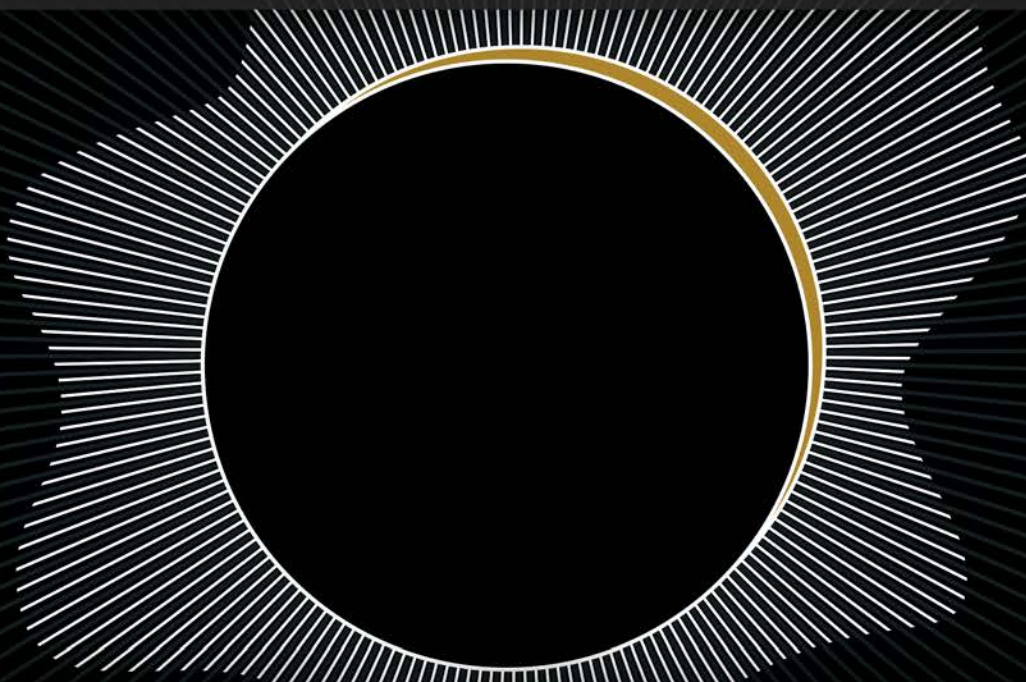


# THE **HOOSIER RESPONDER**

MARCH 2024



## **FOUR MINUTES OF WONDER**

Preparation enters crucial planning phase for the Total Solar Eclipse

### **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**

- First Responders in Action as Tornadoes Touch Down in Indiana
- 50-Year Anniversary of the 1974 Tornado Super Outbreak Approaches
- FEMA Reforms Its Disaster Assistance to Prioritize Survivor Recovery
- Updates on the Health First EMS Readiness Initiative
- Overview of the Legislation Affecting IDHS Stakeholders
- A New Structure for Volunteers as Hoosiers Seek Ways to Help Others



# CONTENTS

Volunteers Help IDHS Help You

4



Flood Insurance: Protecting Hoosier Homes

7

FDIC International Coming to Indianapolis

8



Wrapping Up EMA Week

11

Hoosier Homeland Podcast

11

Health First EMS Readiness Update

12



2023 EMS Annual Report

13

Crucial Preparedness Phase Begins for the Total Solar Eclipse

14



Fire and Public Safety Academy Winter Fire School

22

Hazmat Happenings

22

Share the Good

23

1974 Tornado Super Outbreak and Interactive Story Map

24



Legislative Bills Affecting IDHS Stakeholders

27

FEMA's Bold New Reforms Prioritize Survivor Recovery

28



FEMA

Severe Weather Preparedness

29

IDHS and Partners Respond to March Tornadoes

30



Upcoming Trainings

32

Upcoming Events

33

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

People ask me sometimes if there is ever a slower time throughout the year for IDHS. I have an easy answer: Staying resilient and planning for the next challenge in Indiana is a year-round job.

Right now, we're in the thick of responding to and planning for severe weather. On March 14, we saw the damage left behind from three tornadoes hitting parts of Adams, Delaware, Jefferson and Randolph counties. Fortunately, no Hoosier deaths were reported, but 38 people were injured. Our first responders were ready and on the scene within minutes providing support to the survivors.

The only predictable thing about Indiana weather is that it will be unpredictable. We continue to work with emergency managers and local leaders across the state to plan to respond to weather events. Strong winds, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flooding are typical concerns, and we work with communities to make them stronger and more prepared for these powerful events. Should they need state assistance, our teams are there when requested to guide those impacted communities toward recovery.

Preparedness for severe weather makes a difference. Our public outreach website [getprepared.in.gov](https://getprepared.in.gov) offers useful tips and planning guidance to protect individuals and families. IDHS also facilitates several grant programs to invest in the resilience of communities.

Of course, the upcoming Total Solar Eclipse on April 8 continues to be a primary focus for our time and resources, as it has for the past year. IDHS is leading a large group of state partners in planning for the influx of people and everything that comes with it for the event. Did you know some estimates predict as many as 500,000 people coming to Indiana from other states and countries? Counterparts in other states have helped us understand the magnitude of this once-in-a-lifetime event.

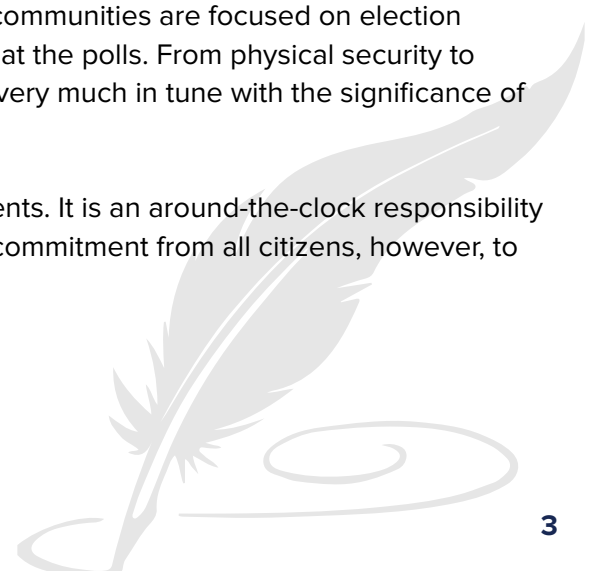
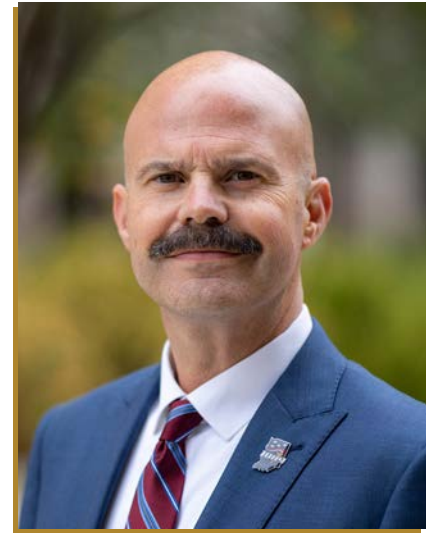
The Indiana planning resource [eclipse2024.in.gov](https://eclipse2024.in.gov) is a great tool to help people understand where and how to enjoy the eclipse, the importance of proper eyewear and the challenges and strains that some communities will experience. The key message: *Have a plan for the eclipse and treat it as a three-day event, not a three-minute event.*

