



Northwest Central  
Joint Emergency Management System  
Annual Report  
2017-2018

# History of the Joint Emergency Management System

The Joint Emergency Management Subscriptions System is a concept that was originally developed by the Villages of Elk Grove, Hoffman Estates and Palatine as a solution for them to increase their inter-operability and to enhance their coordination in the event of a large scale disaster. In the past these communities had developed robust civil defense, emergency services and disaster agencies and had even at one point employed full-time emergency management coordinators but through attrition and changing environments in each of the communities they arrived at the same situation where they were looking to fulfill their emergency management needs in their respective municipalities.

After exploring a variety of intermediaries and potential solutions, the Villages approached the Northwest Central Dispatch System to potentially be the host for this program. The dispatch center already functioned as a shared services entity for each of the communities and was able to draft a supplemental agreement which would govern the new Joint Emergency Management venture.

As the program started to take shape, many of the other communities that were part of the dispatching shared services decided that their communities could also benefit from a coordinated emergency management effort. In total 10 of the 11 primary communities that the dispatch agreement served signed on to the Joint Emergency Management System in the Fall of 2015.

The program continues to grow and is constantly looking to increase its participation with our community groups and member agencies to increase resilience, prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate disasters.



# Message from Joint Emergency Management System Board Chairman Reid Ottesen

Vision. Vision is defined as the act or power of imagination. In 2015, several local communities had a vision that things could be done differently and better. There could be increased preparedness, pooled resources, strengthened emergency response and greater efficiencies. Three years later, the 10 visionary communities that joined forces are reaping the benefits of a vision that has become a reality through Northwest Central Joint Emergency Management System (JEMS).

The ten communities (Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove Village, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Mount Prospect, Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg and Streamwood) collectively serve a population of nearly 475,000. This is a larger population than all but five counties in the State. The residents, businesses and visitors of these communities are safer and better protected than ever before.

This past year marked the second year of functioning as an organization. It was a monumental year for JEMS. All of our communities now have updated Emergency Operation Plans and have either developed or updated their Continuity of Operation Plans. Not only are these updated and completed, they are all now in a similar format for ease of interoperability. This step was essential in building a foundation for all to move forward.

Additionally, JEMS conducts exercises on a regular basis to test systems and improve response. In 2016 and 2017, JEMS conducted or participated in 26 exercises throughout the 10 communities. These exercises included more than 400 participants. The training and preparedness efforts of JEMS goes beyond the 10 communities. JEMS staff has actively participated in drills and exercises with local medical facilities and many businesses in our communities. JEMS appreciates that preparedness is essential if a disaster were to occur.

All 10 communities are far stronger and more prepared through the efforts of JEMS and the Emergency Management Coordinator Mick Fleming and Analyst Doug Hoyt. Those towns that came into JEMS with strong programs have become stronger. Those that had almost no program now have robust systems and policies in place. Most importantly, we close the past year and enter the new year united as a team and prepared to take on whatever comes our way.

## JEMS Mission/Vision

To work collectively with our member agencies through organized planning, training, exercise and evaluation efforts to ensure that all of our communities are able to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from all hazards, as well as provide regional assistance in a standardized manner.

## The JEMS Staff



Mick Fleming is the Joint Emergency Management Coordinator. He has been in this position since the inception of the program in 2016. He holds a Master of Science degree in Emergency Management from Oklahoma State University, and a Bachelor of Science from Western Illinois University. He also serves as the Secretary for the Illinois Emergency Services Management Association, as well as on the Emergency Management Assistance Team, which deploys statewide as needed to assist other agencies in large-scale incidents. He is a Certified Emergency Manager by the International Association of Emergency Managers and an Illinois Professional Emergency Manager.

Doug Hoyt is the Joint Emergency Management Analyst, a part-time position he has held since 2017. He is a full-time Battalion Chief with the Palatine Fire Department, where he has been employed since 1988. He is also a Plans Manager with the Illinois Urban Search and Rescue Task Force (IL-TF1), and the Chief Liaison for the MABAS Division 1 Water Rescue Team. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Beloit College, and is certified through the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal as a Chief Fire Officer and a Training Program Manager.



