Marshall County Emergency Management Agency

November 2026 Newsletter

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Welcome to the Marshall County EMA Newsletter

Monthly updates on everything that happened in the Marshall County Emergency Management world, locally and nationally, in the past month, along with upcoming events!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 4-5 – ICS 400 Advanced (Polk Co)
Nov. 17-18 – Tornado Hazards: Science and Preparedness
Nov. 18 – 911 PSAP Leadership Training (Polk Co)
Nov. 19-20 – Flooding Hazards: Science and Preparedness
Dec. 16 – Emergency Operations Center Interface (Marshall Co)

PLAN UPDATES

EMA plans for 2027 are nearing completion. ESFs and RSF's that will be reviewed/updated:

- ESF6 – Mass Care (complete)
- ESF8 – Public Health (complete)
- ESF10 – Hazardous Materials (reviewing)
- RSF – Health and Social Services (complete)
- RSF- Housing (complete)

ADDITIONAL PLAN UPDATES

- Family Assistance Center Plan
- CERT Shelter Operation Plan

PROJECTS

- Alert Iowa
- Salamander
- Grants
- City EOPs
- Peer Support for First Responders
- Warming/Cooling Shelter Update
- Local Healthcare Coalition
- EMS Annual Grant
- Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
- Responder Training
- Updates of Recovery & Emergency Support Functions

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

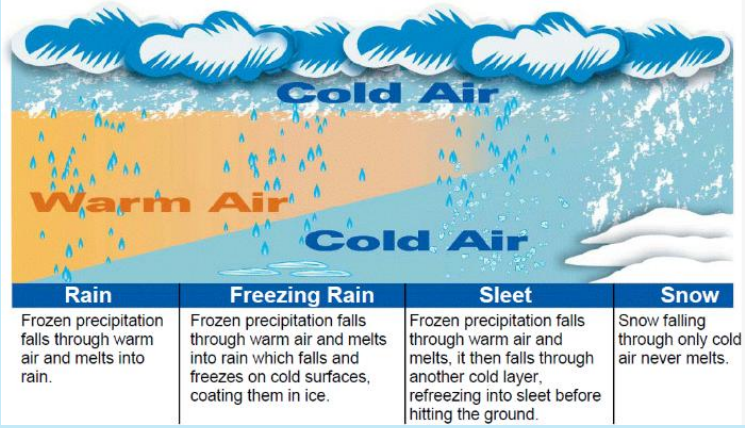
Surviving Extreme Weather: The Complete Climate Change Preparedness Manual by Mykel Hawke & Jim N.R. Dale

GOALS FOR 2026

- Community engagement/relations
- Improvement of Marshall Co. EMA standards Countywide
- Full implementation of Alert Iowa & Salamander systems countywide
- Training Opportunties for Marshall County first responders and local officials
- Outdoor Warnings Sirens upgrades

Winter Weather Awareness Day: November 5th

Winter weather is upon us in Iowa. Winter weather can shift from a light dusting of snow to a massive blizzard in moments. Winter weather increases roadway hazards. Always remember, do not travel unless you absolutely have to. For more information, see Winter Weather Safety



NOTES FROM THE COORDINATOR'S DESK

November…wow how this year has flown by. Preparing for winter is inevitable. Even with the strong El Nino, Iowa is bound to have winter weather including snow, cold, and possible ice. It is very important to start the process of planning for a change of seasons sooner than later.

If you haven't already, make sure to change the batteries in your smoke detectors and your weather radio. It is good practice to do this when the clocks change in fall and spring.

Only use UE rated space heaters and don't plug them in to drop cords. Keep all heaters away from flammable items, including bedding and curtains. Most of the newer heaters have tip over turn off protection. Be familiar with the ones you are using. Turn them off when you are not in the room or at home. Safety is key to saving lives and property from fires cause by faulty or unattended heating sources. Never use your cooking stoves to heat your home. This is not a safe practice and may result in fire or Carbon monoxide poisoning. Candles are also not a safe source of heat.

If you have a vehicle emergency kit, now is the time to get it updated with new items. Take out items that may have expired. Change out bottled water and food sources and include some high calorie food such as granola bars that can be eaten to provide the body energy (heat) if you are stranded in the cold weather in the vehicle. Update any batteries in flashlights. Remember to add a phone charger to your kit if you do not have one already. Staying in contact with emergency services in the event of a snow storm or if the vehicle is stuck is important. The Red Cross has some great lists of items to keep in the vehicle emergency kit and we share many links on our website, also.

Everyone can get involved in preparing and planning for emergencies. It does not have to be scary; it can be fun. Add items to emergency kits that are useful and a few things that are fun, such as crayons and a coloring book for young children. These types of items help pass the time during stressful situations.

Terms to know for winter weather:

Snow Squall: intense, but limited duration, periods of moderate to heavy snowfall, accompanied by gusty surface winds resulting in reduced visibilities and whiteout conditions. Rapidly falling temperatures in conjunction with the snow can cause dangerous impacts to surface transportation.

Blizzard: *Blowing and/or falling snow* with *winds of at least 35 mph*, reducing visibilities to a *quarter of a mile* or less for at least three hours. Winds lofting the current snow pack and reducing visibilities without any falling snow is called a ground blizzard.

Freezing Rain: Caused by rain falling on surfaces with a temperature below freezing. The rain freezes upon contact with the ground. Large build-ups of ice can down trees and power lines and coat roads.

Sleet: Rain/melted snow that has begun refreezing when it reaches the ground. Sleet tends to be softer than hail and is easily compacted. Sleet can make roads slippery very quickly.

Wind Chill: The *apparent temperature* the body feels when wind is factored into the equation.

Whatever El Nino brings us, be prepared, be safe, and have a happy November. We'll see you back here next month.

Kimberly Elder, EM Coordinator