On the heels of the eclipse is the May primary election. Nationwide, communities are focused on election security and staying ready and aware of potential incidents or issues at the polls. From physical security to online cyberattacks, leaders at the local, state and federal levels are very much in tune with the significance of this election cycle, both in May and November.

IDHS is one of many agencies looking out for the well-being of residents. It is an around-the-clock responsibility that public safety personnel proudly embrace. It takes vigilance and commitment from all citizens, however, to make it successful.



Joel Thacker  
Executive Director





## ALWAYS READY

## VOLUNTEERS HELP IDHS HELP YOU

When disasters strike, the IDHS Emergency Management and Preparedness Division stands ready to act. The switch from daily operations, or “blue sky days,” to response mode can be immediate, as IDHS staff deploy to locations around the state to assist local responders, gather in the State Emergency Operations Center or begin the calls and paperwork to get ahead on the recovery phase.

But the nimble ability to act relies on teams of volunteers that work behind the scenes to ensure that IDHS is ready to go when the first call for help arrives.

These volunteers receive training and practice their skills regularly, whether they are on the IN-MORT team that helps coroners during mass fatality incidents or the AUXCOMM team that maintains and tests radio communications equipment and systems in the

event that everyday methods fail. Still more prepare themselves for deployment to help manage incidents alongside county EMAs, assess damaged structures or deliver supplies and equipment wherever they are needed.

“Volunteers are extremely important to IDHS. The agency staff can only do so much. We can’t do 24/7 operations without burning out,” said IDHS Deputy Operations Section Chief Jared Thomas. “Sometimes staff cannot stop doing their daily jobs, and

so we need more people to help, like handle things at the logistics facility. Volunteers and the skills they bring come in handy when we need them.”

Thomas, a former Army paramedic, recently took on the volunteer program manager role at IDHS to support the existing volunteer teams and to recruit and guide prospective volunteers to a place that fits them.

“We will get you in and learn what you are good at, and then you can work with other teams and see



what sticks,” he said. “Volunteers are not restricted to just one team or aspect. For example, CDL drivers. They can help at our logistics facility or with our IN-MORT team, or both.”

A [new webpage](#) on the IDHS website provides information about the ways that service-minded Hoosiers can volunteer

with IDHS. The page has a general interest application and links to more detailed pages for the different IDHS volunteer teams.

“Overall, no matter the team, we are looking for people with a drive to serve others. That’s the whole purpose of IDHS,” Thomas said.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS

### I-BEAM

Steve Alspaugh is an Indianapolis architect who serves with the IDHS I-BEAM team, which assesses buildings following disasters to evaluate whether they are safe to use. The expertise this team brings helps reduce the need for temporary shelters and emergency services as well as lessens the likelihood of post-disaster injuries.

Alspaugh started helping with I-BEAM in 2018, but his heart for service came during his high school days.

In April 1974, an EF4 tornado hit his hometown of Monticello, leaving widespread destruction to the tune of \$100 million. It damaged the White County courthouse, a railroad bridge over the Tippecanoe River and more than 40 businesses. Trees fell on Alspaugh’s own home, though he said the damage was not as bad as to other residences in the area.

Many groups pitched in to clean up the mess the storm left behind, and Alspaugh took notice.

“I saw the recovery and all the types of groups helping in what looked like a war zone,” he said. “In the back of my mind, a seed was planted that someday I may have an opportunity to give back.”

Years later, he attended an I-BEAM training by I-BEAM Coordinator Randy Cooley, IDHS Code



Enforcement section chief, and got involved. Alspaugh eventually was named the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Indiana state disaster coordinator, a role he still holds. He coordinates with Cooley on AIA Indiana’s pool of nearly 40 architects and engineers that deploy with I-BEAM.

Recruitment is a continual goal of his, as well as making sure his fellow volunteers stay current in their training to Cal OES standards. He is keen to grow the roster of structural engineers, in particular.

“If we are deployed, ideally we would have two-person teams of an engineer and an architect,” Alspaugh said. “We see the same buildings and things but see them differently, so having both types of people gives us a better perspective.”

Alspaugh acknowledges that helping in disaster situations is not

for everybody. It is not glamorous work and may involve long hours and living primitively while deployed, so volunteers need to have a heart of service and be willing to get dirty.

“We walk through rubble and try not to step on nails, and it may be exhausting. But we are not doing it because it’s cool or comfortable; we are doing it because people need help and we have the skill sets to do that,” Alspaugh said. “I can’t think of much more rewarding work than to help someone whose hopes and dreams are crushed and get that person back in their home quicker.”

## IN-MORT

For more than 50 years, Donald Simpson has been a funeral director and EMT in Vanderburgh County. A disaster coordinator class in the late 1980s spurred his interest, and he joined the federal disaster mortuary team a few years later. When Indiana formed a



Photo Credit: Jimmy Crocco, Indian River State College

team of its own, he got connected and has been involved with both teams as a volunteer ever since, helping local coroners handle mass fatality incidents.

In December, Simpson and other members of IN-MORT went to Florida for a full-scale exercise and learned best practices from the highly experienced FEMORS program, Florida’s version of IN-MORT.

“If someone needs something, I am willing to go, and I am just as excited to respond today as ever,” Simpson said. “If I need help in my county, I feel the need to be able to help other counties. And none

of this will get done if everyone sits at home.”

For mass fatality incidents, local coroners can request help from the State Emergency Operations Center, and the IN-MORT program will deploy teams to handle different aspects of the recovery and identification of human remains.

“The value is, when an incident happens and the coroner feels totally overwhelmed, he can call and get a professional team — not to take over — but to assist him. One call and he can get help coming,” Simpson said. “To get professional help with this is invaluable, and we want to be in a position to help this state since these teams are not a dime a dozen and not every state has one.”

Simpson has deployed numerous times with IN-MORT and the federal team: plane crashes, a tornado, hurricane, earthquake, terrorist attack and even the COVID-19 pandemic. Staying active with the federal team benefits Indiana, he says.



