



Severe Weather Preparedness Week is March 20–26

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An F1 tornado dissipates south of Lincolnville, Indiana, in this 2004 photo by Matthew Hartman. Tornadoes are just one of several hazardous weather systems Indiana can experience during the warmer months. (Creative Commons license).



Review Diverse Emergency Needs for Disability Awareness Month

March is Disability Awareness Month, a time where individuals, businesses and organizations across the state recognize the abilities of people with disabilities, educate themselves on disability-related issues and encourage all to embrace their inclusion.

It's also a good time to remind all emergency management personnel throughout the state of things they can do and must do, by law, to make emergency situations easier for persons with disabilities. For example, a

county's Emergency Operations Plan must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, specifically Chapter 7, which addresses obligations of emergency management in the areas of planning, preparedness, evacuation, shelters, medical and social services, lodging and housing programs, recovery and rebuilding.

"Crises that result in the need for evacuation are hard enough. Extra planning, however, must be made for people with mobility,

March 20–26 is Severe Weather Preparedness Week, and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) encourages all local public safety professionals to use the week as an opportunity to remind their local communities to prepare for spring and summer severe weather such as thunderstorms and tornadoes.

Severe weather can strike at any time, but volatile weather frequently accompanies the arrival of spring: thunderstorms, tornadoes and flooding often occur during Indiana's spring months. Planning and preparedness can help minimize weather-related deaths, injuries and property damage.

Fire Chiefs Legislative Breakfast: Photos from Jan. 20



ABOVE: From left to right: Wayne Township FD Chief Gene Konzen, Winchester FD Chief Bill Yost, Plainfield FD Chief Gerald George, Fishers FD Chief Steve Orusa, Washington Township Avon FD Chief Dan Smith, Rep. Randall Frye, White River Township FD Chief Joel Thacker.

BELOW: Governor Mike Pence visits with Goshen FD Chief Danny Sink (front left), Schererville FD Chief Joe Kruzan (back left), and Fishers FD Chief Steve Orusa (right) at the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association Legislative Breakfast on January 20, 2016, at the Indiana Statehouse.



BELOW: Senator Tim Lanane shakes hands with members of the fire service at the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association Legislative Breakfast.



RIGHT: Schererville Fire Department Chief Joe Kruzan visits with Senator Lonnie Randolph.



ABOVE: Chief Steve Orusa, Fishers FD (left), and Washington Township Avon FD Chief Dan Smith visit with Rep. Randall Frye.

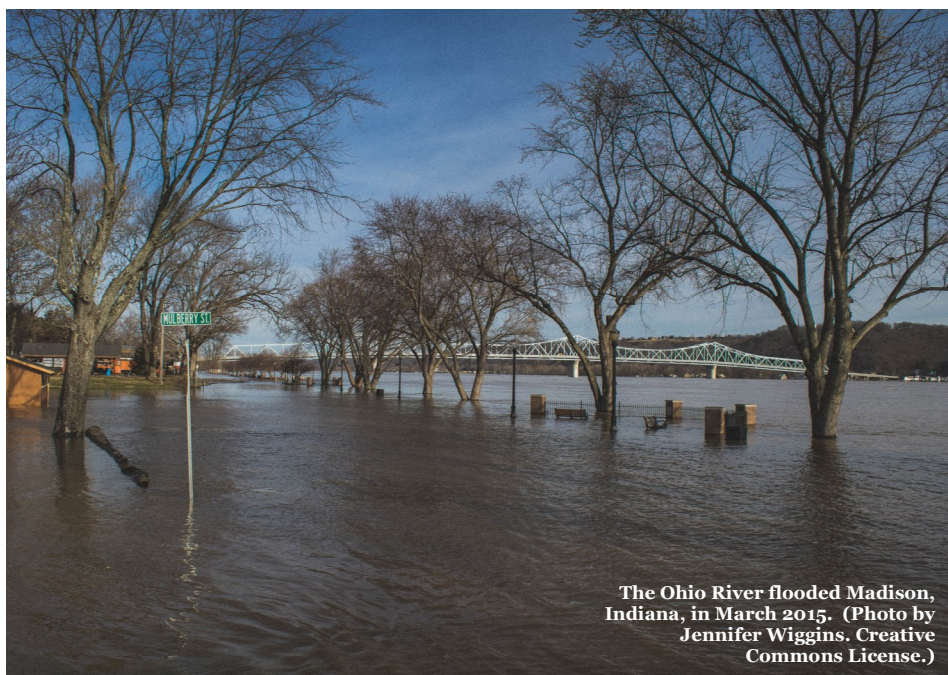
Severe Weather Preparedness (continued from page 1)

Local public safety organizations can use the resources on GetPrepared.in.gov to help constituents get started on preparing for severe weather. GetPrepared includes guides on how to make a preparedness kit, how to create a family emergency plan as well as specific guidelines on preparing for and responding to flooding, thunder and lightning storms, tornadoes and other incidents.

