

Northwest Central Joint Emergency Management System

Annual Report

2023-2024

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Mick Fleming
Director

Message from the Director

As we reflect on the past year, our commitment to strengthening the resilience of our municipalities in the face of unexpected challenges remains steadfast. The 2024 annual report showcases our collective efforts to enhance preparedness for disasters and emergencies. This year has introduced new challenges, prompting us to further refine our strategies and partnerships.

Our office has been actively engaged in building capacity within our communities, as evidenced by our support during severe weather events, tornado responses, and numerous large gatherings.

The dedication of our team has been instrumental in developing and implementing the trainings, exercises, and plans that bolster our communities' resilience. Their unwavering commitment to excellence is a key factor in our ongoing success.

This year marked the conclusion of a four-year training cycle, culminating in a full-scale exercise in collaboration with our local hospitals and the MABAS Division 1 Hazardous Materials team. This comprehensive exercise allowed us to effectively test the cross-staffing of two Emergency Operations Centers, involving personnel from all twelve member municipalities. It was a valuable opportunity to assess our ability to mobilize resources across communities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, while also identifying areas for further improvement.

We have made significant strides in planning, training, and exercises, which are detailed in this report. Our collaborative approach continues to deepen the comprehensiveness of our municipalities' emergency plans, allowing us to learn from real-world incidents. The shared service model has proven beneficial, amplifying our successes and enabling us to leverage lessons learned for future endeavors.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain excited about the opportunities that lie before us and the continued growth of our emergency preparedness efforts.

Mick Fleming, CEM

Joint Emergency Management System Director



The JEMS Mission:

Collaborating to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards.

Our Vision:

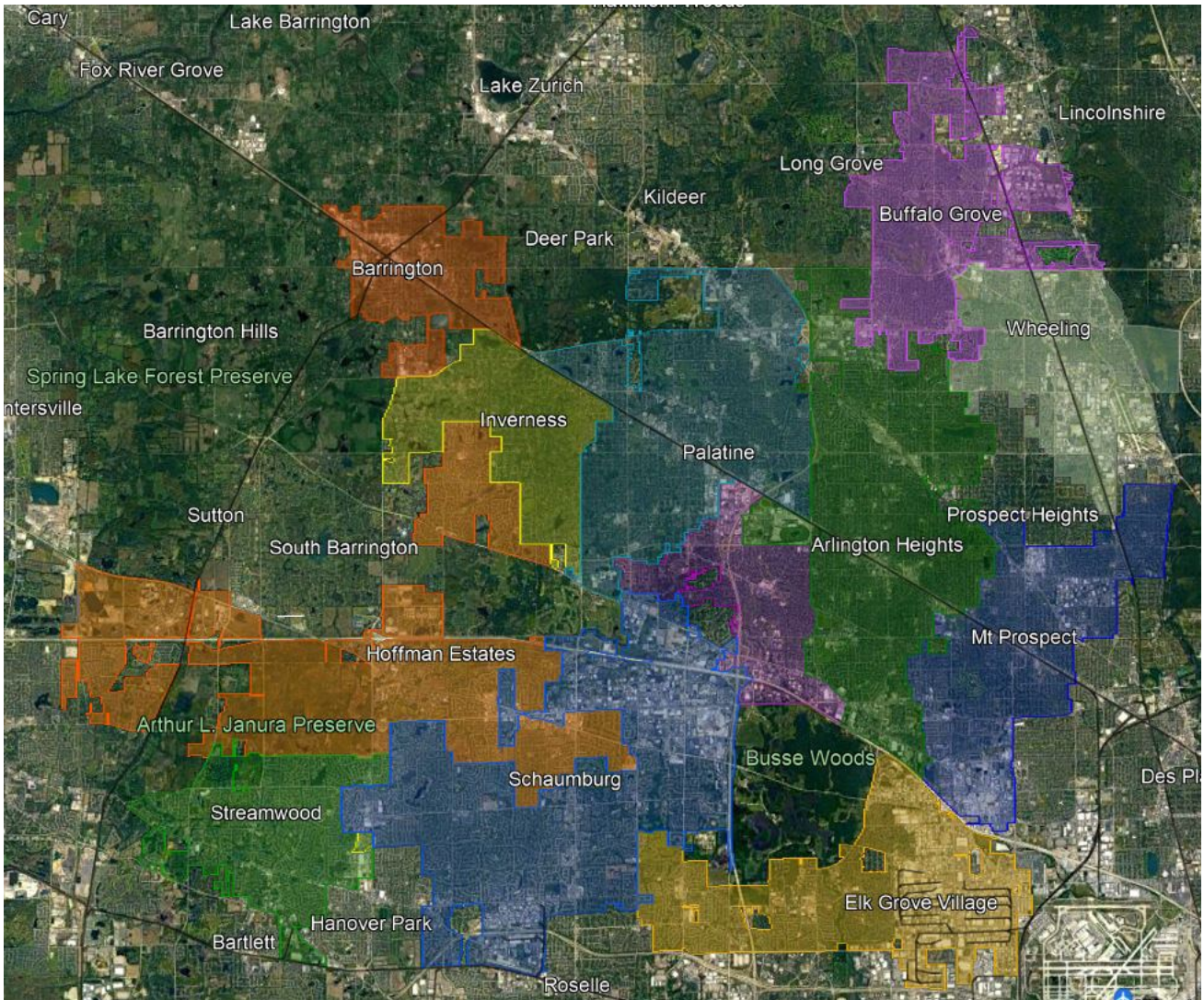
- *Be the trusted source for Emergency Management expertise*
- *Provide efficient Emergency Management oversight and compliance*
- *Be the regional coordination point for Emergency Management*
- *Member communities are resilient and prepared*
- *Be a self-sustaining and resilient organization*

