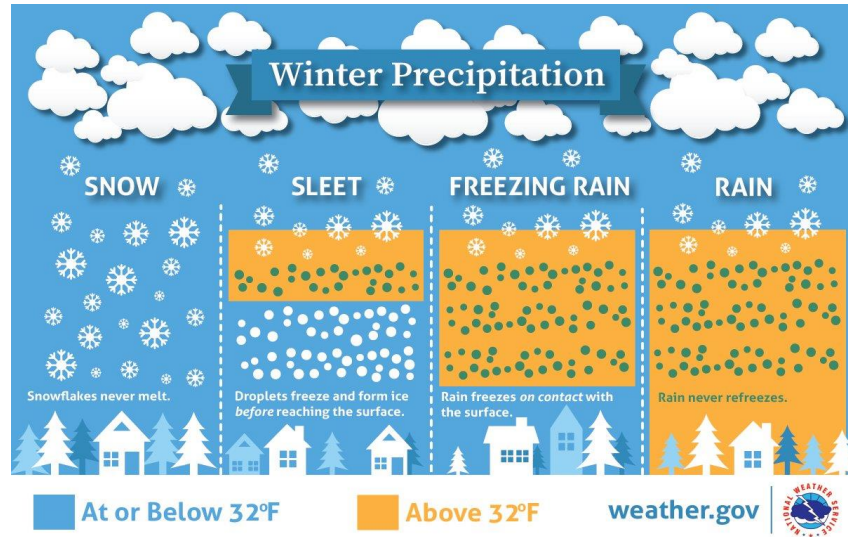
Additional Information and Internship Application: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/internship

It's a Watch, It's a Warning – It's a WHAT?

#WINTERREADY

Know the below terms and what actions to take. Be alert to weather reports and tune in for specific guidance when these conditions develop.

- **Freezing Rain:** Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, can create a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees, and power lines.
- **Sleet:** Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slippery.
- **Wind Chill:** Wind chill is the temperature it “feels like” when you are outside. The NWS provides a [wind chill calculator](#) to show the difference between air temperature and the perceived temperature and the amount of time until frostbite occurs.
- **Winter Weather Advisory:** The NWS issues a winter weather advisory when conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences that may be hazardous. If caution is used, these situations should not be life-threatening.
- **Winter Storm Watch:** A winter storm is possible in your area. The NWS issues a winter storm watch when severe winter conditions, such as heavy snow and/or ice, may affect your area but the location and timing are still uncertain.
 - A winter storm watch is issued 12 to 36 hours in advance of a potential severe storm. Tune in to your NOAA Weather Radio, local radio, TV, or other news sources for more information.
 - Monitor alerts, check your emergency supplies, and gather any items you may need if you lose power.
- **Winter Storm Warning:** A winter storm is occurring or will soon occur in your area.
- **Blizzard Warning:** Sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 miles per hour or greater and considerable amounts of falling or blowing snow (reducing visibility to less than a quarter mile) are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.
- **Frost/Freeze Warning:** Below freezing temperatures are expected.



Hypothermia can set in rapidly, know the warning signs: [Hypothermia/Winter Weather \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/winter-weather/)