From January through April of 2018, we hosted Brandon Buchanan, an Emergency Management Intern from Western Illinois University. This internship is designed to provide field work experience in an emergency management program under the supervision of a qualified preceptor. During his time with JEMS, Brandon was able to attend and participate in various planning meetings, exercises and training sessions and begin to build a network of professional contacts that will benefit him as he enters a career in Emergency Management.

# Preparedness

In Emergency Management we spend most of our time on preparedness activities to bolster our skills and organizations so that we are better off in the event of a major emergency or disaster . Preparedness includes planning, training, exercises and other preparations made to save lives and facilitate response and recovery operations.

In the past year, we have continued our focus on enhancing each of the municipalities' basic plans with additional annexes including incorporating the existing EOC and EOP structure in the 15 Emergency Support Function (ESF) format. We continue to make progress on developing Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), which are the guidebook for how each department would shift responsibilities and maintain critical functions in the event of an interruption to local government services.

We also had the opportunity this spring to participate in the development of a new dam emergency plan that was being written for Elk Grove Village by an engineering contractor. This plan was a collaboration between neighboring Fire and Police Departments as well as DuPage and Cook County Emergency Management Agencies. The plan meets the state requirement for emergency plans for dams.



Each year we conduct an annual training and exercise planning workshop (TEPW). The TEPW is a best practice which aims to assist a jurisdiction in evaluating their training and exercise goals for the long term. Regional participation allows us as partners to become more involved with each other's exercises, minimize duplication of effort and leverage larger exercises for mutual benefit. This year we anticipate participation from almost all of our JEMS members. This years TEPW is uniquely important in that we will be revising the NIMS training requirement for our municipal staff based on the changes to the National Incident Management System which took effect 2017.



# Preparedness

## Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)

A municipality's primary preparedness document is their Emergency Operations Plan, or EOP. This plan provides guidance on how the community prepares for, responds to and recovers from a major incident or disaster. The Emergency Support Functions, hazard specific, and functional annexes supplement the EOP by providing details on how specific systems interact with the overall emergency. The JEMS program continues to work with all of our member communities to revise their plans into a more standardized format to enhance our ability to cooperate and share resources during an emergency.



## Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans

Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101

Version 2.0

November 2010



FEMA

## Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)



Another very important document is a community's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). This plan outlines how a community, or one or more of its municipal departments, will continue to function in the event of some type of disruption in its normal operations. This could be anything from a catastrophic disaster that affects the entire community to a fire in one facility or an illness that affects a large number of staff. The federal continuity guidance breaks continuity planning into 4 major categories: Essential functions, staff, communications / technology, and facilities. Based on this premise we developed 6 worksheets to help municipal departments define their essential elements for

larger multi-department plans. Currently, nine of our ten member communities have updated their plans, and we anticipate all will be complete in the first half of 2019.

# Preparedness

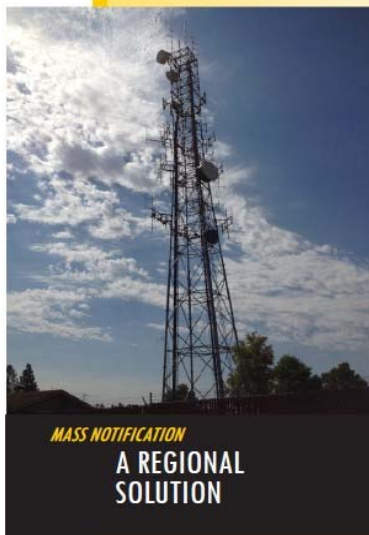
## Regional Mass Notification Plan

Through Northwest Central Dispatch, JEMS member communities have access to the Everbridge Mass Notification System. In order to ensure consistency throughout the service area, in January, 2018 we drafted a Regional Mass Notification Plan. This plan identifies the various portals available in the system, the sources of the data included in the system (including 911 data and opt-in data), and authorized users and the various rights the different account levels have. The document specifies when the “Reverse 911” capabilities of the system can be used (incorporating the 911 data as well as opt-in data; used in situations where life and safety are at risk), and when the opt-in only data is used, such as in cases where general informational messages are sent to residents.