Our Values:

- **Proactive:** *Taking the initiatives to provide excellent service ahead of needs.*
- **Integrated:** *Imbedded within the member communities, while unifying standards across all.*
- **Collaborative:** *Providing synergies to member communities, through cooperation.*
- **Flexible:** *A nimble construct, adaptable to the unique characteristics of its communities.*
- **Innovative:** *Pioneering new Emergency Management skillsets for positive change.*

Member Communities:

- Arlington Heights
- Barrington
- Buffalo Grove
- Elk Grove Village
- Hoffman Estates
- Inverness
- Mount Prospect
- Palatine
- Rolling Meadows
- Schaumburg
- Streamwood
- Wheeling





Governing Board

The Governing Board is made up of the Chief Administrative Officer of each subscriber community. The Chair and Vice-Chairperson are selected annually by a vote of the Governing Board.

- Randall Recklaus
Village of Arlington Heights
- Scott Anderson
Village of Barrington
- Dane Bragg
Village of Buffalo Grove
- Matthew Roan
Elk Grove Village
- Eric Palm
Village of Hoffman Estates
- Sam Trakas
Village of Inverness
- Michael Cassady
Village of Mount Prospect
- Reid Ottesen
Village of Palatine
- Rob Sabo
City of Rolling Meadows
- Brian Townsend
Village of Schaumburg
- Sharon Caddigan - Chairperson
Village of Streamwood
- Jon Sfondilis - Vice Chairperson
Village of Wheeling

Joint Emergency Management System Staff

The Joint Emergency Management System staff is made up of four individuals (3 FTE): the Joint Emergency Management System Director, the Deputy Director, an Emergency Management Analyst, and a Training and Exercise Specialist. All staff operate out of office space at the Northwest Central Dispatch System. Each staff member is assigned projects based on their area of expertise, but projects and assignments often require a team approach to accomplish the goals of the organization. As plans and policy documents are drafted for adoption by the member communities a set of trainings or informational workshops are also developed to accompany them. When incidents in our area of responsibility occur all staff are reorganized to support the communities.

Dan deGrazia was hired as the first JEMS Deputy Director in January, 2024. He comes to us with a significant amount of diverse experience. Most recently, he worked for Lake County (IL) Emergency Management, where he served in a full-time role. He maintains his status as a volunteer with Lake County, and also volunteers with the Buffalo Grove CERT and MRC. He also has experience in private sector Information Technology, and in the military. Dan has completed the FEMA National Basic Emergency Management Academy, and is certified as an Incident Command System instructor.



Dan de Grazia
Deputy Director

Dan has spent his time learning our systems, becoming familiar with the JEMS communities, and helping with various projects. He has provided valuable contributions to our plan update reviews, exercise development and presentation, and ICS training courses, as well as being available to provide back-up for Mick at meetings and around the office. He is also taking over administration of our resource inventory database, and will be coordinating updates to that system.