“Every time I’ve been out, I’ve learned something. For a volunteer, it is valuable that you bring that back to your state, county, business. These things you’ve learned will be used because they become part of you. What you learn in that experience, you can’t buy anywhere and can’t necessarily learn in college,” he said.

Volunteers are needed from a variety of backgrounds. People who work the forensic specialties are greatly needed: coroners, medical and legal investigators, dentists, pathologists and anthropologists. People who do not work directly with human remains, such as security, EMS and logistics volunteers, are also in demand.

“It’s never a one-man show; it takes a lot of people,” said Simpson, who noted not every volunteer can go for each incident. “If you can’t come help us, maybe you have someone you can send on your behalf. It’s still giving, and you’re still a part of what we’re doing.”



## FLOOD INSURANCE: PROTECTING HOOSIER HOMES

Flooding, a pervasive natural disaster, poses a significant threat across the United States, leaving behind a trail of financial ruin for countless homeowners and renters. The toll is stark in Indiana alone, with 76 flooding or heavy rain events recorded in 2022, according to data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Yet, despite the looming threat, only a mere 1% of households in the state are covered by flood insurance.

A coalition comprising the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Indiana Department of Insurance (IDOI) and FEMA are working on stemming the tide of financial catastrophe by calling upon all Hoosiers to bolster their flooding resilience by investing in flood insurance protection. Mary Moran, IDHS Director of Emergency Management and Preparedness, underscores the imperative nature of this call, stating, “Everyone lives in a floodplain. It is just a question of how much water it takes to impact their structures.”

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a cornerstone of FEMA’s efforts, offers affordable flood insurance policies tailored to various regions nationwide, including Indiana. Brian Killen, Senior Floodplain Management Specialist for FEMA Region 5, stresses the escalating risk, “The flood risk is increasing. There is evidence that the frequency of billion-dollar disasters, which was about every 80 days previously, is now down to every 18 days you see these expensive disasters.”

The NFIP encourages stakeholders to reach out to their communities to ensure more people know their risk and understand the value of flood insurance to stay protected. It created a social media toolkit for officials to use to spread awareness about flooding risks.

Investing in flood insurance emerges as a prudent and proactive measure to ensure swifter and more comprehensive recovery for affected communities.

To learn more about getting flood insurance today, go to [in.gov/floodinsurance](https://www.in.gov/floodinsurance).



## FDIC INTERNATIONAL COMING TO INDIANAPOLIS

FDIC International takes over the Indiana Convention Center April 15-20. This conference offers firefighters and EMS personnel from around the world the chance to learn from world-class instructors, attend workshops and get hands-on training on the latest products and services available to the industry.

The five-day conference is packed with [workshops and hands-on training](#). IDHS will have a booth in the main convention hall. Stop by to say hello and speak with agency representatives!

Conference speakers native to Indiana are highlighted below.

### Mark Litwinko - Captain, Fort Wayne Fire Department

#### [Active Shooter Response for the First Due Company](#)

April 15: 8 a.m. – noon & 1–5 p.m.

April 16: 8 a.m. – noon & 1–5 p.m.

This course provides the principles of the rescue task force and tactical emergency casualty care to better respond to high-threat active assailant incidents. Students will be provided the tools, skills and information needed for continued training at their own agencies. This highly interactive course will provide a structured instructor-led curriculum combined with ample hands-on skills, including interior building movement with SWAT cover, bleeding control and victim removal evolutions in both classroom and scenario-based settings in a large event stadium environment.

#### [Rescue Task Force: Care in the Warm Zone Through an Integrated Response Framework](#)

April 17: 1:30–3:15 p.m.

Over the past 20 years, the public safety approach to high-threat, mass casualty incidents such as an active shooter event has undergone significant changes. The initial change forced law enforcement to shift to an aggressive initial response. This change was necessary to “stop the killing.” The next important paradigm change rests in the hands of fire and EMS personnel to “stop the dying.” From this need, the Rescue Task Force concept was born with the framework of risk/benefit analyses and combat-proven evidence-based medicine, allowing for point-of-wounding care to occur. This class will look at lessons learned from past incidents to establish an understanding of the methods and tactics involved for a successful Rescue Task Force integration.





## Steve White - Battalion Chief, City of Fishers Fire Department

### Large Truck Extrication

April 17: 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Rescuers should not take a passenger vehicle approach to a large truck extrication. Students will gain a working knowledge of large truck and trailer construction including air, electrical and suspension systems. Learn options for the use of electric, pneumatic and hydraulic tools to stabilize, gain access and perform disentanglement from semi-tractors, large straight trucks and cars trapped under trailers.



## Dr. Eric Yazel - IDHS State EMS Medical Director

### Mobile Integrated Health as a Vehicle for Addressing Healthcare Disparities and Overdose Response

April 17: 1:30–3:15 p.m.

As Indiana gains a greater understanding of the health care disparities that exist in Hoosier communities across the country, there has been an increased focus on addressing a number of recurring issues. This class will discuss how implementing a Mobile Integrated Health program can positively impact a fire service, decrease 911 calls, improve health care efficiency, boost morale and further ingrain the fire service into the healthcare environment of the community. The class will cover the basics of program implementation, how to integrate a program with your overdose response plan and recovery organizations, programming and partners to enlist to improve health equity and eliminate disparities.



## Candace Ashby - Battalion Chief, Indianapolis Fire Department

### Leadership from the Bottom Up!

April 18: 3:30–5:15 p.m.

This fun and engaging personal leadership development class is designed to inspire, educate and motivate attendees to reignite the passion. To build and maintain a winning organization, fire departments need everyone to bring their “A” game. Take control of the things you can change and let go of the things you cannot. It is time to become part of the solution. If you love the job, want to have fun and be the change, this class is for you.



## Andrew Bowman - Boone County Emergency Medicine

### Refractory Ventricular Fibrillation: Old and Novel Therapies

April 19: 8:30–10:15 a.m.

A review of historical treatment of cardiac arrest due to ventricular fibrillation and new novel therapies that may improve outcomes.

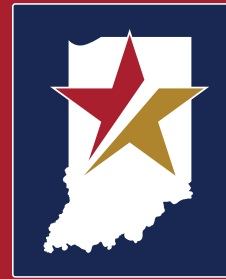


# WRAPPING UP EMA WEEK

First responders usually operate at a high level of efficiency, and people come to expect that level of care at all times. Still, communities try to remember to thank their first responders and give appreciation when it is due.

In February, Indiana recognized the efforts and accomplishments of its dedicated emergency managers statewide during Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Appreciation Week (Feb. 19-24, 2024).

Counties throughout Indiana have emergency management offices that take steps to reduce their communities' vulnerability to hazards and to help cope with disasters. These EMAs work with other public safety partners and organizations to prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from emergencies.



