

THE HOOSIER RESPONDER

NOVEMBER 2023



PREPARING HOOSIERS FOR

WINTER WEATHER

Hoosier history includes more than ice and snow in Indiana winters.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Breaking Down What El Nino Means for Hoosiers
- FEMA Grants Aim to Build Indiana Resilience
- New Technology Aids IDHS Fire Investigators
- Jefferson County Honors a Lifelong Public Servant
- IDHS Rebuilding Incident Management Assistance Team
- County and State Partners Prepare for 2024 Total Solar Eclipse



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our staff works year-round to plan, train and exercise with local, state and federal officials to be ready when disasters and emergencies strike. We have had plenty of opportunities to put that work into action this year as we approach Indiana's annual record for tornadoes.

Our public safety community is well-trained and ready for incidents that occur in a typical year. By sharing intelligence and working together (before an emergency occurs), we do a great job of being informed and postured well for an all-hazards approach.

But what about those things that have never happened before, those events that you cannot really train to respond to or prepare for? In today's environment, emergency management must evolve to meet the challenges in a global community. The things that happen physically a world away have the potential to impact all of us right here in Indiana, especially when you consider the growing cyber threats from China, Russia, North Korea and others.

While we work hard at training for events that are familiar to first responders, we also must not lose sight of the diligence it takes to truly be prepared. We cannot get distracted or complacent in our jobs, and we need to continue the dialogue with community leaders about the true landscape of threats facing our world today.

Public safety is not a partisan issue. It is a fundamental requirement for safe and prosperous communities. The relationships we form with partners and stakeholders in this public safety mission are the crux of our success in protecting our communities.

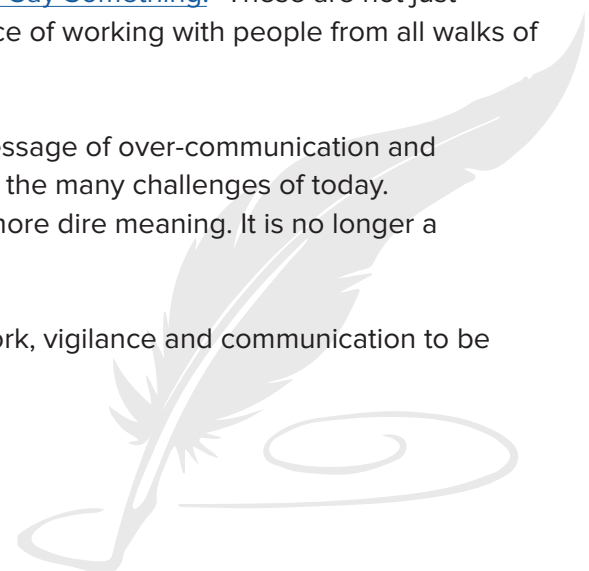
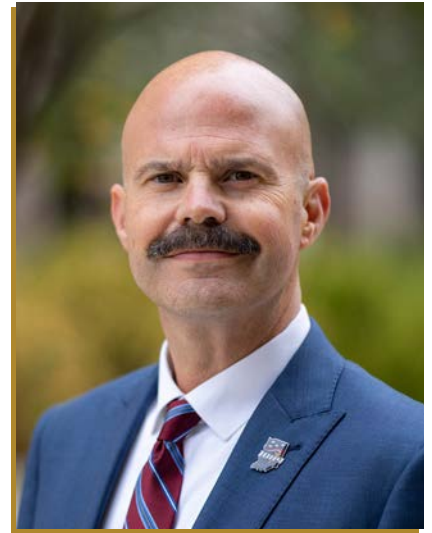
Just recently, another tragedy occurred as people were out enjoying themselves at a bowling alley, laughing with friends and family. It is football season now, and many of you are preparing your tailgating plans. Holiday gatherings are just around the corner. It is time we begin talking more openly about being aware of our surroundings and supporting the old moniker of "[See Something. Say Something.](#)" These are not just emergency manager buzzwords; rather, they represent the importance of working with people from all walks of life to protect one another at all times.

I know firsthand our federal counterparts are preaching this same message of over-communication and information sharing. They understand it is the only way we overcome the many challenges of today. The common phrase of "breaking down silos" has taken on a much more dire meaning. It is no longer a recommendation; it is a requirement.

We are united in our mission to protect Hoosiers. It still takes hard work, vigilance and communication to be successful.



Joel Thacker
Executive Director





Article submitted by FEMA

FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO BUILD INDIANA'S DISASTER RESILIENCE

With the early spring tornado outbreak still fresh in Hoosiers' memories, Indiana has seen the devastating impacts of extreme weather events.

While no one can control when disasters occur, local governments can take action to save lives and protect property before the next one. To support those efforts, FEMA is making \$1.8 billion available for two grant programs designed to help communities increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, including future risks to natural disasters such as extreme heat,

wildfires, drought, earthquakes and increased flooding.

"Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) are some of the most flexible resilience grant programs in the federal government," said FEMA Region 5 Mitigation Division Director Mary Beth Caruso. "These funds can be used by communities to better understand disaster risk and vulnerability, conduct hazard mitigation planning and design transformational projects that ultimately build a stronger Indiana."

Program Overviews

As in years past, [FMA grants](#) will be targeted toward projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the [National Flood Insurance Program](#).

For the [BRIC program](#), funds for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories have been set aside for a maximum of \$2 million each, totaling more than \$112 million.

FEMA also set aside \$50 million exclusively for federally recognized tribes in FY2023. The combined cost of the applicant's capability- and capacity-building activities under this must not exceed \$2 million.

Each year, FEMA also holds a national competition for large projects to enhance infrastructure resilience. Approximately \$701 million is available through the FY23 national competition. Examples of these funded projects from previous years are available on [FEMA.gov](#).



Updates for FY23

For the FY23 iteration of these programs, FEMA made even more efforts to improve equity and reduce complexity:

- **Emphasis on building code adoption and enforcement:** FEMA is setting aside an additional amount of funding dedicated to building code activities that make structures more resilient to seismic activity as well as climate-fueled extreme weather.
- **Additional financial and technical support to help overburdened and underserved communities build resilience:** This includes cost share adjustments and help completing a Benefit-Cost Analysis for certain communities.

The agency is also expanding [BRIC Direct Technical Assistance](#) with a goal to add at least 80 more communities to the [current 74 local jurisdictions nationwide](#). Direct Technical Assistance helps communities in need identify mitigation needs and develop tools to apply successfully for resilience funding through holistic hazard mitigation planning and project support.

Next Steps and More Information

Local governments interested in getting more information can learn more about tips to plan ahead for the BRIC application period in the [September issue of the Hoosier Responder](#) or contact the IDHS Mitigation Section at mitigation@dhs.in.gov.

FEMA has planned [three live webinars](#) for governments to learn more about preparing applications. Subjects will include technical and qualitative criteria, application pitfalls and repetitive loss properties. The Region 5 Hazard Mitigation Assistance team is also offering additional webinars and office hours for you to learn more — visit HMAwebinar.eventbrite.com and HMAofficehours.eventbrite.com for details. A wealth of tools and information about these grant programs can be found on the [IDHS Mitigation webpage](#) and on FEMA's website as well at [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities | FEMA.gov](#) and [Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program | FEMA.gov](#).

GRANTS UPDATES

IDHS reopened the application period for the Newborn Safety Device Grant. IDHS will provide reimbursement grants to eligible entities to purchase a newborn safety device (safe haven boxes) to notify either the Indiana Department of Child Services or a licensed child-placing agency to take custody of a safe haven infant.