IDHS also has severe weather fact sheets and emergency preparedness flipbooks available for local public safety agencies to distribute. Supplies are limited, so contact pio@dhs.in.gov to inquire.

Throughout Severe Weather Preparedness Week, IDHS will be using its social media platforms to spread weather-related safety tips. IDHS welcomes and encourages local agencies and responders to copy and share the messages through their own accounts. Below are a few social media posts ready to be used:

- **FACT:** A highway overpass is not a tornado shelter. Wind is stronger under it. #INWx
- Tornado **WATCH** means get ready. Tornado **WARNING** means take action! Find your tornado safe place today, and be there when severe strikes. #INWx
- When finding shelter, put as many walls between you and the storm. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor during severe weather. #INWx
- Don't rely on just 1 way to get weather alerts. Have a weather radio & smartphone apps along with monitoring TV and



The Ohio River flooded Madison, Indiana, in March 2015. (Photo by Jennifer Wiggins. Creative Commons License.)

social media. #INWx

- **MYTH:** It only floods near rivers. **FACT:** Floods can happen anywhere, especially low-lying areas. #INWx
- Check your prep kits. Make sure you know where to shelter at home & work. #INWx
- Flood **WATCH** means get prepared for high water. Flood **WARNING** means take action now! Flooding is happening or will happen soon. #INWx
- In a mobile or prefab home? In case of severe weather, ID a safe location you can easily get to and make sure everyone knows the plan. #INWx

Hosting preparedness events can be a [fun and educational way](#) to engage the community on the importance of being ready for emergencies. From setting up a table or a booth at local events

and distributing educational materials to visiting area schools and instructing students and teachers on safety topics, there are numerous ways to engage the community.

Emergency professionals can also encourage residents and local businesses to participate in the statewide tornado drill on March 22, at 10:15 a.m. and 7:35 p.m., EST. Should a conflict arise, Wednesday, March 23 has been designated as a back-up date for the drill.

The IDHS Public Information Office wants to hear from local agencies and organizations that coordinated outreach activities for Severe Weather Preparedness Week. Send pictures and event details to pio@dhs.in.gov. ♦

Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief: ‘Help, Healing, Hope’

To Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers, each emergency is another opportunity to apply their servants’ hearts to assisting neighbors and communities across the state.

The Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief is a cooperative, volunteer ministry of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and its 450 affiliated churches which responds to disaster recovery requests throughout the state, the country and the world.

In times of need, volunteers have been deployed to Princes Lakes – three teams with chainsaws removing more than 80 huge trees over the course of two weeks. They also have been deployed to Kokomo, spending six weeks assisting homeowners with flood recovery, removing mud and debris from 52 homes. Working in coordination with local government, they strive to work closely and cooperatively with other volunteer organizations. “We always try to meet with the local organization and be a partner, not act as a lone wolf,” said Dr. John Rogers, Indiana Disaster Relief Coordinator.

Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief focuses on several key tasks as part of its response efforts – chainsaw crews, “muck-outs” following floods, and shower and laundry units. The organization’s two trailer-based shower units were both designed and built by volunteers.

When Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief receives a local or state request, organizers such as District 5 Coordinator Denny



Volunteers from Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief were deployed to Kokomo during tornado recovery in November 2013. IBDR had two deployments to Kokomo that year, also assisting with flood cleanup that spring.

Celebrating Service: Dr. John Rogers

Dr. John Rogers led a congregation for 22 years, and spent 16 years working directly with the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. During his time with the Convention and its Evangelism program, he has been responsible for managing the funding for Disaster Relief. For the last several years, he has served as Indiana’s Disaster Relief Coordinator, running the statewide program, and earning the nickname “John the Baptist.” Now, in April, he is retiring and passing the reins on to another state coordinator.

During his tenure, he has had the opportunity to work with a large variety of people, and spoke about a project in Brown County. At the time, he was leading a Methodist team during the response, which was being housed at a Nazarene church, and being fed by a Missionary church. “It’s more about kingdom work than territorial work, and

we were all there to take care of the victims.”