# EMA APPRECIATION WEEK

## EMA SPOTLIGHT

IDHS sat down with a few Indiana EMAs to learn about the passion that motivates them to serve their communities.

Recently, EMAs have been ramping up preparedness planning for the Total Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024. They have been working with state agencies and their local partners to ensure their counties are ready to handle the influx of crowds. Their behind-the-scenes work will shine bright during a rare spectacle for Indiana.

What is the main message you try to stress to your community?

 VIDEO



## LISTEN TO THE IDHS PODCAST

Special guests John Coutinho and Cory Kissick, from the Delaware County Emergency Management Agency, shed light on the dedication, resilience and unwavering commitment demonstrated by emergency management agencies across the state.

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





## HEALTH FIRST EMS READINESS UPDATE

In 2023, the Indiana General Assembly allocated roughly \$6.4 million a year for the next two fiscal years to enhance the EMS workforce.

Within a year of receiving that money, the IDHS EMS Division is making major strides in ensuring those funds are going to EMS training organizations to support training, equipment and other EMS enhancements.

The recently completed EMS Workforce Assessment gives legislators hard data to work with when identifying ways to support and improve the EMS workforce. Also, funding is being distributed for two EMS grants: the EMS Training Support Grant and the EMS Training Equipment Grant.

Funding for additional workforce projects, such as the [RAPID interfacility transfer pilot](#), is in the works.

### EMS Workforce Assessment

Legislators, state officials and the IDHS EMS Division have a new tool to guide policy and grant funding for EMS personnel in Indiana.

In February, the IDHS EMS Division announced the release of the [2023 Indiana EMS Workforce Assessment](#).

The inaugural workforce assessment culminates a year-long evaluation of the current Indiana EMS workforce, including those entering the workforce, existing EMS personnel and those who have left the workforce. It represents a key first step to better define the EMS workforce in Indiana and will serve as part of a much larger initiative to enhance EMS service across the state.



**INDIANA  
EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL  
SERVICES  
WORKFORCE**

# HEALTH FIRST EMS READINESS

Highlights of the workforce assessment include:

- Mapped locations of EMS training centers and their corresponding test/pass rates
- Data that reveals training challenges from an educational perspective
- Survey results of why EMS professionals let their certifications lapse or leave the industry
- A county-level needs assessment based on population and local EMS workforce numbers

The [2023 Indiana EMS Workforce Assessment](#) was a collaborative effort that included IDHS, the Indiana Department of Health, the Indiana University Bowen Center for Health Workforce Research and Policy and the Indiana Management Performance Hub.

The EMS Division also is working with the Bowen Center on a proposal to extend the workforce assessment for 2024 and establish a new EMS workforce dashboard.

## EMS Training Support Grant

The EMS Training Support Grant was created to support training initiatives in Indiana and increase the number of certified emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Eligible applicants were public safety entities, including private EMS, hospital-based EMS, public EMS, career fire departments, combination fire departments, volunteer fire departments and Indiana EMS training institutions.

After applications were reviewed by the IDHS EMS staff and EMS Commission, \$1,402,753.65 was divided between 42 awards for training institutions,

career departments, combination departments and volunteer departments. Similar amounts will be available next year for allocation.

Visit the [IDHS website](#) for a list of award recipients.

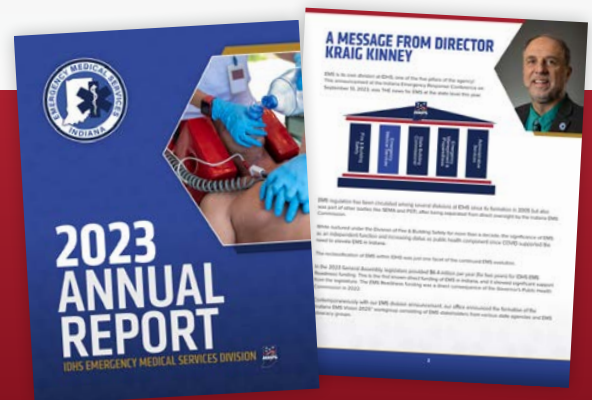
## EMS Training Equipment Grant

The EMS Training Equipment Grant was created to support training institutions in purchasing current and innovative equipment that will be used in initial EMS certification education, such as EMT, AEMT and paramedic courses. For this round of grants, eligible applicants included Indiana EMS training institutions.

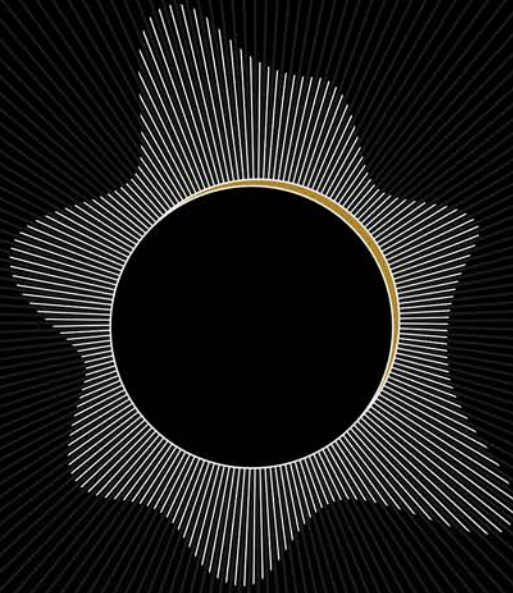
\$1,279,763.04 was awarded to 40 ALS and BLS training institutions.

Visit the [IDHS website](#) for a list of award recipients.

These first rounds of funding are an exciting step forward in realizing the state strategy to support and strengthen the Indiana EMS system. You can find more information about Indiana EMS on the [IDHS website](#).



The IDHS EMS Division released its [2023 Annual Report](#) this month. The report details the division's 2023 highlights, challenges and run data.



# **CRUCIAL PREPAREDNESS PHASE BEGINS FOR THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE**



The entire state of Indiana is gearing up for a once-in-a-lifetime event: the [Total Solar Eclipse](#) on April 8. The eclipse begins in North America on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, travels across the U.S. from Texas to Maine and ultimately reaches Canada's Atlantic Coast.

Nearly four million Hoosiers live within the path of totality. Sixty-four counties in Indiana are within the path of the Total Solar Eclipse. Twelve Indiana counties on the center line of totality will have the longest periods of totality, the highest viewing demands and the most stress on local infrastructure and services.

Indiana is within a one-day drive from 70% of the country's population, making the Hoosier state a target destination. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to travel to Indiana for the eclipse.

