

The DPH Bulletin

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

June 2024

Prepare people with access and functional needs for hurricane season

Now is the time for people with access and functional needs and their caregivers to prepare for the 2024 hurricane season, which officially began on June 1.

Everyone, especially those with special needs, should have an emergency plan. Build a plan for people with access and functional needs with these tools from the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services: Preparedness Buddy, Travel Buddy, and the Disaster Shelter brochure, located at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/php/preparednessbuddy.html>.

To increase your chance of survival during a hurricane, the National Weather Service (NWS) advises knowing what actions to take before the [hurricane season begins, when a hurricane approaches, when the storm is in your area](#), and [after a hurricane leaves your area](#).

Plan ahead with accurate information:

- Sign up for Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) Emergency Alerts and SMART 911 at <https://de.gov/dens>.
- Know your flood risk and whether you live, work, or travel in Evacuation Zones. Evacuation Zones encompass low-lying areas susceptible to flooding and storm surge. Visit DEMA at <https://preparedede.org/know-your-zone>.
- Learn the evacuation routes where you live and work at <https://de.gov/evacroutes>.
- Only use trusted sources for accurate storm information, such as from DEMA, NWS, local news, and The Weather Channel. Visit <https://preparedede.org/stay-informed/#tune-in-to-media>.



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Emergency personnel cannot respond until it is safe to do so, as hurricanes can bring flood waters, high winds, blocked roads, and dangerous conditions.

For more information, visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/disaster-planners/special-populations>.



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Customize emergency kits for special needs

In the event that a natural or man-made emergency should occur, the most empowering thing Delawareans can do is to be prepared.

People with access and functional needs and those who support them regularly know best what they need to survive in an emergency.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recommends creating an emergency kit that is customized to an individual's or family's specific support needs. An emergency kit should include the basics to survive for at least three days. Consider different ages of household members, dietary needs, medical needs including prescriptions and equipment, pets or service animals, and anything else needed to survive. Learn more about building a customized emergency kit at <https://www.ready.gov/disability#kit>.

Learn how to prepare for severe weather, flooding, and wildfires by visiting DHS's Federal Emergency Management Agency at <https://www.ready.gov/>.

More recommendations from DHS are:

- Individuals with a communication disability should carry printed cards or store information on their devices to inform first responders.
- Plan how to protect assistive technology devices so they will not be harmed during an evacuation.
- The [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) advises those who depend on Social Security or other regular federal benefits to sign up for electronic payments before disaster strikes. Visit Go Direct® at <https://godirect.gov/gpw/>.

The website www.ready.gov/toolkits offers toolkits for people with access and functional needs, youth, pet owners; types of disasters; and preparedness campaigns.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health



RespondDE

RespondDE honors 1,700 volunteers

RespondDE Medical Reserve Corps volunteers prepare for and respond to public health emergencies and disasters

and promote health education throughout the state. In 2023, they assisted with public health emergencies, including sheltering and recovery centers for coastal flooding and tornado response.

On April 23, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Health (DPH), Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness Section (EMSPS) hosted an appreciation event to thank the 1,700 RespondDE volunteers for their hard work and generous time they gave to Delawareans in 2023. In the last three years, RespondDE volunteers contributed over 15,000 hours with an economic impact of over \$600,000 by assisting with public health emergencies and providing outreach education.

The Volunteer of the Year Award for 2023 was presented to Joyce Junious of Felton, Del. Junious is Kent County's RespondDE Representative. She volunteered the most hours last year, and participated in four events. In 2023, Junious



Joyce Junious
Submitted photo.

attended multiple trainings and contacted all pending volunteers to welcome them. She also assists with administrative tasks and volunteer outreach for pending volunteers.

Beatrice Gale of Camden, Del. received the Shining Start Award for her participation in three 2023 outreach events. A 15-year member of the

Medical Reserve Corps, Gale also volunteers for RespondDE's Interpreter Corps.

To learn more about RespondDE or to become a volunteer, visit <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/php/vohome.html>.



On May 23 (Stop the Bleed Awareness Day), Delaware Trauma System of Care members offered tourniquet training at Legislative Hall in Dover, Del. Above, Niki Morris of Beebe Healthcare, at left, instructs Jazmine Gibbs of the Division of Public Health how to save a life during a bleeding emergency. Photo by Sean Dooley.



This spring, the Division of Public Health (DPH) Cancer Prevention and Control Bureau provided skin cancer outreach sessions to 450 Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) staff, focusing on outdoor workers. The Bureau gave attendees sleeves and wide-brimmed hats constructed of sun protection fabric. Clockwise, from top left: During the May 20 session, Teresina Jensen, PA-C of Dermatology Partners of Wilmington provides a courtesy skin check. Water Resources Engineer Stephen Wright of DelDOT models SPF50 sleeves that protect arms from ultraviolet light. Public Health Treatment Program Administrator Paulette Robinson-Wilkerson, MS presents. Photos by Donna Sharp.

Protect your skin to save your life

To urge Delawareans to protect their skin to prevent skin cancer, Governor John Carney and Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long proclaimed May 2024 as Skin Cancer and Melanoma Awareness Month.

According to [HealthyDelaware.org](https://www.healthyledelaware.org), people at higher risk for skin cancer:

- Have a history of frequent sunburns (especially before age 20)
- Have light-colored skin, freckles, light hair, and/or blue or green eyes. However, people of color also get skin cancer and should take precautions.
- Have a family or personal history of malignant melanoma
- Are exposed to excessive ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun, tanning lamps, or tanning beds
- Have many moles (particularly abnormal ones).