One of his special memories was receiving an Honorary Incident Manager vest from Phil Brown, Indiana Department of Homeland Security Emergency Response and Recovery Assistant Division Director. That, he says, is one memento that will go home with him.

The one thing that has impacted Rogers the most has been going to minister to victims and be there with the volunteers. “There’s something special about a volunteer that will leave their homes – many of them taking vacation to help others – and spending time with people like that,” Rogers said. “It’s inspiring to see volunteers helping people get back on their feet, and find hope. These are 50, 60, 70 year old men and women that are volunteering to do hard, dirty work. Volunteering with people like this really impacts your life.”

(Continued on page 5)

Indiana Baptists (continued from page 4)

Smith work with the local emergency manager to determine the resources needed for response efforts. The groups work to fill needs, and respond as self-sufficient entities, to limit the burden on responders and communities in need. “We like to touch base with emergency managers in our areas so they know who we are and what we do. This allows us to respond more quickly and start doing our jobs,” said Smith.

Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief is affiliated with the national organization Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. In most cases, state groups respond to emergencies within their own borders. But if more hands are needed, such as in the case of the Henryville Tornado, groups from other states will respond. “If we respond to anything in Indiana, and the budget is meager, churches in the convention help fill that gap. We do things better



together than apart,” said Rogers.

No matter how large or small the event, volunteers stand ready to provide a measure of assistance and hope. “Not every disaster makes the media, and gets the

Indiana Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers work on cleaning out an Indianapolis home following flooding in December 2015.

attention that the larger ones do,” said Smith. “Even if there’s just one person affected, that’s a disaster to that person and family, and we need to respond.” ♦

Disabilities Awareness (continued from page 1)

vision, hearing, cognitive, mental and other issues,” said Indiana Department of Homeland Security Human Services Program Manager Scott Huffman. “When emergency warning systems that inform people of impending disaster are activated, there must be procedures in place to effectively inform those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Emergency shelters must have back-up generators and a way to keep medications refrigerated for those who, for example, may be insulin dependent,” he said.

Huffman added that some people may have life-sustaining medical

devices that need electricity to operate. Shelters need to be able and willing to accommodate service animals without segregating those people from others. And counties should be aware of temporary alternate housing should people with disabilities not be able to return to their specially-equipped homes.

Making sure emergency shelters can accommodate people with all sorts of disabilities is so essential during an emergency, Huffman said. Part of his area of responsibility at IDHS is working to write mass care emergency

plans that include those with disabilities. He brings 10 years of Family and Social Services Administration experience to IDHS and he wants all EMA directors to know he is a resource for them and ready to help.

Huffman can be reached by calling 317-234-7793 or emailing him at shuffman@dhs.in.gov. ♦

Even First Responders Need Help From Time to Time

Everyone knows it's tough being a first responder. Granted, most firefighters, emergency medical workers and law enforcement officers have a good idea of what they are getting into and most are drawn to these professions because of it. But helping people on their worst days comes with a price, in terms of witnessing things they can never "unsee" and, at times, being powerless in situations that end in tragedy.

So who helps the first responders in **their** time of need? Do first responders know when to ask for help? And, more importantly, **will** they ask for help?

Unfortunately, suicide is on the rise in the first-responder ranks, along with stress-related illnesses like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Comprehensive statistics are hard to come by, according to EMS World. However, it is well documented that PTSD raises a sufferer's suicide risk. Less-severe conditions can contribute to personal anxiety and poor health, family problems, withdrawal and anxiety, burnout and abuse of drugs and alcohol.

Jason M. Coffey, Indiana Department of Homeland Security EMS-WMD Training Manager, said, "We put on a uniform and we are expected to act a certain way – to be strong and not show weakness. But we are human beings, too, and sometimes we experience some really bad things. It just shouldn't be seen as weakness to seek out help, if we need it."

Coffey, who began his career as a White River Township Cadet Firefighter, recently attended a funeral for a fellow first responder

whose early death was brought on by the stress of the job. Coffey said some of the younger first responders are more apt to seek help, but most of the older generation not so much.

What are the symptoms of PTSD?

Here are a few of the more common symptoms that could indicate a person is suffering from PTSD. For more information, visit ptsdusa.org.

Hyper-arousal: increases in heart rate, respiration or blood pressure. Trouble sleeping, anxiety, fear, irritability or anger. Night sweats. Easily startled or jumpy. Self-mutilation.

Avoidance: being unable to go back to work, being unable to talk about the traumatic event or visit the location where it occurred, withdrawing from family and friends. Anxiety in crowds or traffic. Neglect of hygiene.