"This event will showcase Hoosier hospitality at its finest, but as our community partners know, hospitality requires planning so we can mitigate the possible incidents," said IDHS Executive Director Joel Thacker. "Our EMA and public safety partners have done a fantastic job collaborating and preparing for this event."

IDHS has been pulling state agencies, local communities, private sector partners and others together to identify major points of concern, planning priorities, mitigation guidance and response strategies. State and local officials can utilize the [State of Indiana Total Solar Eclipse Special Event Planning Guide](#) for further guidance.

The biggest message IDHS wants the public to know is that this is going to be a fun event for Indiana, but preparing ahead of time will make sure that it happens smoothly. Those planning to travel on major roadways before, during and after the eclipse should be prepared for heavy traffic. Fill up gas tanks and pack drinks, snacks and extra clothes in vehicles so, if families are stuck in traffic for a long time, they should have supplies to hold them over until they can get to their destination.

Learn how to make a [vehicle emergency kit](#) on [getprepared.in.gov](http://getprepared.in.gov).

# INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & INDIANA STATE POLICE



States that previously experienced a total solar eclipse all agree on one big takeaway – traffic on major roadways was a nightmare. For example, travel time from Casper, Wyo., to Denver, Colo., — normally a four-hour trip — took 10 hours or more according to the Denver Post.

Increased traffic and congestion are expected as residents and tourists make their way to viewing destinations. Areas near the eclipse center line are anticipated to see the greatest influx of visitors, including Vincennes, Bloomington, Franklin and Bluffton. Indianapolis and Evansville are also included in the path.

To ensure a smooth trip, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and Indiana State Police (ISP)

- Check [INDOT TrafficWise/511in.org](https://www.in.gov/indot/trafficwise/) to plan your route and monitor traffic conditions.
- Plan to arrive at your destination early.
- Avoid travel during the eclipse if possible.
- Do not wear eclipse glasses while driving.
- Exit the roadway to stop and view the solar eclipse. Do not stop along highways or park on the shoulder for viewing.
- Watch for pedestrians, especially along secondary roads.

urge drivers to plan ahead and prepare for potential travel impacts before, during and after the eclipse.

INDOT will limit road closures and restrictions where possible on state routes to help with traffic flow.

Visit the [INDOT](#) and [ISP](#) social media pages for additional eclipse guidance.



# INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is collaborating with state and national partners to support local schools to ensure the safety of all students, while also maximizing this science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning opportunity.

School administrators make the call on if students will be in classrooms, have an e-learning day or have the day off. IDOE reminds school administrators to consider minimum instructional time thresholds when deciding which decision is best for the school.

IDOE highlights several messages for schools to consider:

- Take extra precautions to ensure vision protection of students and consult NASA's [eclipse eye safety webpage](#).
- Consider how heavy traffic will affect bus schedules after school.
- Consider what alternative educational activities can be planned to ensure the learning experience remains valuable in case of unfavorable weather.

The IDOE has more guidance for schools and educators on [eclipse2024.in.gov](#).



INDIANA  
DEPARTMENT *of*  
EDUCATION

# INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & IDHS EMS DIVISION



The urge to look to the skies during this event is natural, but the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) warns the public to do it safely. Anybody planning to look at the eclipse should use eclipse glasses or solar viewers that meet the [ISO 12312-2](#) standards (sometimes written as ISO 12312-2:2015).

Even with that guidance, IDOH is planning for a potential surge in patients with eye complaints due to the eclipse and the number of anticipated visitors to the area.

IDOH and the IDHS EMS Division also are working together to advise and prepare hospitals and EMS providers on potential outcomes that could affect emergency care.

“For health care, our primary focus is on ensuring continuity of health care service delivery. This includes providing guidance regarding hospital staffing, resource management and essential patient services that may be impacted by traffic congestion,” said State Health Commissioner Lindsay Weaver, MD, FACEP.

EMS personnel must prepare for an emergency response to areas where people are stuck in stalled traffic. Response delays may be inevitable as responders will be equally impacted by traffic.

“Anticipated responses can range from anxiety-related conditions from panic attacks to cardiac conditions as well as overdoses to diabetic responses for individuals that may be stuck in people or traffic congestion and have limited access to medications and food,” said IDHS State EMS Director Kraig Kinney.

- Avoid looking directly at the sun during the eclipse. To safely view the eclipse, use approved glasses with solar filters or use solar viewers.
- Plan for longer-than-normal commute times if Hoosiers are visiting medical facilities for routine appointments.
- Additional considerations are available within the [Public Health and Health Care Planning Flyer](#).



# INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The main focus of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is preparing for the large influx of guests at DNR properties. DNR has 54 properties in the eclipse's zone of totality, including 14 state parks, 14 fish and wildlife areas, 11 state forests, six state-managed lakes, three state-managed nature preserves and recreations areas and three satellite properties.

"At our DNR properties, we are looking forward to experiencing the eclipse in the natural settings our public lands offer. Thousands of Hoosiers and guests from all over the country who will be camping, staying at our inns or spending the day with us will see and feel the effects of this amazing astronomical event with the wonderful backdrop of forests, prairies, lakes and wildlife that our DNR sites provide. We can't wait for April 8!" said Ginger Murphy, deputy director of the DNR Division of State Parks.

Many state park properties are offering interpretive programming that will address how the day of the eclipse will affect Indiana. Those programs will kick into high gear on the weekends just before

the eclipse. Some park properties will have events on April 8, after the eclipse ends, for those who want to stay and wait for traffic to let up before they leave.

The DNR provides more information on what to do in its parks on [its TSE webpage](#).

DNR encourages visitors to plan ahead for their visit by:

- Visiting [camp.IN.gov](http://camp.IN.gov) to see if reservable campsites are available. All rooms at state park inns in the zone are booked.
- Having a backup plan. Entry to state park properties will close when parking spots are filled.
- Leaving home early and planning to stay the entire day.
- Shopping eclipse glasses and T-shirts at [shopINstateparks.com](http://shopINstateparks.com).
- Downloading the [DNR smartphone app](#) before you leave home. Notifications will be sent via the app in case of an emergency.



**DNR**  
Indiana Department  
of Natural Resources



IDHS created an [eclipse website](#) to educate local agencies and the public about the eclipse and how to prepare for it. IDHS will be sharing more messaging through social media as the eclipse approaches.

# EXPERIENCE THE WONDER APRIL 8, 2024

TORNADOES  
FLOODING  
EARTHQUAKES  
HOUSE FIRES  
**DISASTERS**  
FOLLOW  
NO SCHEDULE





## OUT IN THE FIELD

### INDIANA FIRE AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY HOSTS THE WINTER FIRE SCHOOL

In February, the Indiana Fire and Public Safety Academy hosted its first Winter Fire School. The school provided free classroom and specialized hands-on training to firefighters across the state.