Joint Emergency Management System Staff



Doug Hoyt
Emergency
Management Analyst

Doug Hoyt is the part-time Emergency Management Analyst at JEMS. Much of his work involves development, review, and revision of the various plans each community maintains. In the past year, Doug played roles in developing our credentialing system for EOC personnel, in laying the groundwork for the JEMS regional Incident Management Assistance Team, and in writing our credentialing plan for both field IMAT personnel and EOC staff. He also successfully completed the Incident Command System and FEMA National Basic Academy instructor trainer courses to help ensure our in-house training conforms to national standards.

Bob Kukla is the JEMS part-time Training and Exercise Specialist. His job includes developing exercises for each of the JEMS communities, documenting training and exercises to ensure that they are conducted in a manner that is compliant with federal and state standards, and scheduling, coordinating, and assisting in the delivery of various training sessions. In 2024, Bob achieved a significant professional milestone in receiving his Certified Emergency Manager designation from the International Association of Emergency Managers, one of less than 2500 people so certified worldwide. Certification requires a comprehensive exam, education and training requirements, experience, and a history of professional contributions.



Bob Kukla, CEM
Training and Exercise
Specialist

IESMA Training Summit



At the 2024 Illinois Emergency Services Management Association (IESMA) Training Summit, an annual event held in Springfield, IL, JEMS Director Mick Fleming was recognized for his leadership in the field of emergency management in the state of Illinois by Alecia Tate-Nadeau, Director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security at the conclusion of his two-year term as President of the organization. He will continue to serve the organization on its Board of Directors in the role of Past President.

The IESMA Summit, held every year in April, is a training opportunity for Emergency Management professionals and for those in related fields on a variety of timely topics, and an opportunity to meet with vendors of various related products and services. JEMS staff attended the event and participated in a number of different training sessions.





Executive Summary

Since 2016, the Joint Emergency Management System has worked in collaboration with the member communities to provide high-level support of their Emergency Management programs. A major accomplishment this year was the addition of a second full-time employee in Deputy Director Dan de Grazia. This move is consistent with our Strategic Plan, and gives us redundancy within the office, as well as expanding our capability to deliver high-quality service to all of our communities. This year also saw the formation of our joint Qualification Review Board and adoption of our credentialing plan for local EOC personnel. We've continued with the regular update and continuing implementation of our 5-year Integrated Preparedness Plan, which we use to plan training, exercises, and future preparedness activities. Our regular planning cycle continued with updating the communities' Continuity of Operations Plans.

Another highlight this year was the full-scale exercise we facilitated for our communities. Personnel from all 12 municipalities combined to fully staff two EOCs in support of a simulated chemical release scenario. In addition to the EOCs, the exercise involved a field component of a response by the MABAS Division 1 Hazardous Materials Team, and coordination with two local hospitals. We remained busy with training this year, partnering with IEMA to provide a number of courses. We again engaged with the Illinois Fire Service Institute to provide the Active Shooter Incident Management and School Safety and Violent Event Incident Management courses. Texas A & M Extension Services presented an EOC Operations and Planning class, and we also partnered with the National Weather Service and provided several sessions of the Severe Weather Spotter class, and we partnered with IEMA-OHS to provide ICS-300 and ICS-400 Incident Command System classes.

Similar to previous years, we saw the need for planning demonstrated in several incidents throughout the year. There were several instances of severe weather, including one that spawned several tornadoes in our area. There was a major fire in a large multi-family residential building resulting in numerous displaced residents and associated recovery activities. The Democratic National Convention was held in Chicago, which also had activities that involved some suburban communities as well, leading to local situation monitoring in a partial EOC.

The past year's activities prepare us to continue moving ahead in the coming year. We look forward to expanding local capabilities with the formation of a combined, all-hazards Incident Management Assistance Team, and to continue to build on our strong foundation of planning, training and exercises.

Planning

In our schedule of plan maintenance, 2024 was the year to update communities' Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs). These plans provide a framework for each community to maintain key operations in the event an emergency occurs affecting government facilities or personnel, making normal operations impossible. These plans had most recently been updated in 2022, and only minimal updates were needed in this round, reflecting changes in personnel, vendors, and so on, along with minor template revisions reflecting lessons learned in real-world events over the past two years. These templates were rolled out to the JEMS communities, and the local Emergency Management coordinators worked within their own municipalities to complete the revisions. These were then sent back to JEMS to maintain and submit as required.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency - Office of Homeland Security is in the midst of revising their administrative rule, which will significantly impact planning requirements for all of our communities. We anticipate this rule change will take effect in 2025 and will impact our planning schedule. We still intend to work on EOP revisions next year, but timing within the year will depend on when the rule is promulgated by the state.

The Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security also made some changes this year, implementing a new, online, cloud-based planning software system. This should streamline the process for the various plans we need to submit to the County. We uploaded our previously adopted EOPs, COOPs, and Recovery Plans into this system to meet county submittal requirements.



Continuity Guidance Circular


February 2018 (2024 update)

FEMA Office of National Continuity Programs




Implementing the National Qualification System

In the past year, we made significant progress in implementing the National Qualification System (NQS) to ensure that personnel working in key positions in EOCs, especially those who could be deployed to other communities, are properly credentialed to fill those roles. JEMS personnel, along with a committee of Emergency Management Coordinators from several communities, created a Position Task Book (PTB) for EOC personnel to document competency in performing basic EOC tasks. A joint Qualification Review Board (QRB) was also approved by the JEMS Board. The QRB will review the completed task books and issue credentials. A Personnel Credentialing Plan was also completed, which provides guidance on how this process will play out. Several communities have already issued PTBs to selected EOC staff, and they have begun the process of completing those books. The Credentialing Plan also details the process for credentialing of IMAT personnel.



Northwest Central
Joint Emergency Management System



NATIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEM (NQS)
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)
POSITION TASK BOOK

Position Title: EOC Generalist 1.0

CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING EOC SKILLSETS:

POSITION TASK BOOK ASSIGNED TO:

TRAINEE'S NAME:
DUTY STATION:
PHONE NUMBER:
E-MAIL:

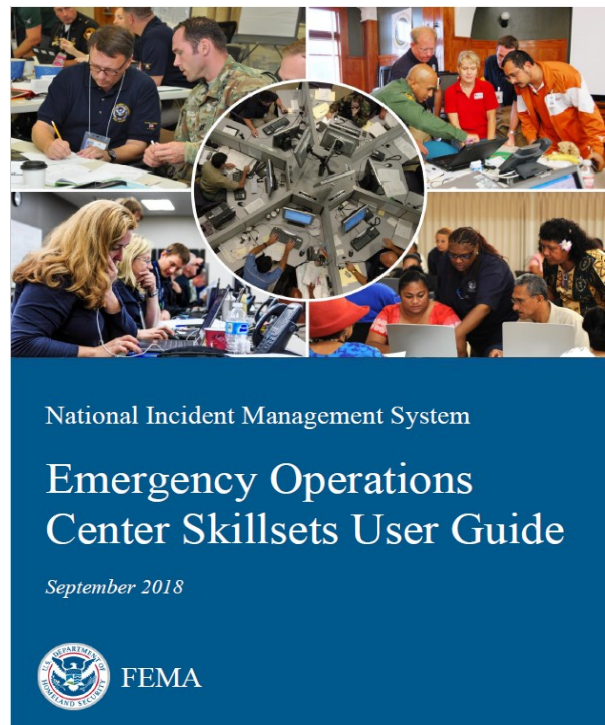
POSITION TASK BOOK INITIATED BY:

OFFICIAL'S NAME:
TITLE:
DUTY STATION:
PHONE NUMBER:
E-MAIL:

POSITION TASK BOOK WAS INITIATED:

LOCATION:
DATE:

Version: July 2024



Incident Management Assistance Team

After several incidents in Northern Illinois, including the Highland Park mass shooting, chief officers from several agencies recognized the need for on-scene, high-level incident management assistance at large-scale incidents. The JEMS team responded to the request, and put together a working group of police and fire chiefs to investigate team development. This group invited a representative from the Lake County Police Incident Management Assistance Team, who explained how the Lake County team was established, and how it has grown and developed. The working group also looked at various policies, procedures, and guidelines from a number of Incident Management Assistance Teams throughout northern Illinois.

JEMS staff drafted a proposal for a Type IV (local) Incident Management Assistance Team, and with the support of the JEMS Board, moved ahead with establishing the team. The working group met several times to discuss team development. An Operations Policy was developed from these discussions, which was approved and adopted by the JEMS Board.