IDHS will accept applications until March 31, 2024, and will award grants on a rolling basis each month. All projects are required to be completed by June 30, 2024.



Eligible organizations include fire departments (including volunteer departments), hospitals, units of local government (counties, cities, towns, townships), nonprofit organizations and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers. Eligible locations include hospitals, facilities, fire departments and EMS stations.



988, MIH PART OF STATE'S IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT RESOURCES

July 2023 marked the one-year anniversary of 988's launch in Indiana. The rebranding of the national suicide prevention hotline system as 988 was part of a national effort to improve mental health crisis care.

While the old number (800-273-TALK) is still active, 988 is an easier-to-remember number where callers can directly connect to compassionate, accessible care and support when experiencing mental health crises, including thoughts of suicide, substance use and other emotional distress. 988 crisis specialists listen, support and provide resources to help.

The need is significant: Indiana averages more than 1,000 suicides per year (2017-2021), according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 1,100 people died by suicide in Indiana in 2021.

Despite only 60% of people being aware of 988, according to a July 2023 national poll by the National Alliance on Mental Health, the hotline is receiving significant use. Since the new phone number went into effect, the hotline has received 40% more calls nationwide than it did the year before. About 3,500 calls a month originate from within Indiana, and more than

90% of those calls are answered by fellow Hoosiers at in-state call centers.

"This high percentage reflects the dedication and effectiveness of the state's call center staff in meeting the needs of Hoosiers," said Amy Duke, a spokesperson for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), which is spreading awareness of the new number.

The call system acts as an alternative to calling 911. Whereas 911 should be used for police, fire and medical emergencies, 988 should be used for mental-health-related distress, according to the [FSSA website](#). Calls going to 988 are meant to provide Hoosiers better care, but it also has the added benefit of often saving both the caller and health care system from costly hospital visits or the need to dispatch first responders.

The service's abilities are growing as well. In September, 988 launched American Sign Language



Call or text 24/7 for help.

It's nonjudgmental.
It's the support you need.
It's a reminder you're not alone.

It's whatever help you need, when you need it.



(ASL) capabilities, allowing callers who have hearing difficulties to use a videophone to connect to ASL-trained 988 crisis counselors.

In addition to spreading [988 awareness](#), FSSA has awarded millions in grants to community health centers and established mobile crisis unit pilot programs that can dispatch to respond to Hoosiers in mental health crisis. These teams may include law enforcement or EMS personnel.

Monticello Fire Department Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Director Nick Green has served as a community paramedic the past two years and has seen the need for mental health crisis support services. He said he was once dispatched to care for a 22-year-old who had entered a police station lobby and began to breakdance. While speaking with the man, Green learned his goal was simply to create a nuisance. During the course of their conversation, Green made sure the man was aware of 988, which he had heard of but not used.

“He did not need to be arrested. He just needed help, which can start with 988,” said Green.

Recognizing the need for this kind of help in White County, Monticello MIH is hiring a mental health specialist, thanks to grant funding through the Indiana Department of Health. The new position will include working with local law enforcement on calls dealing with crisis management, a growing trend nationally, according to a [recent Associated Press article](#). There is no nationwide statistic on how many mental distress reports are typically handled by police, but Green said as much as 40% of the local police call volume is estimated to be related to mental health issues.

In these cases, individuals are often sent to a hospital emergency room for 12 hours or more hours, but Green envisions the new mental health specialist helping those in distress to avoid the hospital visit (and bills) by assisting in ways others cannot.

“Our uniform is trusted differently. We’re the fire department, not the police,” Green said. “Responding together, hopefully we will be able to go through the list of resources and options for help, like 988, and if a person hasn’t called 988 yet, we envision calling with them on their behalf and walking through the initial steps together with the patient, then following up with them in the days afterward.”

988 USE AND SENIORS

Older Hoosiers are at increased risk for social isolation and loneliness. A [report](#) from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found that nearly a quarter of adults age 65 and older are socially isolated, which increases many health risks, including higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicide.

Green said many of the older White County residents that Monticello MIH encounters struggle with the isolation of being alone, whether that is outliving their loved ones, living far away from family or living rurally.

“Some have no friends, family or neighbors. It’s not about their personality; they just don’t know anybody or socially isolate,” Green said. “Sometimes they say, ‘If not for you coming over here, I don’t see anybody.’”

Of the senior population in his area, veterans seem to be most at risk, Green said. The typical isolation component in rural areas combines with a pride in keeping quiet and dealing with their issues on their own. He said the good news is that there are a lot of resources for veterans. The key is someone making the connection for them.



“Connecting Hoosiers in need to people who can help them is one of the greatest strengths of mobile integrated health programs,” said State EMS Medical Director Dr. Eric Yazel. “With new and expanding MIH programs across the state, and the investments being made in support services like 988, our state’s ability to respond to health needs is on the rise.”



THIRD UAS SKILLS CAMP TO FEATURE COMPETITIONS

The Indiana UAS Skills Camp hosted by IDHS will take flight for the third time on Jan. 17-19, 2024, at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. The annual skills camp provides public safety personnel the opportunity to practice flying unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), complete proficiency tests and learn from each other in a semi-informal atmosphere.

“It is an excellent networking opportunity with the majority of drone teams in the state,” said organizer and IDHS CBRNE Assistant Section Chief Mike White. “It’s in January, so the camp is a good opportunity to fly inside a 66,000-square-foot climate-controlled environment where it is comfortable and dry. If it’s nice, we can go outside and have the fairgrounds to use.”

The camp, which is free to attend but requires pre-registration, allows drone teams from emergency management

agencies, law enforcement agencies and fire departments to come together to trade tips, demonstrate drone skills and test drone equipment. Top teams, like the Fort Wayne and Indianapolis Metropolitan police department drone units, showcase their operations and best practices.

The first two days of the camp will focus on interior searches, image processing and counter-drone classes or demonstrations. Proctored proficiency testing ([NIST course setups](#)) and opportunities for open flying practice will be available all three days.

New for the third day will be open drone skills competitions between Indiana and Ohio pilots. The contest between states is open not only to public safety drone operators, but also public teams such as collegiate UAS teams. It is being organized by the state chapters of the Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), a leading worldwide organization devoted to advancing the unmanned system and robotics industries.

The Indiana and Ohio AUVSI chapter leaders have always had a friendly relationship, and the



idea for a competition hatched during this year's AUVSI national conference. Its purpose is to further camaraderie while also having a little fun.

"We see this competition as a unique way to showcase the professional skills and aptitudes of both of our chapters' members and to further promote training and career advancement in piloting," said AUVSI Indiana President Aaron Pierce, whose Indianapolis-based Pierce Aerospace company develops remote identification solutions for airspace monitoring.

Specific events are still being developed but may include obstacle courses, races, free flight, mapping and search and rescue. The events will give drone operators opportunities to show and explore different competencies — and to exercise new skills learned from the first two days of the camp.