## Citizen Alert

[www.Citizen-Alert.org](http://www.Citizen-Alert.org)



The Everbridge Mass Notification System (Citizen Alert) continues to be an invaluable asset to our community preparedness campaign. Through our partnerships within the community we have developed a trust to accurately provide information in times of need. Again this year through JEMS we were able to provide educational presentations at several community events, as well as providing training on the system and its capabilities.

Our partners have continued to grow and adopt the platform as well, with initial use heavily being used for "call-backs." The system now acts as a mechanism to page EOC teams and other crisis groups.

# Citizen-Alert



# Preparedness

## Hazardous Weather Plan

The Hazardous Weather Plan is an example of a hazard-specific annex included in an Emergency Operations Plan. This annex was first included in Rolling Meadows' 2017 EOP update,



and provides guidance for a community's preparation for and response to severe weather. Coupled with appropriate training and warning capability, this plan helped allow Rolling Meadows to achieve a Storm Ready Community designation from the National Weather Service. As our communities update their EOPs, this annex will also be included in those documents.



# Preparedness

## Training

Training provides responders with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform key tasks required during an emergency response of any type. Training decisions are based on information derived from the assessments, strategies and plans developed as a result of our annual training and exercise workshop. Over the past year, we delivered training to over 450 individuals over many trainings. Some of the topics included:



- Introduction to EOC
- EOC Position Specific: Operations Section
- EOC Position Specific: Planning and Intelligence Section
- EOC Position Specific: Logistics Section
- EOC Position Specific: Finance Section
- EOC Position Specific: Management Section
- Everbridge Workshop
- National Weather Service: Weather Spotter
- Cost Recovery Workshop
- Introduction to Point of Dispensing
- Mass Care and Shelter Management

## Volunteer Coordinators Workshop

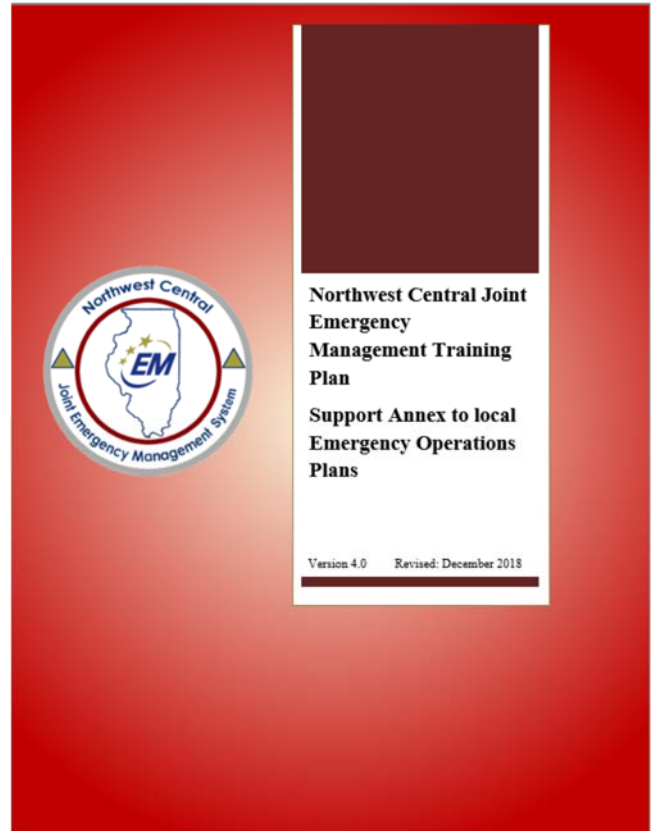
Many of our communities have active Emergency Management volunteer groups, and each of those communities have a Coordinator who ensures that their volunteer personnel are properly trained, credentialed and otherwise prepared to serve their community. In various discussions and meetings, these coordinators (most of whom serve as Liaisons to the JEMS program) noticed that they have similar challenges in working with the volunteers, including training, insurance, and so on. In order to determine regional best practices and learn from each other, the JEMS program hosted a Volunteer Coordinators Workshop specifically to identify those common issues and concerns, discuss how the various municipalities are dealing with them, and to brainstorm creative, cooperative solutions to those challenges. The workshop also identified potential opportunities for joint training and response, and looked at how to predict and overcome logistical and legal challenges that might crop up in the process.