Per this policy, each community is expected to provide at least one qualified member from each of their public safety departments (police and fire) to serve on the team. The working group solicited interest from the communities and from this list, initial team leadership was selected and approved by the Executive Committee. Chief Cawley from the Hoffman Estates Police Department and Chief Salela from the Wheeling Fire Department will be serving as co-Team Leaders to begin the process of assembling the team and making it operational.

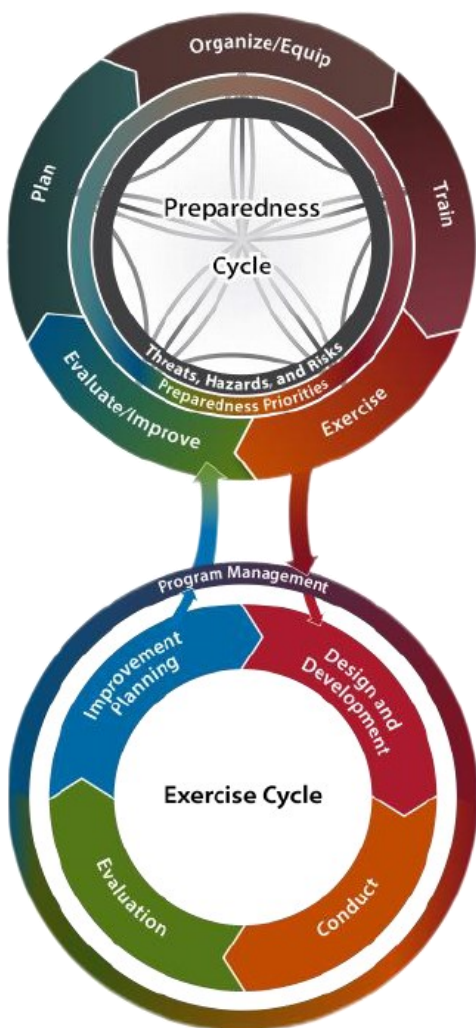
The next step will be to finalize the team membership, begin to provide more advanced training, and begin training together and exercising. We hope to have the team ready for operations in 2025.



Integrated Preparedness Plan

On September 27, JEMS hosted the annual Integrated Preparedness Workshop, where representatives from all JEMS communities meet to develop a plan and tentative schedule for training and exercises for the next 5 years. During this process, emergency managers from the communities reviewed and updated the validity of the threats and risks identified during the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and determined how to best test the capabilities of the communities to prepare, protect, mitigate, respond, and recover.

This workshop continues to be successful in determining ways to share training and exercises and/or co-host classes. Through these cooperative efforts, JEMS has been able to bring in several nationally taught programs for local delivery.



The cooperative effort involved in the IPPW is a great assistance to the JEMS staff in writing the yearly Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP). In 2024, JEMS aided in administering a full-scale exercise that each of the communities participated in to meet our core capability testing for the year. JEMS communities will be taking part in table-top exercises in 2025. JEMS staff will develop two exercises using different scenarios to test the identified core capabilities. Each community will select a scenario that best fits its needs, and have their EOC staff work through it. These types of exercises work well to introduce newer employees to the function of an EOC, and give more experienced staff a refresher on those processes they would be expected to carry out during an emergency.

Training

Providing quality training for participating communities has been a primary focus since the creation of JEMS. In 2024, JEMS continued to offer core competency development courses, as well as securing some new training sessions. As identified in the IPP, the following courses were determined to be needed annually to continue to build basic abilities in all personnel, primarily targeting new hires or newly promoted personnel that may now be involved in emergency management or the EOC, and were offered as part of standard training during 2024:

- ICS 300– Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- ICS 400- Advanced ICS for Complex Incidents
- G191– Incident Command System / Emergency Operations Center Interface
- G2300– Intermediate Emergency Operations Center Functions
- MGT-346 Emergency Operations Center Operations and Planning
- National Weather Service Storm Spotter Training

In addition to the standard course offerings, there were several occasions where JEMS was able to bring in beneficial courses with the assistance of outside agencies. Multiple offerings of Active Shooter Incident Management (ASIM) and the School Safety and Violent Event Incident Management (SSAVEIM) courses took place throughout the JEMS communities in cooperation with the Illinois Fire Service Institute.



