

Emergency Management

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

EOC News

DECEMBER 20TH, 2024

Holiday Safety



If you're planning to travel this year, ensure that your vehicle is in excellent working order, get ample rest, and be ready for any emergencies. Car travel during the holidays has the highest fatality rate of all major transportation methods, based on fatalities per passenger mile. Stay safe on the roads during the holidays — and every day:

- Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency kit handy
- Get sufficient sleep before your trip and avoid driving while drowsy
- Leave early, anticipating heavy traffic
- Ensure everyone in the vehicle is securely buckled up, regardless of the distance traveled
- Keep your cell phone out of reach; distractions while driving are plentiful, but cell phones are the primary offenders
- Practice defensive driving
- Designate a sober driver to guarantee guests arrive home safely after a holiday celebration; alcohol or various substances can impair judgment

Decorate Safely

Decorating is one of the most enjoyable ways to embrace the holiday spirit, but emergency rooms treat thousands of decorating-related injuries each season. Follow these guidelines from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission while decorating:



- Keep potentially harmful plants – such as mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis – out of children's and pet's reach
- If using an artificial tree, ensure it is labeled “fire resistant”
- For a live tree, trim about 2 inches off the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption, remember to water it, and dispose of it when dry
- Position your tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources, ensuring it doesn't block doorways
- Avoid placing fragile ornaments or those with small parts on lower branches where young children can reach them
- Use indoor lights exclusively indoors and outdoor lights outdoors; select the appropriate ladder for hanging lights
- Replace any light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed wires, or loose connections
- Follow the package instructions regarding the number of light sets that can be plugged into a single socket
- Never nail, tack, or put stress on wiring when hanging lights, and keep plugs elevated and away from puddles and snow
- Turn off all lights and decorations when leaving the house or going to bed



Watch Out for Fire-Starters

Candles and Fireplaces

The use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in combustible seasonal decorations, raises fire risks during the holidays. The National Fire Protection Association reports that candles cause, on average, 46% of fires in December.

- Place candles in safe locations where they cannot be easily knocked over, and keep them out of children's reach
- Store matches and lighters securely and out of children's reach in a locked cabinet
- Use flameless candles instead of lighted ones near flammable materials
- Never burn trees, wreaths, or wrapping paper in the fireplace
- Always use a screen in front of the fireplace when a fire is lit
- Never leave candles or fireplaces unattended or burning while you sleep
- Inspect and clean the chimney and fireplace area at least once a year



Food Poisoning Is No Joke

Keep your holidays joyful by practicing safe food handling:

- Wash your hands frequently while handling food
- Keep raw meat separate from fresh produce
- Use different cutting boards, plates, and utensils for raw and cooked meats to prevent cross-contamination
- Use a food thermometer to ensure meat reaches a safe cooking temperature
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftovers within two hours of serving
- For turkey leftovers, cut them into smaller pieces for quicker cooling
- Properly refrigerated Christmas leftovers are safe for three to four days

Prioritizing Thoughtful Gift-Giving for Safety

Gifts and toys should evoke joy, not pose risks of injury. Each year, a significant number of children sustain serious injuries due to toy-related accidents. To mitigate safety hazards during gifting, consider the following recommendations from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Choose toys based on age ratings, as these are specifically designed for different age groups, rather than solely on a child's intellectual or physical capabilities.
- For children under the age of 3, select toys free of small parts to eliminate choking hazards.
- Avoid gifting toys that require plugging into an electrical outlet for children younger than 10.
- Exercise caution with toys containing button batteries or magnets, as these can be hazardous or even fatal if ingested.
- When giving scooters or similar riding toys, ensure that appropriate safety gear is included; helmets should always be worn and properly fitted.

Emergency Management Staff, Volunteers, & Stakeholders

Shining a spotlight on the people who make this agency function.

National Weather Service (NWS) - Tallahassee



The National Weather Service has been crucial in helping everyone, by monitoring the weather and providing timely forecasts that aid in planning and decision-making. Its role extends beyond mere predictions, as it also issues vital warnings about severe weather conditions, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe thunderstorms thereby safeguarding lives and property. Over the years, the service has evolved with technological advancements, embracing satellite imagery, radar systems, and computer models to enhance the accuracy and reliability of weather information. This has empowered communities to better prepare for and respond to natural disasters, minimizing their impact. The National Weather Service's commitment to innovation and public safety continues to be a cornerstone in building resilient societies capable of withstanding the challenges posed by nature. Through its educational initiatives and community outreach programs, the National Weather Service fosters a greater understanding of meteorological phenomena among the public, encouraging proactive engagement in weather preparedness. Collaboration with international meteorological organizations ensures a global exchange of data and expertise, further enhancing the accuracy of forecasts. As climate change introduces new complexities to weather patterns, the National Weather Service remains dedicated to researching and developing cutting-edge solutions to address these emerging challenges.