Despite heavy snow in the forecast, 225 students from 125 fire departments in Indiana gathered to learn new best practices and skills.

Save the date for next year's Winter Fire School: Feb. 1-2, 2025.



## HAZMAT HAPPENINGS

In preparation for the Total Solar Eclipse, the Office of the State Fire Marshal's Hazardous Materials Section and the IDHS State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) are building a map showing all local, county and district agencies and individuals that have Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS/drones). This information will give IDHS an idea of whom to call to provide that service if an incident occurs and drone surveillance is needed.

If you or your agency has UAS capability and can cover your local jurisdiction, email IDHS CBRNE Assistant Section Chief Mike White at [mwhite@dhs.in.gov](mailto:mwhite@dhs.in.gov). Include your name, agency and physical address (agency or personal, not both).

This information will be used for SEOC purposes and will not be shared outside of the IDHS/INDOT/ISP/Civil Air Patrol's aviation coverage plan for the eclipse.

# SHARE THE GOOD

In February, Fountain County EMS was dispatched to a residence near Mellott to help save a newborn baby's life. The baby, at 27 weeks, arrived unexpectedly at home, and the umbilical cord was wrapped around its neck. The Mellott Fire Department and a Crawfordsville Fire Department community paramedic also responded.

When Fountain County EMS got to the scene, the cord was being cut and resuscitation efforts began. The baby was discolored due to oxygen deprivation, and the crew used warming, stimulation and oxygen techniques, but there was little improvement.



Fountain County paramedic Barry Twigg decided to intubate the newborn, which proved successful. Twigg and partner Ashley Stonebraker then transported the child to a Lafayette hospital, followed by a second Fountain County ambulance unit of Wayne Laswell and Aaron Stonebraker transporting the new mother. During transportation, the baby's skin color and warmth began to improve, and some purposeful movements occurred. The baby arrived at the emergency room, and as of early March remained in the NICU, but was expected to be OK.

"From time of call to arrival at the hospital was an hour and eight minutes, which is very good for the rural location of the call and distance to the hospital," said Fountain County EMS Assistant Director Jeff Hutchinson. "We don't handle many pediatric patients in our county, so we are very proud of how our crews and staff handled this call."



Justin Hurd, Barry Twigg, Ashley Stonebraker

## EMS STORIES NEEDED

EMS Week is May 19–25, 2024, and IDHS wants to highlight ways EMS professionals have made a difference over the past year. Now is the time to show your local EMS team or individual some love! [Complete this form](#) to submit your stories to IDHS.





# 50 YEARS AGO: 1974 TORNADO SUPER OUTBREAK

## IDHS MARKS MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY WITH INTERACTIVE STORY MAP

Imagine missing the school bus and calling your mother to come pick you up, hearing her sound uneasy as she mentions tornadoes all over the place, and then hearing silence as the phone line goes out.

What would it feel like to notice a tornado coming toward your house, and before you can get into a safe place, the house blows apart and you become airborne?

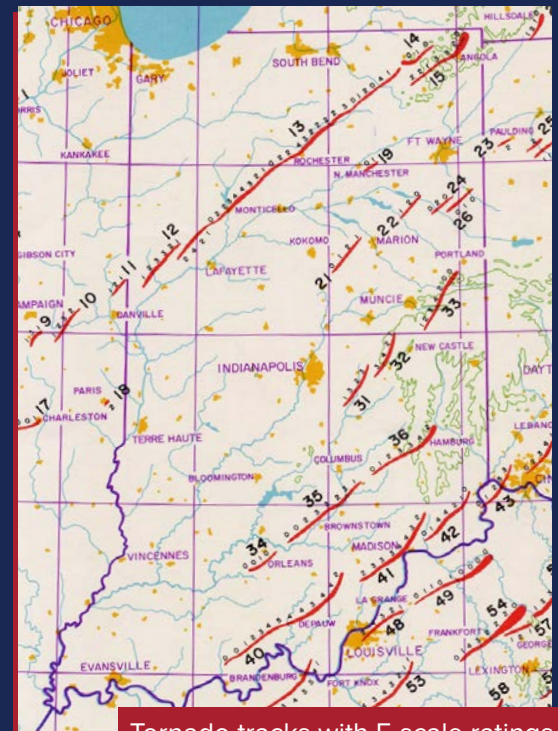
Have you ever held softball-sized hail, been out of school for weeks due to your school being damaged or traveled across the state to help strangers clean up what is left of their homes and neighborhoods?

Many Hoosiers lived [these experiences, and many others](#), during and after the Tornado Super Outbreak of April 3, 1974.

Twenty-one tornadoes touched down in

Indiana. Thousands of properties were damaged or destroyed, hundreds of people were injured and dozens were killed. These powerful storms were part of the largest tornado outbreak of the 20th century, with 148 tornadoes in 13 states in about a one-day period.

Meteorologist Sam Lashley, of National Weather Service Indianapolis, was a young boy growing up in Crawfordsville when the outbreak happened. No tornadoes happened in his area, but his grandparents' home was on Lake Freeman, near where one of the most infamous tornadoes of the day, dubbed the Monticello tornado, occurred. That tornado was on the ground for 109 miles and caused death and destruction



Tornado tracks with F-scale ratings

across northern Indiana. Rated an F4, it severely damaged a railroad bridge over Lake Freeman, near where Lashley's relatives lived.

“We did everything you’re not supposed to do right after a storm — we drove up to check on their house and make sure it was OK,” Lashley said, noting his family and



their house were fine but strongly remembered “seeing a house with nothing left except the foundation and a toilet and bathtub. That image was engrained into my mind.”

The experience of the storm sparked Lashley’s interest in weather, and he credits it as the reason he got into meteorology. The outbreak affected not only his career path, but also the trajectory of the NWS itself.

“The current weather spotter system, tornado drills, outdoor sirens and more all came about or increased when the NWS realized more reporting and alerting was needed,” Lashley said.

Weather radios and the transmitter system that broadcasts their signals were promoted and enhanced, and the National Warning System (NAWAS) phone line system was expanded to



Destroyed Lincoln School in Monticello after tornado

improve emergency communication between NWS and public safety officials. Serious discussions ensued, focused on creating a more advanced weather radar network, which was implemented in the following years.

The 1974 Super Outbreak was the largest outbreak nationwide until 2011, when about 200 tornadoes occurred in one day and more than

300 occurred in a three-day period. Still, even that outbreak did not have as many violent tornadoes as did the 1974 event, Lashley said.

The 1974 outbreak remains the only time Indiana has seen F5-scale damage, at least since 1950 when modern methods of tracking began.