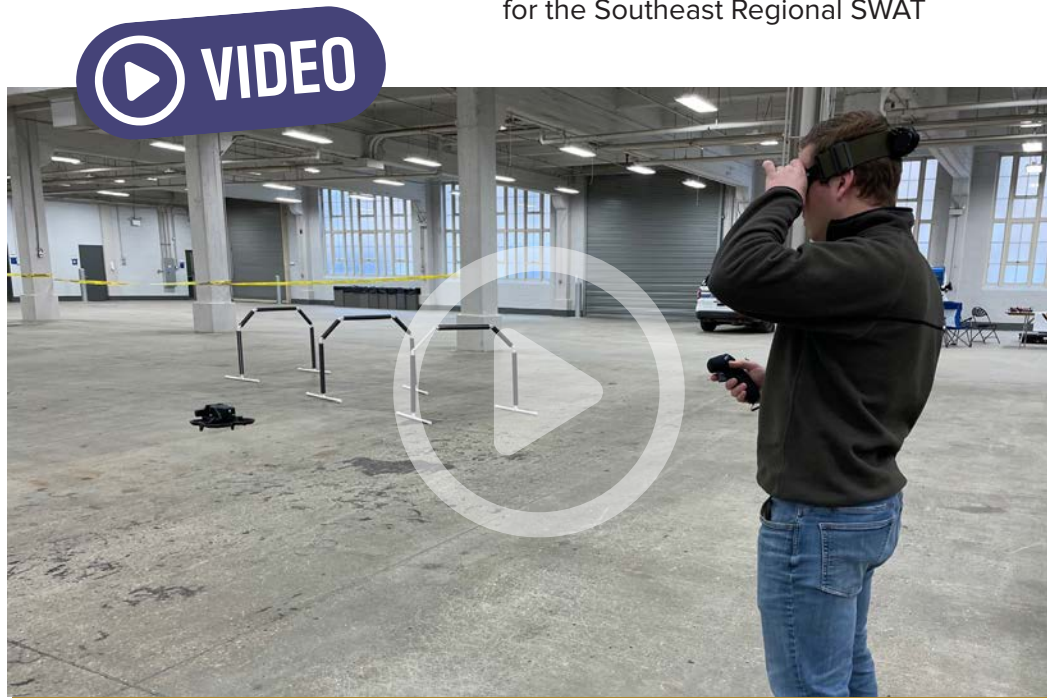
"While this is a competition, it is really an opportunity to come together and collaborate and share ideas. Yes, we're competing in this event, but everyone's taking something home with them and back to their day-to-day flying operations. That's tremendously valuable for the participants," said Pierce, who noted there are no skills camps quite like the IDHS one. "What IDHS and the Indiana State Fairgrounds are doing is unique and invaluable for the progression of public safety UAS operations. Their willingness to

partner with AUVSI IN and AUVSI OH for this competition furthers the opportunities for public safety as well as other UAS pilots."

Camp attendees should bring their own drones if they can, but it is not a requirement. In fact, public safety personnel who have not flown drones before but are interested in starting drone units are welcome. Agencies and the corporate

Clark County EMA Director Gavan Hebner has attended the skills camp both years, in addition to various other UAS camps and demonstrations. He said the IDHS camp strikes the right balance of training, networking and vendor demonstrations, while accommodating both experienced and inexperienced participants.

Hebner operates a drone to navigate and explore structures for the Southeast Regional SWAT



sponsor Darley will have drones available to test fly both indoors and outdoors, weather permitting.

"You can get ideas, learn how drones work and find out where to buy drones. The first couple years, there have been a lot of people who never have flown before but were interested and we put them on drones to try them out," White said.

Team, and his county EMA's drone operators support various public safety agencies across the county too. They average two or three deployments per week.

"We assist law enforcement in pursuits of fleeing criminals, locating missing persons and providing crowd overwatch operations during special events. Additionally, our drone operators are automatically assigned to

large woodland fires, search and rescue operations and Regional SWAT activations to enhance situational awareness for incident commanders,” Hebner said. “Beyond these routine incidents, our drones have been deployed for tasks such as assessing severe weather damage, assisting with water rescues, enhancing situational awareness on large structure fires and reconnaissance operations for hazardous material incidents.”

Even with that substantial flight experience, Hebner strongly encourages drone operators to practice frequently, even weekly.



“Much like any specialized equipment, without regular training, proficiency can diminish, and this is especially critical in high-stress deployment scenarios,” he said.

Online registration for the camp will be available starting in early December. [Subscribe to the skills camp email list](#) to be notified. Separate registration for the skills competitions will be shared when available.

OUT IN THE FIELD: IDHS TRAINING SECTION

IDHS and the Indiana Sheriff’s Youth Ranch hosted South Korean K-9 teams to train the U.S. ally on search and rescue techniques.

IDHS Search and Rescue Training Manager Lillian Hardy has been working with four handlers and their dogs since March when she flew to South Korea to teach a basic cadaver class. In October, those handlers and dogs came to the Indiana Sheriff’s Youth Ranch to continue their training and expose the dogs to various scenarios.





COOKING UP SAFETY

As kitchens across the nation buzz with activity this Thanksgiving, it is essential to prioritize safety amid the holiday hustle and bustle. To ensure an accident-free Thanksgiving, here are some cooking safety tips to remember and share.

MIND THE BIRD

If you are roasting a turkey, ensure it is thoroughly thawed to avoid a fire. For every four pounds of bird, allocate 24 hours for thawing in the refrigerator.

TEMPERATURE MATTERS

Invest in a reliable meat thermometer. The turkey's internal temperature should reach 165°F in the thickest part of the thigh and the stuffing. Undercooked poultry can harbor dangerous bacteria, so accuracy is vital.

AVOID GREASE FIRES

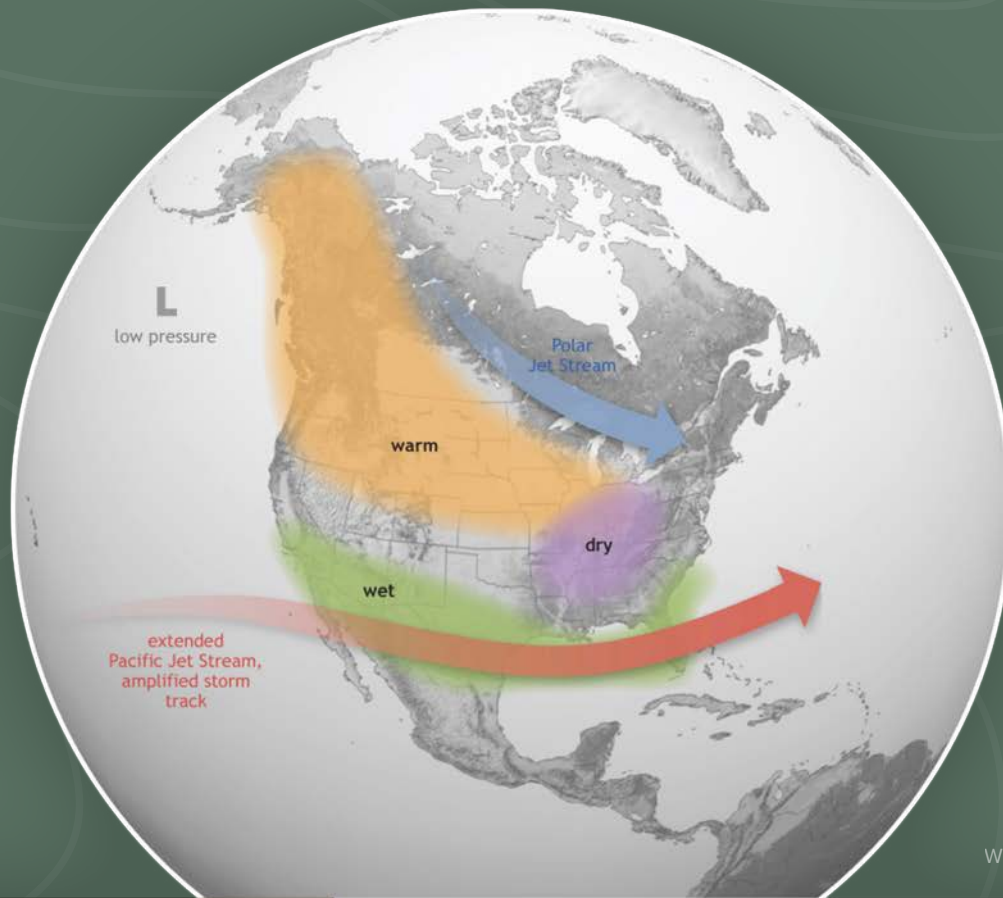
Be cautious when deep frying a turkey. Set the fryer outdoors on a flat surface, away from flammable objects. Thoroughly thaw the turkey and pat it dry to prevent splattering hot oil. Never overfill the fryer, and keep a fire extinguisher designed for grease fires nearby, just in case.