# Preparedness

## Training and Exercise Plan

To help ensure consistent training of personnel from all JEMS communities that meets the requirements of the federal National Incident Management System (NIMS), JEMS staff have developed a Joint Emergency Management Training Plan. This plan was updated significantly in 2018 to reflect the latest edition of NIMS, which was released in late 2017. This plan also serves as a Support Annex to each of the local Emergency Operations Plans to detail how each community will train its personnel. In addition to specifying training required for personnel who fill the various command, coordination and support roles, this document also contains a multi-year training and exercise calendar that is developed and updated annually at the Training and Exercise Planning Workshop.



## Exercises

Throughout the service area of JEMS, emergency management professionals attend and conduct exercises on a regular basis to test systems and improve response. Although we work to develop exercises for each municipality we also play a role in exercises that take place in our communities. Highlights of exercises in the past year include:



- Arlington Heights Winter Weather (Wx) Tabletop Exercise (TTX) - December 2017
- Alexian Brothers Medical Center Evacuation TTX – January 2018
- Buffalo Grove EOC Seminar – January 2018
- Palatine Functional Exercise – January 2018
- Hoffman Estates Severe Wx TTX – January 2018
- Rolling Meadows EOC Seminar – February 2018
- Elk Grove Village Severe Wx TTX – February 2018
- National Weather Service Event Weather Watcher TTX – February 2018
- Rescue Task Force Functional Exercise – March 2018
- IESMA Functional Exercise – April 2018
- Rolling Meadows Severe Wx TTX – June 2018
- Schaumburg Severe Wx Functional Exercise – July 2018
- Earth Ex TTX – August 2018

## Rolling Summary Report

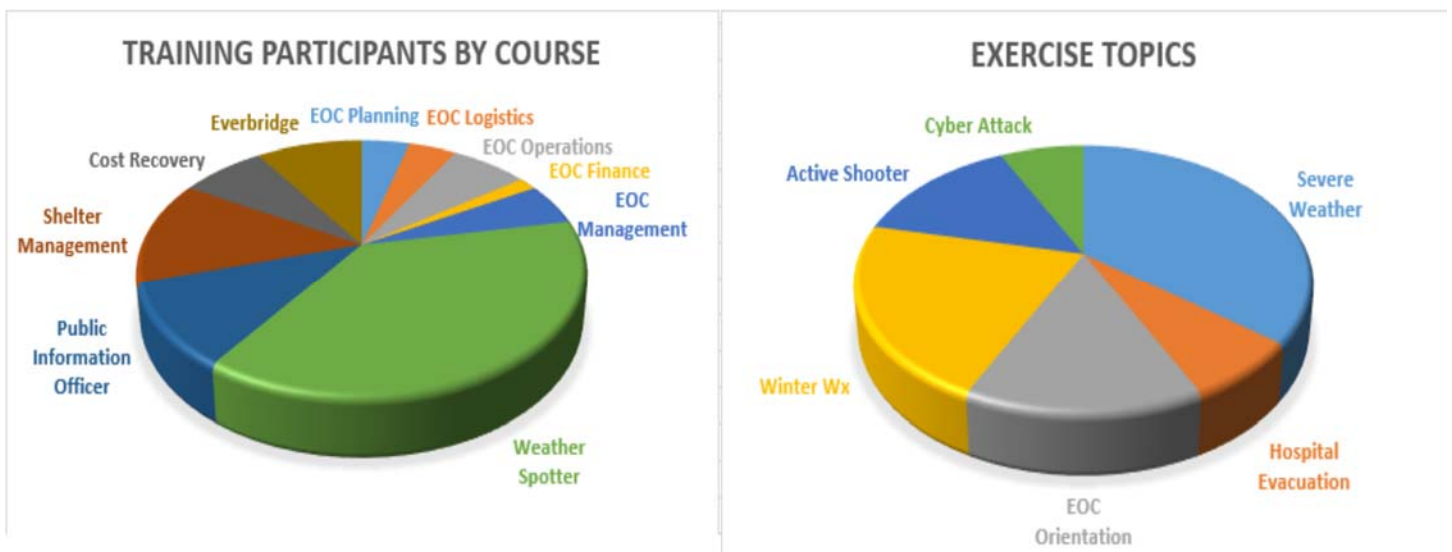
In order to track progress toward meeting the objectives identified in the Training and Exercise Plan, in 2018 we implemented a Rolling Summary Report. The purpose of the Rolling Summary Report (RSR) is to provide stakeholders with a periodic analysis of exercises identified in the Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan. The RSR is designed to:

- Inform elected and appointed officials on the progress of exercise programs;
- Provide data to support preparedness assessments and reporting requirements; and
- Enable exercise planners to modify objectives and the exercise schedule to reflect knowledge gathered from exercises process, allowing organizations to address known shortfalls prior to exercising capabilities.

# Preparedness

## Training and Exercise Review

We continue to look at the trainings and exercises that we offer and how they benefit the communities that we serve. Following each training and exercise we hold an after action meeting which produces an after action report and improvement plan. The report is a consolidation of notes from both the participants and the instructors and/or evaluators. The comments provided assist us in making our trainings more interactive and immersive as we progress. We hope to continue to use our exercise and training metrics to guide our future training and exercise development.



## Public Education

Public education is a major component of emergency management. During the 2018 preparedness month (September), we coordinated with all of our municipalities to distribute preparedness information on how to be a better prepared individual. Our campaign lasted for the entire month with each week focusing on different topics. Each municipality leveraged their own social media and traditional media accounts to spread the word. Additionally we assisted in the promotion of the nation wide test of the wireless emergency alerts (WEA) system

In an effort to increase the number of users on our collective mass notification system (Everbridge), we attended public education events in the Village of Schaumburg and Elk Grove Village where we signed people up for our mass notification system.



# Response

## Activations

Response begins when an incident is imminent or immediately after an event occurs. Response encompasses the activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Emergency Operations Centers activate at one of three levels:

- Level 3— Minimum activation is used in an enhanced readiness/monitoring posture to prepare for and monitor an event. It is normally staffed by the day-to-day staff.
- Level 2— This structure is used when additional staff are necessary from multiple departments to respond to the emergency, disaster or planned event.
- Level 1—Is inclusive of a full activation of all four sections and the management staff with units being filled as needed.

Between 2017-2018, there were three instances in which Emergency Operations Center staff were activated. Below are the activations with the cause of activation and level defined for each.

Incident	Activation Level
February 2018 Winter Storm – Arlington Heights	Level 2
February 2018 Winter Storm – Mount Prospect	Level 3
June 2018 Excessive Heat Warnings - All	Level 3
September 2018 September Fest Severe Weather - Schaumburg	Level 3

## Responses / Deployments / Mutual Aid

On occasion, a large-scale incident will require emergency managers in an affected region to request mutual aid or assistance to help ensure an effective response. This may be in the form of requesting an incident management team or emergency management assistance team, or it could be requesting personnel to help with damage assessments after a severe storm or flood. JEMS personnel provide assistance in these types of situations, with the knowledge that in the future we can rely on assistance from others in the event of a significant incident in our area. JEMS personnel have assisted in the following deployments:

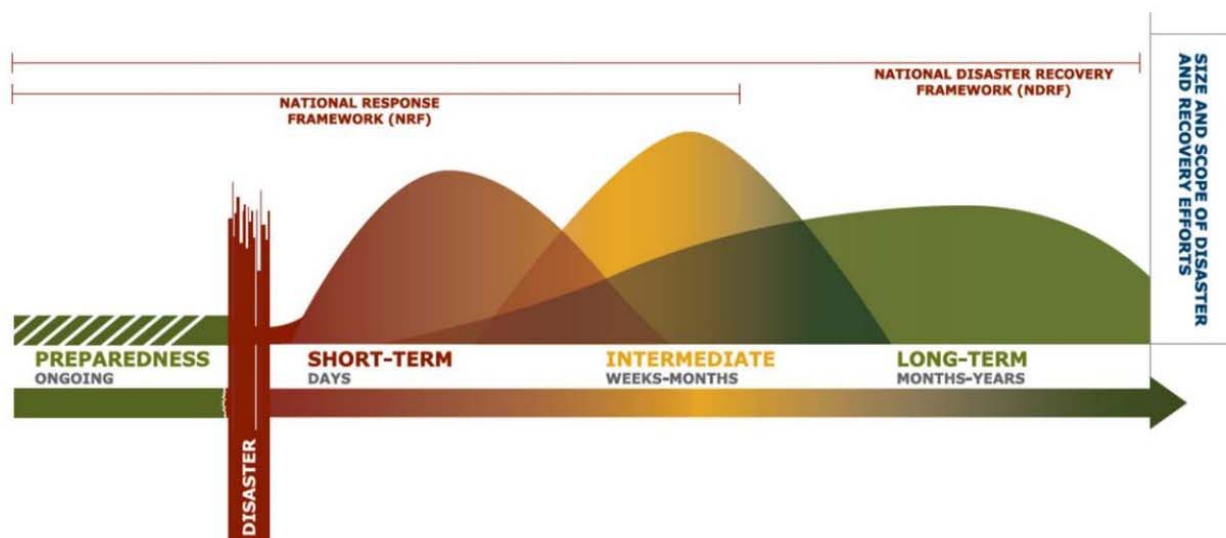
- Lake County, IL for damage assessment following flooding
- Iroquois County, IL (Watseka) for damage assessment following flooding

# Recovery

The goal of recovery is to return the community's systems and activities to normal. Recovery begins right after the emergency. Some recovery activities may be concurrent with response efforts. Long-term recovery includes restoring economic activity and rebuilding community facilities and housing.

While we were experiencing the flooding that took place in July of 2017 the Governor declared a disaster that included Lake and Cook County. The JEMS program offered assistance to each of our impacted municipalities by explaining the documentation that was initially required and how it would be coordinated through to the counties.

Another recovery objective in the 2016-2017 report was to educate finance staff on the major hurdles in the recovery process during the finance section trainings. Included in the finance position training was a brief overview of the federal public assistance process and the types of information that would be required to receive federal disaster aid.



## Recognition

The JEMS program has been recognized for its ability to provide comprehensive, standardized Emergency Management efforts. A highlight of 2018 was the July 31 presentation of the Shared Services Best Practice Award to the JEMS program by Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner and Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti. This award recognizes the “exemplary intergovernmental cooperation” that allows the JEMS program to provide a high level of service delivered at a significant cost savings to residents. Lt. Governor Sanguinetti called the program “a tremendous collaborative effort” and praised its success as “absolutely remarkable.”



JEMS Coordinator Mick Fleming was recognized in April with the “5 Phases Award” from the Illinois Emergency Services Management Association at their annual Training Summit in Springfield, IL. This award is presented annually to “an IESMA member that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in one or more of the 5 phases of Emergency Management.” This award was presented to Mick for advancement in all 5 phases (Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery) within the ten communities served by JEMS.



## Looking Forward

The next year promises to bring additional coordination efforts for all partners. Under the Joint Emergency Management Agreement, partners will be engaged in all five mission areas: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Some projects slated for the year include:

- Hosting an Integrated Emergency Management Course, provided by trainers from the FEMA Emergency Management Institute, which will include participation from all of our member communities as well as supporting agencies.
- Continued development and maintenance of Emergency Operations Plans and Continuity of Operations Plans.
- Development of basic recovery plan elements.
- Analysis of local logistics systems and resource typing for alignment with the NIMS resource management benchmarks.
- Implementation of a regional resource management database using the FEMA Incident Resource Information System (IRIS).
- Review and revision of shelter site agreements.
- Emergency Operations Center Section Specific Training.
- Annual Emergency Operations Center Exercises.
- Increase implementation of EOC paging systems and rosters
- Continuity of Operations Quarterly Training.
- Volunteer Training.

## Stay Prepared

Remember to help all of our emergency management professionals by preparing yourself and your family for an emergency or disaster. You can find information on the various programs

- <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies>
- [www.citizen-alert.org](http://www.citizen-alert.org)
- [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- [www.ready.illinois.gov](http://www.ready.illinois.gov)
- [www.weather.gov/safety/](http://www.weather.gov/safety/)
- <https://www.weather.gov/wrn/>



<http://www.nwcds.org/jems.html>

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