## STORIES OF '74: REMEMBERING THE SUPER OUTBREAK IN INDIANA



IDHS created an interactive story map to show Hoosiers in a visual way what the state experienced 50 years ago. Explore memories and stories by selecting points across the state, see photos and videos of tornadoes and the damage they left behind, learn the weather conditions that created the outbreak and more.

Go to <https://on.in.gov/1974-tornado-super-outbreak> to experience the story.

F5 Saylor Park tornado originated in Ohio County, Ind., before crossing into Kentucky and Ohio



“These outbreaks produce large numbers of tornadoes over a large area,” Lashley said. “While they don’t happen very often, when they do, they are widespread and fatalities are higher.”

DeNae Deckman is an emergency management specialist for

the Metropolitan Emergency Services Agency (Indianapolis). Her father, Mick Deckman, a police officer with the Parker City Police Department at the time, witnessed the F4 tornado that went through four east-central Indiana counties and destroyed Monroe Central Junior-Senior

High School. He had a camera and snapped a few now-famous photos of the twister. One of his images from the event helped prove Dr. Fujita’s multiple vortices theory.

Dr. Ted Fujita was a University of Chicago professor who contributed greatly to the science and understanding of tornadoes. At the time, he encountered resistance to the concept that some tornadoes have multiple suction vortices that enhance top wind speeds. [Deckman’s photos](#), along with other video and photo evidence from the 1974 outbreak, confirmed the theory was correct.

The NWS Indianapolis office will be giving a virtual presentation about the outbreak in the days leading up to the April anniversary. Keep an eye out for registration on the [NWS website](#).

Learn more about the outbreak and other 50th anniversary commemorations at <https://on.in.gov/1974-tornado-super-outbreak>.

## TRAIN TO BECOME A STORM SPOTTER

The National Weather Service (NWS) trains interested members of the public how to recognize different types of weather conditions and how to report them to meteorologists. Storm spotter reports help weather and public safety officials understand

“ground truth” weather conditions and make quicker, more informed warnings.

Look up your local NWS office and find storm spotter trainings near you on [getprepared.in.gov](http://getprepared.in.gov).



# BILLS AFFECTING IDHS STAKEHOLDERS



## SEA 190

### State Disaster Relief Fund

This bill makes changes to the permissible uses for the state disaster relief fund. It changes the requirements for an eligible entity to receive financial assistance from the fund and the calculations used to determine the amount of financial assistance an eligible entity may receive from the fund. The bill increases the maximum award for individual assistance from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

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## SEA 234

### Disaster Emergency

This bill changes how long a disaster emergency declared by the governor may last.

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## SEA 23

### Damage to a Penal Facility

This bill provides that a person who recklessly, knowingly or intentionally damages a component of an automatic building fire suppression system located in a penal facility commits criminal mischief, a Level 6 felony.

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## HEA 1302

### Emergency Medical Services

This bill requires county executives to provide IDHS information relating to each emergency medical services provider in the county no later than July 15, 2024. IDHS, in consultation with the Indiana EMS Commission, will prepare and submit a report to the general assembly by Aug. 15, 2024, to assist the legislature in improving EMS access throughout Indiana.

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## HEA 1027

### Fire Department Work Schedule

This bill allows a fire department to deviate from required maximum work hours for members of the fire department only if authorized by a collective bargaining agreement, memorandum of understanding or other similar written mutual agreement with an exclusive recognized representative of fire department employees.

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## HEA 1142

### Hoosier First Responder Medal of Honor

This bill establishes the Hoosier First Responder Medal of Honor and establishes requirements to nominate someone for the medal.

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## HEA 1385

### Emergency Medical Services

This bill makes changes regarding health plan operator payments to nonparticipating ambulance service providers. The bill establishes the Community Cares Initiative Grant Pilot to provide grants for mobile integrated health care programs and mobile crisis teams in Indiana. The program will be administered by the Family and Social Services Agency (FSSA).

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# FEMA

## FEMA'S BOLD NEW REFORMS PRIORITIZE SURVIVOR RECOVERY

Article submitted by FEMA Region 5 Regional Administrator Tom Sivak

FEMA and the Biden-Harris Administration are on the verge of making the most significant updates to survivor assistance in the last 20 years to reach more individuals and deliver disaster assistance faster.

The federal agency is calling 2024 [FEMA's Year of Resilience](#). These new updates will serve as a starting point for individuals and families to have more flexibility and access to programs. From quickly providing assistance to people who become displaced to simplifying the application process, FEMA is empowering survivors and their communities so they can rebuild their lives faster after a disaster.

With the increase of extreme weather events fueled by climate change, FEMA is excited to share how these changes could benefit Hoosiers affected by disasters, speeding up their recovery and helping to build resilience to future hazards.

### IA Program Update Details

FEMA's new benefits will:

- Establish Serious Needs Assistance: This new cash relief program will provide \$750 for

households with serious needs to help cover immediate expenses related to sheltering, evacuation and meeting basic household needs.

- Establish Displacement Assistance: This new benefit will provide eligible survivors with up-front funds to assist with immediate housing options until they can secure a rental option to focus on their long-term recovery.
- Remove Loan Application Requirements: FEMA is removing the requirement that survivors apply for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loan before being considered for certain types of financial assistance.
- Help Underinsured Survivors: FEMA is streamlining insurance-related rules to help survivors who do not receive enough assistance from their insurance company to cover their rebuilding costs.
- Simplify Assistance for Entrepreneurs: As a part of the new regulations, FEMA may now provide self-employed survivors with some initial financial support to replace disaster-damaged tools and

equipment, or other items required for a specific trade or profession.

- **Expand Habitability Criteria:** FEMA is simplifying its definition of “habitability” to broaden eligibility to include repairs to homes with pre-existing conditions. It also expands eligible hazard mitigation measures to include the prevention of future damage to any disaster-damaged part of the residence. Lastly, it confirms in regulation FEMA’s enhanced flexibility on documentation to prove a residence is owner-occupied.
- **Make Accessibility Improvements:** Survivors with disabilities can now use FEMA funding to make certain accessibility improvements to homes damaged by a declared disaster.
- **Remove Barriers for Late Applicants:** Those requesting approval for a late application no longer must provide documentation supporting the reason for their late application.
- **Streamline Temporary Housing Assistance Applications:** FEMA is reducing documentation requirements for applicants seeking continued temporary housing assistance.
- **Simplify the Process for Appeals:** Survivors who wish to appeal FEMA’s decisions on their eligibility will no longer need to provide a signed, written appeal letter to accompany the supporting documentation.

FEMA expects these changes to take effect for new disasters declared on or after March 22, 2024. In addition to these planned updates, FEMA has already made the [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster-assistance) and [Transitional Sheltering Assistance](https://www.fema.gov/sheltering-assistance) websites more accessible and easier to navigate for survivors.