CHILD AND PET SAFETY

Keep children and pets out of the kitchen to avoid accidents. Create a designated safe space for little ones to play, ensuring an adult supervises them.

PROPER FOOD STORAGE

Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Perishable foods must be put away after two hours.



Wintertime El Niño pattern
NOAA Climate.gov

EL NIÑO'S

WINTER EMBRACE

Meteorologists and emergency planners in Indiana are closely watching an unfolding weather pattern that could affect winter in the state. This climatic phenomenon known as El Niño “occurs when warm water in the equatorial Pacific interacts with the atmosphere, triggering significant shifts in weather patterns,” explained Jason Puma, a senior meteorologist at the National Weather Service Indianapolis office.

Historically, in Indiana, El Niño’s influence on winter weather is characterized by above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation. While this general trend holds, not all El Niño events are identical.

“Each El Niño has its unique features, and this year, we are observing warmer waters farther north in the Pacific. If these warmer

waters persist, they might affect our winter weather more,” noted Puma.

The ongoing El Niño, which began in June, is expected to continue through the winter and into early spring 2024. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there is a greater than 95% chance that El Niño will influence weather patterns in Indiana from January through March.

As these trends and patterns continue to evolve, agencies at all governmental levels are preparing for the coming winter. The success of Indiana’s preparedness strategy lies in its adaptable response.

Brad Thatcher, response director for the Response Section of IDHS, emphasized that “our response strategies are not static blueprints but dynamic,

evolving frameworks that adjust to shifting weather patterns. We maintain a pulse on meteorological updates, allowing us to adapt our tactics swiftly.” This adaptive approach ensures that Indiana remains agile and capable of responding effectively to unexpected weather changes.

The collaborative spirit among agencies forms the bedrock of Indiana’s preparedness strategy. At the heart of this collective effort lies the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), a bustling hub where information converges, strategies are formulated and decisions are made.

“The SEOC is our nerve center, where meteorological data converges with emergency response strategies. It’s a testament to our state’s proactive approach, where preparedness meets execution,” said Beth Carpenter, IDHS emergency services planning manager.

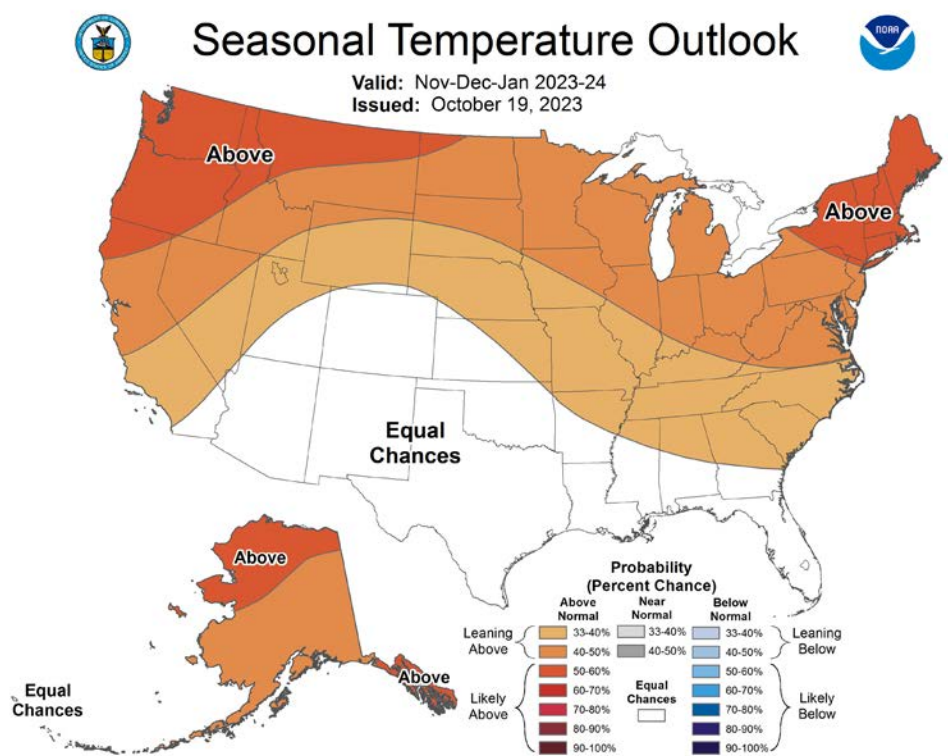
IDHS partners with multiple state agencies and other leaders like the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to work toward a common goal of ensuring Indiana’s safety and well-being. INDOT, through its district Winter Weather Operations Seminars, disseminates invaluable insights to local communities.

“These seminars serve as platforms where knowledge is shared, strategies are refined and collaborations are strengthened. The synergy between state agencies and local partners is our strongest asset,” explained Thatcher.

While El Nino often brings above-average temperatures, Puma cautioned against complacency.

“Despite the overall expectation of slightly warmer temperatures, sporadic cold spells and unexpected snowfall can catch us off guard. Multiple sources for weather alerts, such as weather radios and official platforms, become lifelines during such situations.”

A vital tool in Indiana’s preparedness arsenal is the [statewide county travel status map](#), which provides real-time information that keeps residents vigilant and adaptable in the face of winter storms. This dynamic map serves as a comprehensive guide, reflecting the collective decisions of counties across the state. When winter storms loom, counties assess