Intrusions: flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive memories of the event or continually reliving it.

Psychic numbing: sense of being emotionally numb, experiencing a sense of unreality, dissociative amnesia, spacing out, using substances to "numb out."

"It really does seem generational," he said. "Admitting PTSD exists in the first-responder ranks is being talked about in some circles, like social media, but not really on the

news yet. Maybe television shows play a role in some of this, but we know there isn't all the glory in real life that viewers see on TV."

First responders refusing to seek help – even something like talking through a traumatic experience with a professional – is one problem. There are also insurance issues, and states differ about including mental health or behavioral health assistance under worker's compensation. Part of the problem is the difficulty in quantifying it. Sometimes talking with fellow first responders is enough. Sometimes it just isn't.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states that there is no recognized national agency that collects statistics on firefighter and EMS suicides, making it difficult to track information and trends. NFPA says there is a new awareness of behavioral health in the fire service that is "finally dragging long-hidden issues such as depression and PTSD into the open." But, it adds, whether or not this awareness is making it any easier for emergency responders to acknowledge problems and seek help is not known.

Coffey, who after his years as a firefighter, on an ambulance and most recently as Madison Township Training and Safety Captain, hopes here at IDHS he can start integrating the behavioral issues associated with being a first responder into training curriculum.

"I am starting to see less reluctance in seeking help from the younger first responders," Coffey said. "Hopefully this is a trend that will continue." ♦

Firefighters: Take Action Against Cancer

“We are just starting to understand the magnitude of the cancer problem in the fire service,” says IDHS Fire Training Branch Chief John Buckman. He says signs of firefighters’ exposure are everywhere – in photos that show them in action, wearing contaminated turnout gear and helmets, and possibly no masks.

More than 40 percent of Americans will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime. Firefighters face even greater challenges because they have a statistically significant higher risk for *multiple* cancers than the general public.

Several actions are being emphasized in training are designed to help mitigate the cancer risk for firefighters. They include:

- A thorough cleaning of contaminated gear after every incident;
- Showering immediately following fires;
- Not transporting contaminated gear in personal vehicles or taking items home to wash with the family clothing;
- Decontaminating the interiors of apparatus cabs; and
- Not taking contaminated gear into station sleeping quarters.

New Smartphone App Helps Firefighters Document Cancer Risk Exposure

For years, John Buckman has put together posters, developed training and participated in the creation of a white paper and other materials warning

firefighters of their increased risk for job-related cancer. While some industry-related and job safety associations try to correlate cancer rates to firefighter exposure of certain chemicals and fire conditions, none has truly been able to track an individual firefighter’s activity...until now.

Buckman and Training Program Developer Patrick Fisher have created a smartphone app that individual firefighters can use to log data after every run or incident. Called the Indiana Firefighter Exposure Tracking app, this smartphone tool allows firefighters and other first responders to log things such as:

- Date of exposure
- Address of incident
- Type of structure
- Type of fire
- Color of smoke
- Length of time on scene
- Length of time in hot zone
- Identification of any chemicals present
- Gear worn during exposure
- Role the individual played in the incident
- Whether or not gear was cleaned after exposure

The app is being beta tested now and plans are for it to go live in May.

“Many firefighters sure wish they had this type of tracker earlier in their career or even right at the beginning of their career,”

Buckman said. “Many firefighters try to keep information of this type on a written log or scratch pad but, over time, often that information gets misplaced or destroyed and then it’s impossible to recreate it.”

Fisher says the information gathered from the exposure tracker will be stored in the cloud in a spreadsheet format so that statistics can be cross-tabbed for future uses. Firefighters who log exposure incidents receive emails with the data they have entered.

“Educating firefighters about cancer risks is something I incorporate into every training session and meeting I can,” Buckman said. “Cancer is the most dangerous and unrecognized threat to the health and safety of our nation’s firefighters. Oftentimes, pinpointing the cause of a type of cancer is difficult because firefighters can be exposed to multiple cancer-causing agents. Hopefully having this individual data at our fingertips will be a great education for firefighters and another way to analyze trends for future increased safety.”

Being able to build exposure records, like through the new smartphone app now in testing, is key. ♦

Clay County to Receive RACES Grant from IDHS

On February 9, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) informed Clay County that it would receive a grant of nearly \$2,000 to purchase equipment for the [Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service \(RACES\)](#), which will be housed in the St. Vincent Clay Hospital in Brazil, Indiana.

The RACES equipment will be installed in an unused wing of the hospital, and amateur radio operators will have 24/7 access to the communications room in case of emergency.