Exercises

In accordance with our Integrated Preparedness Plan, we develop and deliver various types of exercises for each member community. We follow a process of increasing complexity over each 4 year period, beginning with tabletop exercises and culminating in a multi-community full-scale exercise. This exercise was held in September, 2024, after over a year of planning and preparation. The scenario was an intentional release of a chemical agent at outdoor events in two different communities, and the exercise included both a field component involving the HazMat team from MABAS Division 1, and the activation of two separate EOCs,



each staffed with personnel from multiple municipalities. All of the JEMS communities supplied personnel to one of the activated EOCs, and the simulation cell (SimCell) included representatives from numerous outside agencies, including the Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security, the Cook County Department of Public Health, Northwest Community Hospital, Alexian Brothers Medical Center, the American Red Cross, and Northwest Central Dispatch, as well as local police, fire, and emergency management personnel. In all, over 100 personnel participated in this real-time exercise. It demonstrated the ability of EOC personnel from the JEMS area to integrate and work cooperatively in another community's EOC.



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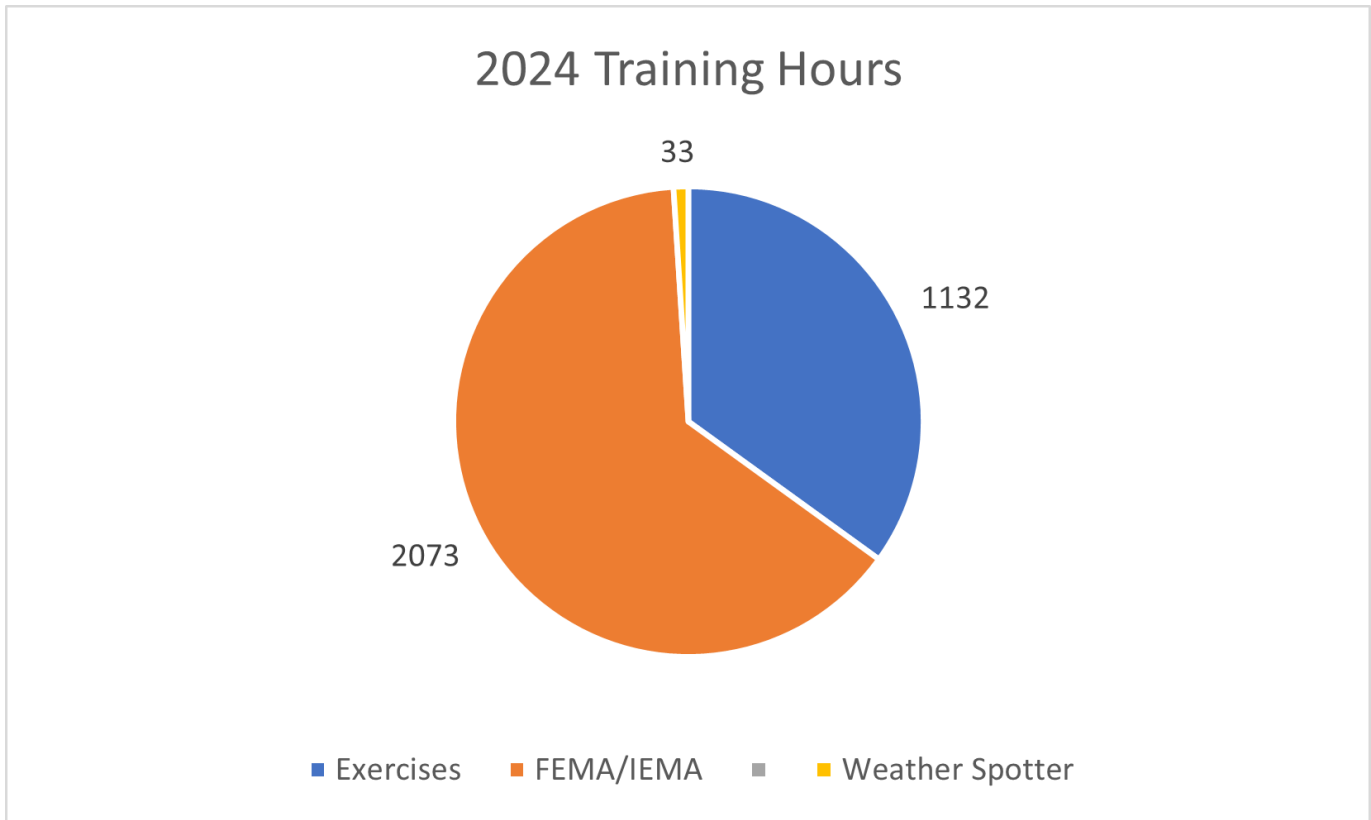
In addition to the large full-scale exercise, JEMS staff also presented four functional exercises and a table-top exercise, and supported three local Rescue Task Force / Active Shooter operational exercises as controllers and/or evaluators, as well as assisting with After-Action reporting.