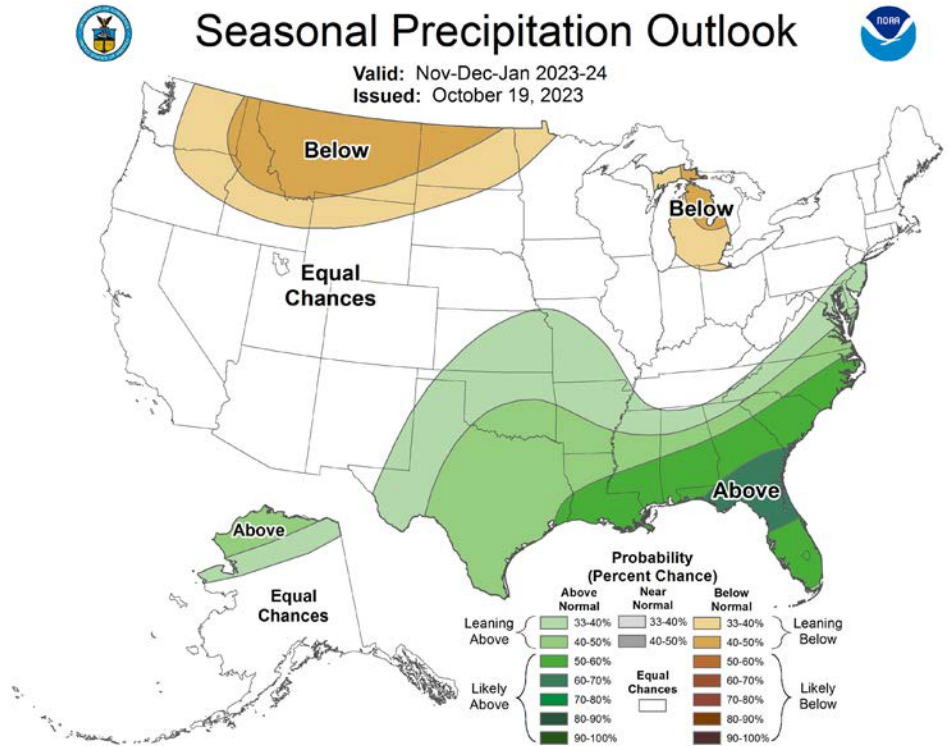


the situation and issue travel advisories, watches or warnings based on the severity of the weather. These updates are reported by county emergency management agencies to the state, ensuring the map remains current and accurate. Hoosiers can check the map before heading out the door to make informed decisions when planning their routes.

Carpenter advised that “preparedness isn’t merely a state initiative; it is a personal responsibility. Families should craft comprehensive emergency kits, stock up on essentials and devise robust communication plans. Knowledge becomes their armor, shielding them from the uncertainties that winter might bring.”

The significance of community engagement cannot be overstated. Carpenter emphasized, “Our outreach initiatives are the bridge between information and action. By empowering communities with accurate knowledge, we foster a culture of preparedness. Hoosiers become active participants in their safety, understanding the importance of staying informed and ready.”

As the winter unfolds, Indiana partners remain vigilant against the unpredictable twists of winter.



This collective effort transforms preparedness from an individual responsibility into a shared commitment, ensuring that every Hoosier is well-informed and equipped to make safe decisions.

LOOKING TO LEARN MORE ON THIS TOPIC? HOOSIER HOMELAND HAS YOU COVERED!



LISTEN TO THE IDHS PODCAST

National Weather Service (NWS) Meteorologist Sam Lashley joins the podcast to discuss Indiana’s winter outlook. The conversation dives into climate change effects and NWS initiatives, ensuring you are prepared for the winter season ahead.

Listen online at on.in.gov/hoosier-homeland or subscribe to the podcast using one of the podcast services below:





10 YEARS AGO

INDIANA'S LARGEST LATE-SEASON TORNADO OUTBREAK

On Nov. 17, 2013, Indiana saw 30 tornadoes sweep across the state, making it the largest late-season tornado outbreak in state history and the second-largest tornado outbreak for Indiana regardless of the time of year. Dozens of other tornadoes occurred throughout the Midwest, including an EF4 that hit Washington, Ill., outside of Peoria, which resulted in major damage, 122 injuries and a fatality.

The strongest tornado in Indiana was an EF3 that traveled about

30 miles from Tippecanoe County to Cass County. There were also 13 tornadoes rated EF2 and 16 that were EF1 or EF0.

The National Weather Service (NWS) placed Indiana at a High Risk (5/5) for severe weather, which is rare, said Sam Lashley, warning coordination meteorologist for NWS Indianapolis. On average, Indiana only sees such a risk level once every couple of years. IDHS activated the State Emergency Operations Center to Level III.

“It was a classic severe weather setup that you would normally expect in late March-April-May. A strong cold front pulled up moist, warm air from the Gulf of Mexico. Fall storms pull in a lot of wind shear, but in the past, moisture from the Gulf was difficult to get here that time of year,” Lashley said. “The strong cold front, wind shear and moisture set the stage.”

Most of the tornadoes were concentrated in north-central Indiana. Kokomo experienced two



EF2 tornadoes that damaged buildings, homes and apartments, some of which were hit again by an EF3 tornado that took a very similar path a few years later in August 2016. Nearly 1,000 homes sustained damage in Howard County, with close to 200 being severely damaged or destroyed.

Janice Hart, who is now the Howard County EMA director, was an administrative assistant for the EMA at the time. She remembers the NWS warnings saying the storms were going to be bad that day, so everyone was on alert. When she looked outside that Sunday, she recalled the sky being unusually eerie, giving her chills.

Pat O'Neill was the Kokomo Fire Department fire chief in 2013, and was returning to town as the storms hit, even witnessing signage from a gas station blow across the roadway in front of him. One of the

tornadoes significantly damaged the fire department's Station 6 and destroyed a tanker truck. Fortunately, the firefighters inside the station were unhurt.

"Off-duty personnel came in and let management know that everyone at the station was all right, but there was not much communications access in the first 45 minutes because the radio traffic was horrendous and there was no cellular coverage. All lines were tied up," said O'Neill. "The crew in Station 6 had hunkered

down, but then got the fire engine out and started making runs. Off-duty personnel were called in and helped go door to door looking for victims in neighborhoods that were hit."

After the tornadoes hit Kokomo, Hart drove to the office to aid the response, but many routes were blocked by debris or police.

"It was traumatic to see because parts of Kokomo looked like they had been bombed," she said. "With the amount of destruction, we must have had an angel on our side: There were no injuries or deaths."

Once at the EMA office, she began answering phone call after phone call, and continued to field them for the next 24 hours. Residents called asking what they should do and how to report damage, and many local, national and even international media outlets rang in to talk about the response efforts.

Kokomo firefighters and local and state emergency services worked throughout the night helping



with search and rescue efforts, which included helping keep generators and light towers running, and later transitioned to conducting damage assessments. A command post was set up at Fire Station 1 and was later moved to the Howard County EOC. O'Neill noted how it seemed every city and county agency was on hand to lend their services.

"It was kind of like a tabletop disaster exercise, but for real," he said.

Kokomo's fire department hired a contractor to make sure the damaged station was safe, and fortunately, the department was able to continue to use the station, though it took a year to complete repairs.

Hart remarked on how resilient Kokomo residents were, and she was in awe of how everyone was helping to put things back together and return to normal.

"It makes you appreciate your community, where you live, when you see neighbor helping neighbor," she said.

Statewide recovery efforts included federal disaster loans



being made available in 19 Indiana counties. No Hoosiers were killed in any of the 30 tornadoes, but eight people were injured, including two who were hurt when a tornado flipped a semi truck at a travel plaza in Boone County.

The November 2013 tornado outbreak solidified for NWS a trend it had started to notice in the early 2000s of fall severe weather outbreaks, such as the October 2001 tornado outbreak in northern Indiana and the 2002 Veterans Day weekend outbreak that included an EF4 tornado that devastated Van Wert, Ohio. That tornado had started in eastern Indiana with a few touchdowns but intensified across the border.

"When the 2013 outbreak happened, we were shocked at 30 tornadoes, but it fit into the pattern of seeing severe storms in late fall," said Lashley, who added that ongoing research indicates late-season storms may be becoming more intense overall, which includes heavy rainfall leading to increased wintertime flooding. "The biggest takeaway is year-round preparedness."

Historical tornado data, including tornado paths from 1950 to 2022, are available on the [Tornado History Viewer](#) on the IDHS website. Visit [GetPrepared.in.gov](#) for tornado safety tips.

"The biggest takeaway is year-round preparedness."