“St. Vincent Clay graciously offered to host the RACES equipment,” said Clay County Emergency Management Agency Director Brian Husband. “They’re great partners.”

The new equipment will enable emergency communications to be sent via the packet radio method, which allows the transmission of text messages using radio waves

instead of the internet. VoIP or other digital voice transmissions cannot be sent with this equipment because the bandwidth is insufficient.



RACES — the “Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service” — is a standby radio service protocol created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Communications Commission.

“One of our concerns is the ability of hackers and terrorists to disrupt the internet,” said Don West, IDHS Emergency Response Division Communications Director. “If we have a non-internet way to efficiently send text messages

then that’s a huge redundancy for emergency management.”

RACES stations can transmit a text message up to 50 miles, but they can also relay messages from other stations.

“If we get [a station] in each county it’s possible that you could send [a message] all the way from Gary to Evansville without ever going through the internet,” said West.

Clay County RACES leader Gary Adams and Clay County Emergency Management Director Brian Husband started the process of applying for the grant in May 2015, and they had the communications wing set up in the hospital by the end of 2015. Husband hopes to have the new equipment tested and running by May of this year.

“With RACES we have a backup that will work no matter what, no matter where,” said Husband. ♦

Madison County EMA Installs New AED Units

The Madison County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has added new automated external defibrillators, commonly known as AEDs, to its emergency operations center and central dispatch center, both located in Anderson. One hundred county employees will be trained on how to use the devices, and will also receive additional CPR training.

An AED is a portable device that checks heart rhythm and help to restore a normal rhythm through the use of electric shock. AEDs are often used to treat sudden cardiac arrest. AEDs are becoming more commonly seen in other public



Madison County EMA’s AEDs will be available for use in the event of an emergency involving anyone on the premises, including employees as well as the general public.

places, such as airports, sporting arenas, and office complexes.

The AEDs will be available for use in the event of an emergency involving anyone on the premises, including employees as well as the general public. Units will be wall-mounted throughout each facility for easy access. When Madison County opens their new facility in Anderson during August of this year, which will house both the central dispatch center and the emergency operations center, each of the AEDs from the two separate facilities will be moved into the new building. ♦

Training Academy Announces Courses: Medical Management of Bombing and CBRNE Incidents

Indiana Department of Homeland Security EMS-WMD Training, part of the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy Training System, has announced four upcoming training courses being offered in the following areas:

Medical Preparedness to Bombing Incidents

March

			16	17		

Locations & Dates

District 5. This will be conducted at the Wayne Township Fire Department in Marion County on **March 16 and 17.**

Course Description

This course is designed for personnel from any professional background who may become part of a community response to a bombing event. This interactive, instructor-facilitated program employs case studies and research-based information designed to enhance medical preparedness for and response to blast effects. Breakout sessions address considerations and concerns specific both to medical responders and emergency planners.

Medical Management of CBRNE Events

May

				12	13	
			18	19		

Locations & Dates

District 1. This will be conducted at Community Hospital in Munster on **May 12 and 13.**

District 5. This will be conducted at the Martinsville Fire Department on **May 18 and 19.**

Course Description

This course offers basic EMS concepts for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) events, along with weapons of mass destruction/terrorism awareness for emergency responders. Topics include what to do if a catastrophic event occurs, what special level of protection may be needed, what medications might be needed and how to distinguish between different agents of concern.

This course is a combination of facilitated discussions, small-group exercises, Human Patient Simulator hands-on scenarios, and traditional classroom discussions. Exercises are conducted in a CBRNE scenario using both adult and pediatric Human Patient Simulators to reinforce classroom lectures and interaction. It promotes critical thinking skills while utilizing the RAPID-Care concept. The multi-discipline make-up of the participants helps to strengthen information sharing, communications and medical surge capabilities.

June

				23	24	

Locations & Dates

District 8. This will be conducted at Jackson County Learning Center on **June 23 and 24.**

To Register:

To register for these courses, visit the Indiana Fire & Public Safety Academy Training System at dhs.in.gov (under featured topics) and look for the courses using the District Tab for District 1, 5 or 8.

Mission

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security will provide statewide leadership, exemplary customer service, and subject matter expertise for the enhancement of public and private partnerships and the assurance of local, state and federal collaboration to continually develop Indiana's public safety capabilities for the wellbeing and protection of our citizens, property and economy.

Contact

The Hoosier Responder is a publication of The Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Please direct any questions or comments to the IDHS Public Information Office at (317) 234-6713 or pio@dhs.in.gov.

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