How to Protect Yourself from Winter Weather



Enhance your home's resistance to the cold by adding insulation, caulking, and weather stripping. Learn how to prevent pipes from freezing. Ensure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and tested, with battery available. Stock up on supplies to sustain you in case of power outages lasting several days, taking into account individual needs, including medications and those of your pets. Keep extra batteries for radios and flashlights handy.

Regularly check your heating system to ensure it's functioning efficiently and consider having it serviced by a professional before the coldest months set in. It's also wise to have a backup heating source, such as a space heater or a wood-burning stove, but remember to use these safely to avoid fire hazards. Familiarize yourself with local emergency services and shelters, especially if you live in areas prone to severe winter storms. Stay informed by monitoring local news and weather reports, and sign up for community alerts to receive timely updates. By taking these precautions, you can ensure that you and your loved ones remain safe, warm, and comfortable throughout the winter season.

In case of emergency be prepared for winter conditions at home, at work, and in your vehicle. Assemble an emergency supply kit for your car that includes jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothing, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks. Always keep your gas tank topped off.

See What We Are Up To



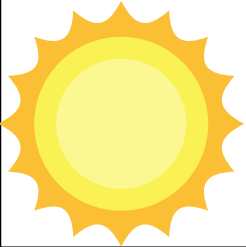

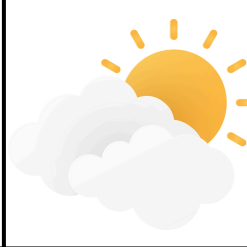
A glance at the projects that each staff member and prominent volunteer is undertaking.

- Jennifer Daniels, the Director, has been working on reimbursement for Hurricane Debby, Hurricane Helene, and also updating our directories; also, she will be attending a Directors and FEPA meeting next week.
- Amanda Anthony, the Coordinator, is working on updating our finance books and our Survival Guide.
- Jessica Lockhart, the SPN Coordinator, is trying to coordinate a Contractors meeting for 2025, and taking training to further her knowledge about the field of Emergency Management.
- Tim Keith-Lucas, the Operations Chief, is refining our checklists to ensure comprehensive hurricane preparedness, equipping our Mobile Command Trailer, and also setting up for Holiday on the Harbor.
- Scott Bush, the Quartermaster, is currently reorganizing the EOC trailers to accommodate a wider array of events, coordinating the organization of the Hangar, and also assisting with equipping our Mobile Command Trailer.
- Judi Ring, the CERT President, is developing educational materials to raise awareness about the CERT program among the public, updating our event schedule, and prepping our oncoming class of Certers.
- Rob Zingarelli, the Lead Radio Operator, is concentrating on the radio wiring setup within the command trailer and is doing weekly check-ins with SARNET.
- Robin Daniels, the Inventory Manager, is in the process of consolidating equipment from various areas within the EOC to both the command trailer and its supporting trailer.
- Robin Gibson, our Vehicle Inspector, has been diligently checking and ensuring that our county vehicles are maintained and ready at a moment's notice.
- Allen Sanders, the Groundskeeper, has resumed grounds maintenance activities in preparation for the forthcoming summer season and is currently maintaining chainsaws.
- The team eagerly awaits the review and approval of the new building plans by the state Office of Environmental and Historic Preservation.

Upcoming Events

Event	Description	Date	Time	Location
Christmas	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	Tues - Wed Dec 24 & 25	All Day	-
New Years	New Years Eve and New Years Day	Tues - Wed Dec 31st & Jan 1st	All Day	-
Winter Field Day	Ham Radio on Air Event	January 25 - 26	All Day	-

Weather Outlook

	<u>Sat, Dec 21</u>	<u>Sun, Dec 22</u>	<u>Mon, Dec 23</u>	<u>Tues, Dec 24</u>	<u>Wed, Dec 25</u>
Weather					
	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
Temp. (F)	37 / 57	40 / 59	45 / 60	54 / 66	57 / 69

EOC Tip of the Week

Winter Weather Safety

- Dress in layers with loose-fitting, warm clothing.
- Protect extremities with hats and gloves or mittens.
- Stay dry by covering your mouth against cold air.
- Consume warm fluids, avoiding alcohol and caffeine.
- Plan travel to avoid driving during or after storms.
- Prepare your home by insulating outdoor fixtures and ensuring heat circulation.
- Care for pets with warm shelters and fresh water.



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