Sam Lashley, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, NWS Indianapolis

TORNADOES
FLOODING
EARTHQUAKES
HOUSE FIRES
DISASTERS
FOLLOW
NO SCHEDULE



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED ON VETERANS DAY



IDHS honors all veterans who served our country in hard times and times of peace.

Many U.S. veterans continue their serving spirit on the home front. They become first responders protecting their communities. IDHS is proud to serve these first responders as they continue to take care of Hoosiers.

WE THANK YOU



NEW TECHNOLOGY MEANS QUICKER ANSWERS FOR IDHS FIRE INVESTIGATORS

Fire investigators have a tough road ahead of them from the moment they get the call. When IDHS investigators respond to the scene of a fire, they are brought in for their expertise and resources to determine the origin and cause of a fire.

The challenge with a fire scene is that flames can quickly burn up evidence of what started a fire, and the water used to douse an ongoing fire also can wash away evidence. Now IDHS fire investigators have a new tool that will give them a better understanding of the evidence that is still left behind.

The IDHS Hazmat Section recently purchased a portable gas chromatograph mass spectrometer (GC/MS). Before owning this tool, fire investigators would

Origin – The general location where a fire or explosion began.

Cause – The circumstances, conditions or agencies that bring together a fuel, ignition source and oxidizer resulting in a fire or a combustion explosion.



look for burn patterns or areas that may indicate an ignitable liquid might have been used. They would take samples of the material and send them to the Indiana State Police lab or other accredited laboratory, then lab specialists would test the samples to determine if a possible ignitable liquid is present. This process can sometimes take weeks to receive the test results.

Meanwhile, fire investigators move forward with their investigations, but wait for the information from those

samples to assist with determining how and why a fire started.

The portable GC/MS is now speeding up that process. It can indicate the possible presence of a suspected ignitable liquid while investigators are still on-scene.

“It’s basically like a K-9. It helps us determine on the scene if an ignitable liquid may be present by identifying chemical compounds that may be found in common ignitable liquids,” said IDHS Fire Investigations Section Chief Clayton Kinder.

Fire investigators are already seeing the benefits. IDHS has the Griffin G510 model, which has already been used successfully on a case since the purchase of the machine.

“The GC/MS didn’t solve the case, but the results confirmed the findings of the investigation,” said Kinder.

The portable GC/MS does not replace the need to submit samples to a laboratory but can help identify



sample locations at a scene that may yield lab results that identify petroleum distillates.

“This machine can help visualize the picture of what may have been involved in starting a fire. When we get the printout listing all the chemical components in a sample, our fire investigators will use their background knowledge or do their research to figure out how those chemicals may play a role in igniting a fire,” said IDHS CBRNE Assistant Section Chief Mike White.

“We can’t just take the results and go to court. We have to have a certified analyst review the results and tell us what the chemicals were. But this is still useful for fire investigators, because it helps us understand what chemicals may be present in the scene that could be consistent with an ignitable liquid,” Kinder explained.

IDHS is fortunate to have a portable GC/MS on hand. This technology is used around the world for military and hazardous materials purposes. The IDHS GC/MS is only one of a couple in use currently in Indiana.

Fire or police departments can request the IDHS [fire investigator assigned to their county](#) if they need assistance with determining the cause of a fire. The fire investigators may then use GC/MS or the IDHS K-9 unit to add value to the investigation.





PUBLIC SERVANT HONORED FOR A LIFELONG LEGACY

TROY MORGAN COMMITTED HIS LIFE TO JEFFERSON COUNTY

“Ubiquitous” is the word Josh Webb used to describe his late friend, Troy Morgan.

In the Madison, Ind., community, Morgan was involved in a little bit of everything to better his community, most recently as the Jefferson County emergency manager. Morgan worked early in his life at the family funeral home with his father. He later went on to establish the EMS service at King’s Daughters Hospital, serve two terms as county coroner and serve on the county council and countless other boards and commissions dedicated to public safety.

Since his death in June at age 59, the community is still coming to terms with the loss of part of the Jefferson County fabric, not just for his commitment to his community, but also for his friendship, leadership and love.

“This community feels like it lost a sibling, a trusted older sibling or big brother figure who always had our back,” said Webb, a longtime

friend of Morgan’s who worked with him at the Morgan and Nay Funeral Home (formerly Gans funeral home).

“When you lose someone like Troy, you don’t think about a hierarchy or succession plan,” Webb added. “His presence was ubiquitous when it came to assessing or triaging a situation, determining the reality or hypothetical impact of an event.

“From analyzing equipment to the temperament of an individual and how they might react to a tragedy in the world, he was an excellent barometer of people.” Morgan’s obituary cited the completion of the new Jefferson County Public Safety Center as one of his proudest achievements. In September, the

community honored the man who had given so much by renaming the facility the Troy D. Morgan Public Safety Center.



“For a lot of people, their legacy lives on for a while,” said Matt True, a longtime friend and now acting county emergency manager. “This building is a brick-and-mortar representation of Troy Morgan. This place is him.”

True, one of the organizers of the building renaming effort, said the event “was really about family. He



worked his tail off to get this up and running.”

“Troy never would have wanted a statue or anything like that. This is a practical tribute to the man he was,” Webb said.

In addition to the honor of the building hosting his name, Morgan’s family also was presented the inaugural Indiana Homeland Medal of Merit. Indiana Homeland Security Executive Director Joel Thacker presented the award to recognize Morgan, who was also a former IDHS employee, for his lifetime commitment to public safety and resilience in his community.

NOMINATE A HERO FOR THE INDIANA HOMELAND MEDAL OF MERIT

The Indiana Homeland Medal of Merit honors exceptional conduct and the performance of outstanding services to Hoosiers to support the safety, security and resilience of Indiana.



This award will be given to any hero who goes above and beyond the job to ensure Hoosiers are protected. Nominations are being collected now. Visit the [Special Recognition webpage](#) to submit a nomination. An IDHS team will review all submissions.



INDIANA’S NEXTLEVEL HUB-AND-SPOKE UPDATE

IDHS and local fire departments held ground-breaking ceremonies in all four sites in Phase One of the Hub and Spoke Training Model.

The sites in Corydon, Linton, Rensselaer and Wabash are expected to be operational by spring 2024. Additional sites will be selected next year.

Departments interested in a new training facility or new personal protective equipment (PPE) for their volunteers are still asked to [complete the questionnaire available on the IDHS website.](#)

IDHS soon will finalize vendors and begin distributing PPE to volunteer departments, with the goal of helping the volunteer departments with the most need.