Follow this sun safety advice:

- Limit time in the sun, especially between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., when UV rays are strongest.
- Use a water-resistant sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) level of 30 or higher, and reapply it every two hours or more often if swimming or sweating.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses that block 99% or more of UV light. Wear UV protective clothing.
- Wear lip balm and makeup products with an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Self-examine skin for changes. If at high risk, visit a health care provider for regular skin exams. People of color should pay particular attention to their palms, soles, and nails of the hands and feet.



A wide-brimmed hat with front and back flaps made of sun protective material. DPH photo.

Melanoma skin cancer – the sixth most common newly diagnosed cancer type in Delaware – can be deadly when it attacks other organs. Delaware (27.1 people per 100,000 population) has a higher melanoma cancer incidence rate than the U.S. (22.4 people per 100,000 population) and currently ranks tenth among the states for 2016-2020, according to the Delaware Cancer Registry. Also for 2016-2020, Delaware males (35.0 people per 100,000 population) have a higher melanoma cancer incidence than Delaware females (21.0 people per 100,000 population).

For more information, visit [HealthyDelaware.org](https://www.healthyledelaware.org). Health care providers can also visit [cdc.gov/skin-cancer](https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer).



Lyme disease can present as a bull's-eye rash. CDC photo.

Prevent Lyme disease; avoid ticks

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in Delaware with over 300 cases [reported each year](#), according to the Division of Public Health's (DPH) Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology.

Lyme disease is spread by the bite of an infected blacklegged tick, also known as a deer tick, if it is attached for 24 hours or longer. In some cases, a bull's eye

rash will appear near the bite site. If an expanding rash with a diameter of more than two inches appears or flu-like symptoms occur over a 30-day period following a tick bite, individuals should contact their health care provider immediately.

To remove an attached tick, use tweezers to grab it as close to the skin's surface and pull upward.

Prevent tick bites by following these precautions:

- Avoid wooded or brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Stay to the center of trails.
- Treat clothing with products containing 0.5% permethrin or use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing products like Diethyltoluamide (DEET). Always follow label instructions.
- [Perform tick checks](#) on people and pets after being outdoors.
- Shower within two hours of coming indoors and tumble dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks.
- Keep pets up to date on tick prevention products.
- At home, place a three-foot-wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and play equipment. Maintain a nine-foot-wide barrier between the wood chips and high-use areas. Keep grass short in high-use areas and keep leaves raked.

For more information about Lyme disease and tips for preventing tick-borne illnesses, visit the DPH Lyme disease webpage at <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/epi/lyme.html>.

For additional information, visit Delaware's Lyme Disease Education Oversight Board's webpage at <https://www.lymediseaseeducation.org/>.



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Prevent drownings with water safety

Spending time at the beach, pool, or favorite swim spot is a fun summer activity, but there are risks associated with water-related activities. Alarming, drowning is the leading cause of death in children in the United States. More children ages 1-4 die from drowning than any other cause, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises to teach children how to swim, to never let children dive into water unless an adult has first checked its depth, and to never swim in canals or fast-moving water. Water safety is especially important for children and adults with [autism](#) because they are drawn to water, and some are unable to understand its dangers.

[Prevent drowning](#) and increase safety in and around water by following these guidelines from the CDC:

- Learn basic swimming and water safety skills and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Never swim alone and swim only in areas where lifeguards are on duty.
- Swimmers and adults supervising them should pay attention and avoid distractions. Unlike television and movies, drownings are often silent.
- Wear brightly colored swimsuits that are more visible.
- Know the risks of natural waters such as oceans, rivers, lakes, and creeks.
- Take additional precautions for medical conditions and prescription medications.
- Follow boating safety laws summarized in the [Handbook of Delaware Boating Laws and Responsibilities](#) on the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's [Boating Safety page](#), which also lists recommended boating safety courses.

For more detailed information on water safety, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/prevention/index.html> <https://www.safekids.org/poolsafety>.

Delaware's public swimming pool regulations ensure health and safety

Safe Kids Delaware and the Delaware Coalition for Injury Prevention recommend following local requirements for fences and barriers. Safe Kids Delaware and the Coalition advise that private pools and non-locking hot tubs should have a fence that is at least 48 inches tall, have no openings larger than 4 inches, and remain locked when not in use.

Public swimming pools must follow the [State of Delaware Public Swimming Pool regulations](#) within 16 Del. Code § 4464. Every year throughout the summer months, the Division of Public Health (DPH) conducts routine inspections of all public swimming pools to ensure compliance with the regulations. This includes verifying that they have required emergency equipment such as ring buoys, rescue tubes, and backboards. DPH also investigates complaints.

The Public Swimming Pool regulations do not require a lifeguard to be on duty at any pool of any motel, hotel, or private campground. Therefore, adults should supervise swimmers of all ages.

Access to public swimming pools for disabled persons must conform to American Disabilities Act standards. Public pools with diaper-aged bathers must have a diaper changing station and an operational hand wash sink.

Regarding security, all outdoor public swimming pools must be enclosed by a fence that is at least four feet high everywhere (six feet is recommended). All pool fences must have a locking gate which must be locked when the pool is closed. The entrances to indoor public swimming pools must be locked when the pool is closed.

All public swimming pools drain covers must comply with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, which is federally mandated.

Slides in public swimming pools are prohibited unless a variance has been obtained.

Every public pool must be monitored at least weekly by a qualified operator, who must document the visits and have them available for DPH review. Any patron or DPH representative must be able to view the certificates that DPH issues to qualified operators.

Read the complete set of regulations at: <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/hsp/poolsandspas.html>.

For more information, contact the Environmental Health offices in each county:

- New Castle County: 302-283-7110
- Kent County: 302-744-1220
- Sussex County: 302-515-3302.