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Training and Exercise Summary

There was a total of **3238** hours of training offered/completed in 2024. (-14% over 2023)



Joint Emergency Management System (JEMS)

- Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW)
- EOC Full-Scale Exercise

Federal Emergency Management Agency / Illinois Emergency Management Agency

- Incident Command System 300 & 400 courses
- Intermediate EOC Functions course

National Weather Service

- Weather Spotter Course

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service

- EOC O&P All-Hazards Events Course



Severe Weather



One of the highest hazards we consistently face in the JEMS area is the threat of severe weather, and the past year was no exception. Two particular instances of severe weather stood out from the numerous storm events during that time period.

An unusual tornado outbreak occurred on February 27, 2024 across northeastern Illinois following a stretch of unseasonably warm weather. Eleven tornadoes were confirmed to have touched down in the National Weather Service’s Chicago Forecast Area. The National Weather Service received storm reports which included numerous trees that were downed or damaged, several buildings with structural damage, and power outages from downed power lines. The NWS determined that three tornadoes, two rated as EF-1 and one at EF-0, touched down within the JEMS area, affecting Hoffman Estates and Inverness. Along with the tornadoes, NWS investigators also determined that there was significant damage caused by straight-line winds of up to 80 miles per hour in the Inverness and Palatine area. Warning sirens throughout the area were activated.

The second instance was on July 15, when a derecho brought strong winds and tornadoes to Northern Illinois, including winds up to 70 mph through the area, especially Schaumburg and Elk Grove Village. This storm spawned 32 tornadoes, and at one time the entire JEMS area was under a Tornado Warning, prompting warning sirens throughout the area to be activated.

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Hoffman Estates to Inverness Tornado March 7, 2024
Thank you to the Northwest Central JEMS for their assistance in this storm survey!

Storm Survey Results	
Hoffman Estates to Inverness Tornado (Cook County)	
Date	2/27/2024
Time	7:32 - 7:35 PM CST
EF Rating	EF-1
Est. Peak Winds	90 MPH
Path Length	2.6 miles
Max Width	110 yards
Injuries/Deaths	0/0

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service Chicago, IL

South Barrington/Hoffman Estates #1 March 7, 2024
Thank you to the Northwest Central JEMS for their assistance in this storm survey!

Storm Survey Results	
South Barrington/Hoffman Estates #1 (Cook County)	
Date	2/27/2024
Time	7:29 PM - 7:35 PM CST
EF Rating	EF-0
Est. Peak Winds	85 MPH
Path Length	3.9 miles
Max Width	300 yards
Injuries/Deaths	0/0

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service Chicago, IL

EOC Activations

An EOC may be activated if there is a planned event or in response to an emergency or disaster. 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.

Incident	Activation Level
February Tornado Hoffman Estates / Inverness	Level 2
June Mount Prospect Fire	Level 3
July Derecho	Level 3
August DNC Wheeling	Level 2

UASI Grant

JEMS was awarded a grant through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), administered by Cook County, to collectively purchase two Meridian traffic barrier trailer packages. The grant proposal required significant collaboration between JEMS and NWCDS, as well as the member communities. The barriers were delivered in October, and will be available to all of

the JEMS municipalities for securing event areas against unwanted vehicle intrusion. The need for this resource was identified by several communities, and the cooperative nature of the grant request contributed to the successful proposal.



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:

- Continue implementation of the JEMS strategic plan.
- Compete and implement updated JEMS Agreement.
- Explore accreditation through the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).
- Continue implementation of the Personnel Credentialing Plan.
- Implementation of a shared EOC personnel database.
- Operationalize the local Incident Management Assistance Team.
- Update and maintain the Incident Resource Inventory System (IRIS).
- Emergency Operations Plan Revisions based on new IEMA-OHS standards.
- Review and revision of shelter site agreements.
- Emergency Operations Center Section Specific Training.
- Expanded training offerings for emergency management courses.
- Develop and facilitate Tabletop Exercises according to the Integrated Preparedness Plan.
- Explore grant opportunities for member communities, including Mitigation grants.



Staying 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 various programs at:

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



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

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