More information is available on the [IDHS website.](#)



WHEN AMBULANCES CRASH

EMS Provider & Patient Safety



DATA COLLECTED BETWEEN 1992-2011

4,500

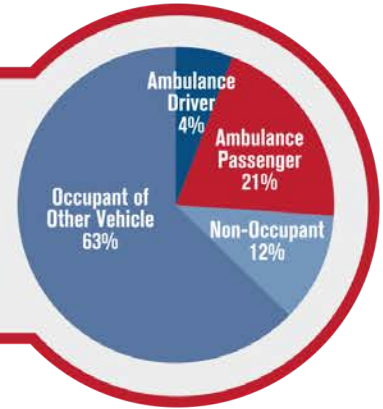
vehicle traffic crashes involving an ambulance per year
ESTIMATED ANNUAL AVERAGE

34%

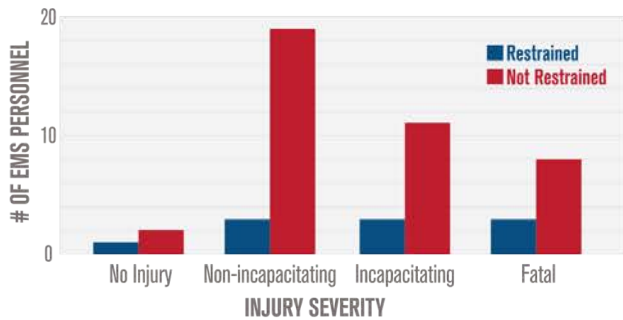
resulted in injuries

33

people killed per year



Injury Severity and Use of Safety Restraints in EMS Providers*



84%

OF EMS PROVIDERS IN THE PATIENT COMPARTMENT



WERE NOT RESTRAINED*

ONLY 33%

OF PATIENTS

WERE SECURED*

WITH SHOULDER AND LAP RESTRAINTS

44% of patients were ejected from the cot in serious crashes*

61%

restrained with lateral belts only*

38%

shoulder harnesses were available but were not used*



*IN SERIOUS CRASHES INVESTIGATED BY NHTSA

SIT DOWN & BUCKLE UP!
Secure Your Patients. They Rely on You!

This safety message brought to you by NHTSA's Office of EMS.



ems.gov



IDHS REBUILDING IMPORTANT RESOURCE

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM SEARCHING FOR NEW MEMBERS

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the capacity of first responders, local governments and health care workers to their limits. Everyone was required to be at the top of their game, responding and helping their communities through the pandemic, which impacted all parts of Hoosier lives. Now that communities have made the adjustments necessary to a new normal, IDHS is looking again to its first responders to rebuild an important tool for Indiana and for the rest of the country.

The Indiana Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) is looking for new members. The IMAT is a forward response team for IDHS during disasters and large-scale emergencies. It is an on-scene support group for local jurisdictions.

Primarily, IMAT teams will be deployed by the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) when a community experiences a disaster and needs additional support to manage the response

and recovery. It does not take over an incident, but it can assist with mentoring, advising and offering broad expertise and additional personnel.

“The end goal is to assist local jurisdictions and obtain incident stabilization. The result is to ensure that incidents are managed safely, effectively and efficiently through common ICS framework,” said Mark Olson, IDHS SEOC shift manager and IMAT program coordinator.

The IMAT team is a beneficial tool for the SEOC to gain a better situational understanding of the scene of the disaster, and it can offer local personnel insight into the tools the state has or can procure.

Incidents like the Clark County tornado in 2012 and the 2016 Dubois County Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza



required the IMAT team to go to the scene and work with local officials to gain knowledge of the scope of the incident and help manage the situation until the severity of the incident got back to a manageable level for the local jurisdiction.

The uses of the IMAT team do not stop at state lines. This team is structured in a way that FEMA can call on the Indiana IMAT team to respond to events out of state like hurricanes and tornadoes. The team went out to assist with relief efforts during Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Hurricane Michael in 2018.

IDHS Hazmat Specialist Russell Feuquay is certified for IMAT as an operations section chief. He was deployed to Hurricane Michael as a deputy operations section chief and assisted with the response to the March/April 2023 tornado in Sullivan, Ind.

“You witness a lot of tragedy and destruction, but you also see how resilient people can



IMAT Team Deployed to Hurricane Michael in 2018

be after a disaster. Communities pull together to help each other, helping you help them. It’s very heartfelt and touching to know that at the end of the day, that lives were changed for the better and you were a part of it,” said Feuquay.

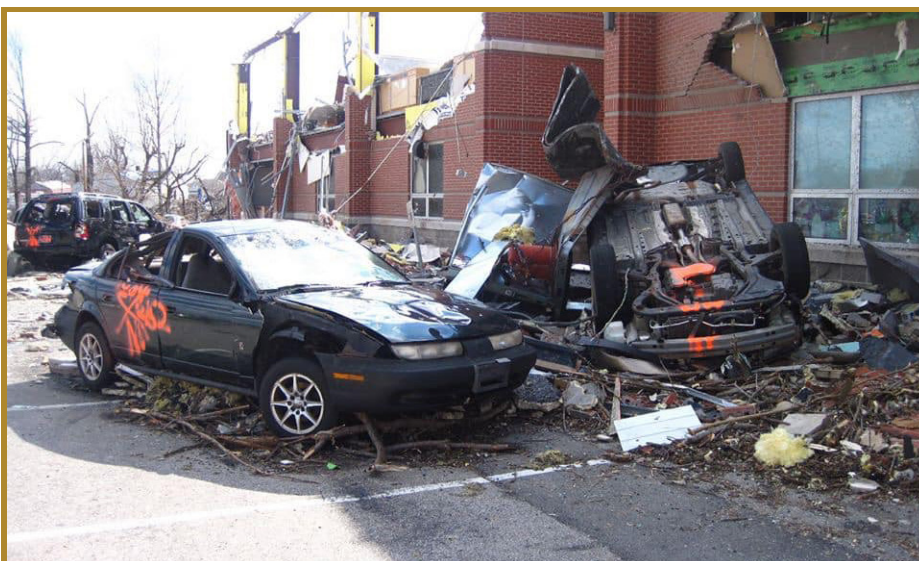
Feuquay adds he has assisted with disaster response efforts across the country, and the reaction of the local jurisdictions and disaster victims is what keeps him coming back.

“We are trained to bring order to chaos and communities see that.

Local communities see that we’re not there to take over but to be a pipeline for resources to create a path to recovery. We often form friendships along the way, especially with local government employees and officials as well as community ties,” he said.

“I encourage anyone who has a heart to help others in a deeper sense to jump on this bandwagon. It is so rewarding I could write a book,” said INDOT Crawfordsville District Safety Director Shari Harrington, who was deployed to four hurricane response efforts with IDHS and additional disasters on different teams. “The comradery of my peers, working out problems, celebrating the victories for communities we worked for and the lifelong friendships I have made are worth sleeping in a PE teacher’s classroom on a cot for two weeks.”

A number of different skill sets are needed to create a fully effective team.



“We’re going to be looking for people in the power section, water, emergency and communications,” said Olson. “We are looking for people with emergency management analytical skills. One of the things this team will need to do, especially with FEMA, is when they deploy, they will need to return situational awareness in the form of FEMA lifelines.”

Joining the IMAT team will mean a two-year commitment to be deployed when requested, in Indiana or elsewhere in the country.

To begin the IMAT certification process, visit the [IMAT webpage](#), download the application and email the application to imat@dhs.in.gov.

“If you want a challenging job where your efforts help thousands of strangers recover from disaster, ending every day knowing that you changed someone’s life for the better, then IMAT is for you. It only takes one time and you’re hooked; you’ll never regret it,” said Feuquay.

TASK FORCE ONE

Many people are familiar with the Indiana Task Force One team. That team has a different function. It is solely an urban search and rescue team.

The IMAT team assists with on-scene incident management.

EMS UPDATES



The IDHS EMS Division communicated previously about the transition from the current NEMSIS version to the NEMSIS version 3.5, which will happen at the start of 2024. The timeline for the transition in which NEMSIS version 3.4 is no longer accepted and all reports must be in NEMSIS version 3.5 format has been moved to **Friday, Dec. 1, 2023**. Only NEMSIS version 3.5 EMS run reports will be accepted on and after this date.