To learn even more about how FEMA is helping establish a solid foundation of resilience to better position individuals as they face increasingly complex disasters, visit [FEMA’s website](https://www.fema.gov).

## INDIANA WEATHER KEEPS HOOSIERS GUESSING

When thunder roars, go indoors. Turn around, don’t drown. Hoosiers can recite those mnemonics anytime they hear a storm approaching.

Severe Weather Preparedness Week (March 10-15) encouraged Hoosiers to listen to those rhymes and take additional action based on the storm system. Indiana weather can be unpredictable, especially during the months of February, March and April. Even at night, people need to be prepared.

Already this year, Indiana experienced severe weather happening overnight when people were sleeping. In 2023, tornadoes hit Sullivan, Monroe and Johnson counties in the evening, leaving a large path of damage behind.

“As severe weather season ramps up, the likelihood of nighttime tornadoes also increases. Test your NOAA weather radio and make sure it’s tuned to your local station,” said IDHS Natural Hazards Planning Manager Allison Curry. “Be prepared for severe weather. If you know storms are coming, most importantly, have your cell phone turned on, charged and make sure Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) are enabled.”

IDHS collaborated with the National Weather Service (NWS) during Severe Weather Preparedness Week to remind and educate Hoosiers about seasonal severe weather threats and how to prepare for them.



**SEVERE  
WEATHER  
PREPAREDNESS  
WEEK**



## OUT IN THE FIELD

# IDHS AND PARTNERS RESPOND TO MARCH TORNADOES

Hoosiers are focused on recovery after a series of severe storms crossed the state on March 14. The National Weather Service confirmed three tornadoes hit parts of four Indiana counties:

- EF1: Adams County
- EF2: Jefferson County
- EF3: Delaware, Randolph counties

First responders including county emergency management agencies, firefighters and EMS personnel, police officers, the Indiana State Police, Indiana Task Force One and Incident Management Teams were on the scene in the minutes, hours and days after the storms, helping survivors.

In Indianapolis, IDHS activated the State Emergency Operations Center to Level III, which brought in additional state agency partners to help the local communities in the initial response stage. Thirty-eight Hoosiers were injured, but there were no fatalities.



Photo Credit: Delaware County Emergency Management Agency



# MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE MARSHAL

As State Fire Marshal, I get to see examples of heroics, selflessness and community pride from time to time. Even during the darkest hour, these traits blossom like springtime in the public safety world, and this was especially true on March 14 when an EF3 tornado tore through Winchester and areas nearby.

Hearing reports of possible entrapment and serious damage, I headed that way as soon as the storm rolled through at about 8 p.m. When I arrived, it was utter destruction and chaos, as many buildings had collapsed, and crews searched frantically to determine the extent of the injuries. It was a scary time for those areas in Randolph and Delaware counties as reports began to emerge about a mass casualty event. Thankfully, these early reports were inaccurate, and nobody died from this swift-moving storm. Nearly 38 people were injured, some critically.

It's odd arriving in a community that is completely blackened out due to the loss of power in the area. The glaring lights of the emergency vehicles were enough, however, to see the extent of damage in Winchester. More than 50 buildings were destroyed, both homes and businesses. Some were completely flattened, making initial searches by local public safety officials and Task Force One teams incredibly difficult.

Each disaster response is different, but you can expect some things to always appear. The media always will show up to report on the event and inform the public how it can help. Stories of survival are shared with first responders: a woman who held on for life in her bathtub, a church that held five parishioners during the storm, a mayor who took shelter in his home with family before running to rescue his community once the storm passed. Pets were saved to the delight of their owners. Treasured belongings found among the rubble provided some glimmers of hope.

The State Emergency Operations Center began coordinating a statewide response quickly. In the first 24 hours, crews worked to safely remove a host of power lines and poles. Many roads were impassible until a day later and are slowly becoming clear again. Volunteers from across the state, some even from other states, have rallied around Winchester during the cleanup. Church members and their flocks are picking up the pieces and praying together again. Local food providers are feeding public safety personnel and impacted residents in the area.

At the end of a major storm like this, we look for the good in people. We look for some sense of reason as to why it happened. Mostly, we rely on the strength of the community to move forward and recover.



Stephen Jones  
Indiana State Fire Marshal



# UPCOMING TRAININGS

## MARCH

<b>MAR 27-28</b>	MGT315 - Critical Asset Risk Management	<b>PLAINFIELD</b>
<b>MAR 28-29</b>	ICS400 - Advanced ICS Command & General Staff	<b>SEYMOUR</b>

## APRIL

<b>APR 3</b>	AWR136 - Essentials of Community Cyber Security	<b>PLAINFIELD</b>
<b>APR 8-13</b>	EMR0174 - EMS Emergency Medical Responder	<b>CRAWFORDSVILLE</b>
<b>APR 12</b>	K9200 - Basic Air Scenting Techniques for K-9s	<b>BRAZIL</b>
<b>APR 13</b>	K9300 - Intermediate Air Scenting Tech for K-9s	<b>BRAZIL</b>

## MAY

<b>MAY 2-18</b>	EMT0377 - Emergency Medical Technician	<b>CRAWFORDSVILLE</b>
<b>MAY 4-5</b>	K9410 - Advanced Land Cadaver Search Tech for K-9s	<b>BRAZIL</b>
<b>MAY 8-9</b>	MGT384 - Community Preparedness for Cyber Incidents	<b>PLAINFIELD</b>



## FEMA'S IT'S NOT LUCK! CAMPAIGN MARCH

FEMA's "It's Not Luck!" campaign emphasizes the importance of preparedness and safety. By urging individuals not to rely on luck when it comes to disaster preparedness, the campaign encourages proactive measures such as creating emergency plans, assembling disaster kits and staying informed about potential hazards. Learn more about the "It's Not Luck!" campaign on [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).



## NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH APRIL

National Donate Life Month is dedicated to raising awareness about organ, eye and tissue donation and encouraging individuals to register as donors.

## LOW-HEAD DAM AWARENESS MONTH APRIL

Low-Head Dam Awareness Month aims to educate the public about the dangers associated with [low-head dams](#), which can create hazardous conditions for boaters, swimmers and other water enthusiasts. These structures, often underestimated for their potential dangers, can create powerful hydraulic currents that pose significant risks, including drowning. Awareness campaigns highlight the importance of understanding and respecting the dangers posed by low-head dams to promote water safety.



## NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK APRIL 7-13

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week honors the vital contributions of 911 dispatchers and call-takers who serve as the first point of contact during emergencies. These dedicated professionals play a crucial role in public safety by quickly and efficiently dispatching emergency services, providing lifesaving instruction and calming callers in distress.

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



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