This timeline change is being implemented to allow a 30-day period before the NEMSIS version 3.5 deadline of Jan. 1, 2024, to address any issues with the transition that are encountered by individual EMS organizations or vendors. If organizations or vendors cannot comply by Dec. 1, they should work with the **EMS and fire data manager** on a timeline before the Dec. 1 transition.



More than two thirds of fatal fires occur in homes with no working smoke alarms. Let’s change that and **GET ALARMED.**

GetAlarmed.in.gov

CISA ENCOURAGES MAKING CYBERSECURITY A PRIORITY

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is in the middle of a nationwide cybersecurity public awareness campaign called “Secure Our World.” The goal is to educate all Americans on how to stay safe online, especially as the U.S. enters a heavy online shopping season.

Congress asked CISA to create this program to provide small businesses, communities and individuals with the guidance and tools they need to protect themselves online. It is an important message as several local governments in Indiana have become victims of a cyberattack.

Visit [Secure Our World](#) to find tips to share with your organizations and the public you serve.



The Secure Our World program focuses on four simple tips everyone can take to stay safe online:

- **Strong passwords:** Use passwords that are long, random and unique to each account, and use a password manager to generate them and save them.
- **Multifactor authentication (MFA):** Use MFA for all accounts that offer it. Users need more than a password to protect the most important data. This includes email, financial and social media accounts.
- **Recognize and report phishing:** Think before you click! Be cautious of unsolicited emails, texts or calls asking you for personal information. Resist the urge to click on these links, and do not click on links or open attachments from unknown sources.
- **Update software:** Enable automatic updates on software so the latest security patches keep devices continuously protected.

OUT IN THE FIELD TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE 2024

On **April 8, 2024**, a total solar eclipse will plunge much of Indiana into momentary darkness. IDHS, state agencies and local government personnel are partnering together to ensure all Hoosiers and visitors can experience the spectacle safely.

IDHS and partner state agencies like the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation and Department of Health have been working on a state plan for years. On Sept. 28, state agencies shared those plans, concerns and awareness with partners across the state during the Total Solar Eclipse Seminar.

During the seminar, IDHS debuted the eclipse2024.in.gov webpage. The webpage houses information for local governments on best practices for communities to plan for the influx of crowds, shareable public safety information and links to partner webpages for additional information.



Share this video on your social media platforms and more. This video was created to get the public thinking about what to do before the day of the eclipse.



VISIT THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE WEBSITE AT

eclipse2024.in.gov

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

With all the unrest in the world, there is a growing risk of an attack on the homeland. The FBI and federal DHS report, without question, the nation is seeing a spike in reported threats. As State Fire Marshal, I want our fire service (and all first responders) to be as prepared and safe as we can if an event affects the Hoosier homeland.

When tragic events occur, local responders — not the U.S. military — are first on the scene to respond. Everyday fire runs are expected, but a mass casualty event may stretch even the most seasoned responders for the knowledge and skill set of what to do first. The training and collaborative opportunities to plan, coordinate and exercise multiple scenarios are our best chance to mitigate these unexpected events.

Evaluating vulnerabilities is essential to emergency planning and preparedness. We must identify communication system gaps, assess the availability and adequacy of medical supplies and equipment and evaluate staffing levels and training needs. By conducting these regular assessments and addressing identified weaknesses, emergency responders can be better prepared to handle various scenarios and protect the safety and well-being of those they serve.

Historically, firefighters have faced these challenges head-on when confronted with unknown events. During World War II, fire brigades were critical in protecting cities and civilians from the devastating impact of bombing raids. In England, the fire brigades established and incorporated volunteers, who were provided with training and physical fitness to ensure they had the necessary skills and workforce to operate effectively.

They also were equipped with the latest firefighting technology and equipment, such as high-pressure pumps and mobile water tanks, to help them respond quickly and effectively to fires caused by bombing raids. England also placed water pumps in rivers at bridges throughout the city to pump water using hose trucks to lay supply lines down the streets, providing a reliable water source for firefighting purposes. They had water tanks throughout the city to ensure water was readily available.

They trained many volunteers in basic first aid and drivers to help provide the workforce needed to handle the medical workload. They even created firefighting training academies that provided volunteers with the necessary skills for fire hoses and the operations of master streams.

While we cannot predict the future during major events, we encourage the fire service to push the limits of what we are used to and plan for large-scale events. We must work smart and plan for operations in the most challenging times.



Stephen Jones
Indiana State Fire Marshal



UPCOMING TRAININGS

NOVEMBER

NOV 6 - FEB 9	Fire - Academy (HMA, HMO, FFI, FF2)	KOKOMO
NOV 6 - FEB 9	Fire - Hazmat First Responder Operations	HAGERSTOWN
NOV 7-11	Emergency Medical Responder	MADISON
NOV 17	K9210 Basic Land Cadaver Search Tech for K-9s	BRAZIL
NOV 18-19	K9310 Intermediate Land Cadaver Search Tech. for K-9s	BRAZIL
NOV 27 - DEC 1	EMT - Primary Instructor	BLOOMFIELD
NOV 27 - DEC 1	Fire - Incident Safety Officer	MOORESVILLE

DECEMBER

DEC 4 - MAR 12	Fire - Hazmat First Responder Operations	HAGERSTOWN
DEC 15	K9600 K-9 Pretest-Air Scent Live	BRAZIL
DEC 16-19	K9650 K-9 Credentialing Test: Tracking/Trailing	BRAZIL

UPCOMING EVENTS

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE MONTH NOVEMBER

Critical Infrastructure Month is a period dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of safeguarding essential systems like energy, water, transportation and communication networks. It emphasizes the need for preparedness and resilience in the face of potential threats to these critical infrastructures. Visit the Critical Infrastructure page on [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://www.getprepared.in.gov) for more information.



WINTER WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK NOVEMBER 5-11

[Winter Weather Preparedness Week](#) is an initiative designed to educate about the dangers of winter weather and promote safety measures. It provides valuable information on how to prepare for and respond to winter storms, icy roads and extreme cold temperatures.

VETERANS DAY NOVEMBER 11

Veterans Day honors military veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces. It is a day to recognize and show gratitude to the brave men and women who have defended the country during times of war and peace.

NATIONAL SEAT BELT DAY NOVEMBER 14

Ground ambulance crashes remain one of the leading causes of death on the job among EMS personnel. This year IDHS is encouraging all first responders to keep their own safety in mind when jumping in a vehicle to respond to an emergency. New data, available on [ems.gov](https://www.ems.gov), provides an in-depth look at the latest statistics and recommendations to improve ground ambulance safety.



THANKSGIVING NOVEMBER 23



BLACK FRIDAY NOVEMBER 24

Black Friday marks the beginning of the holiday shopping season in the United States. It is known for massive discounts and doorbuster deals, prompting throngs of shoppers to line up outside stores in the early hours of the morning to snag the best bargains. The [GetPrepared.in.gov](https://www.getprepared.in.gov) webpage has cyber safety tips to keep personal information safe online.

HANUKKAH DECEMBER 7-15

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is a Jewish holiday that usually falls in December. Hanukkah is celebrated by lighting the menorah, playing games and enjoying traditional foods.



CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 25



KWANZAA DECEMBER 26 - JANUARY 1

Kwanzaa is a weeklong celebration observed by many African Americans and people of African descent. Kwanzaa honors African heritage and culture, focusing on seven core principles, including unity, self-determination and creativity. During the celebration, families come together to light the kinara (candleholder) and exchange gifts that reflect creativity and purpose.

*The Indiana Department of Homeland Security works 24/7
to protect the people, property and prosperity of Indiana.*



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