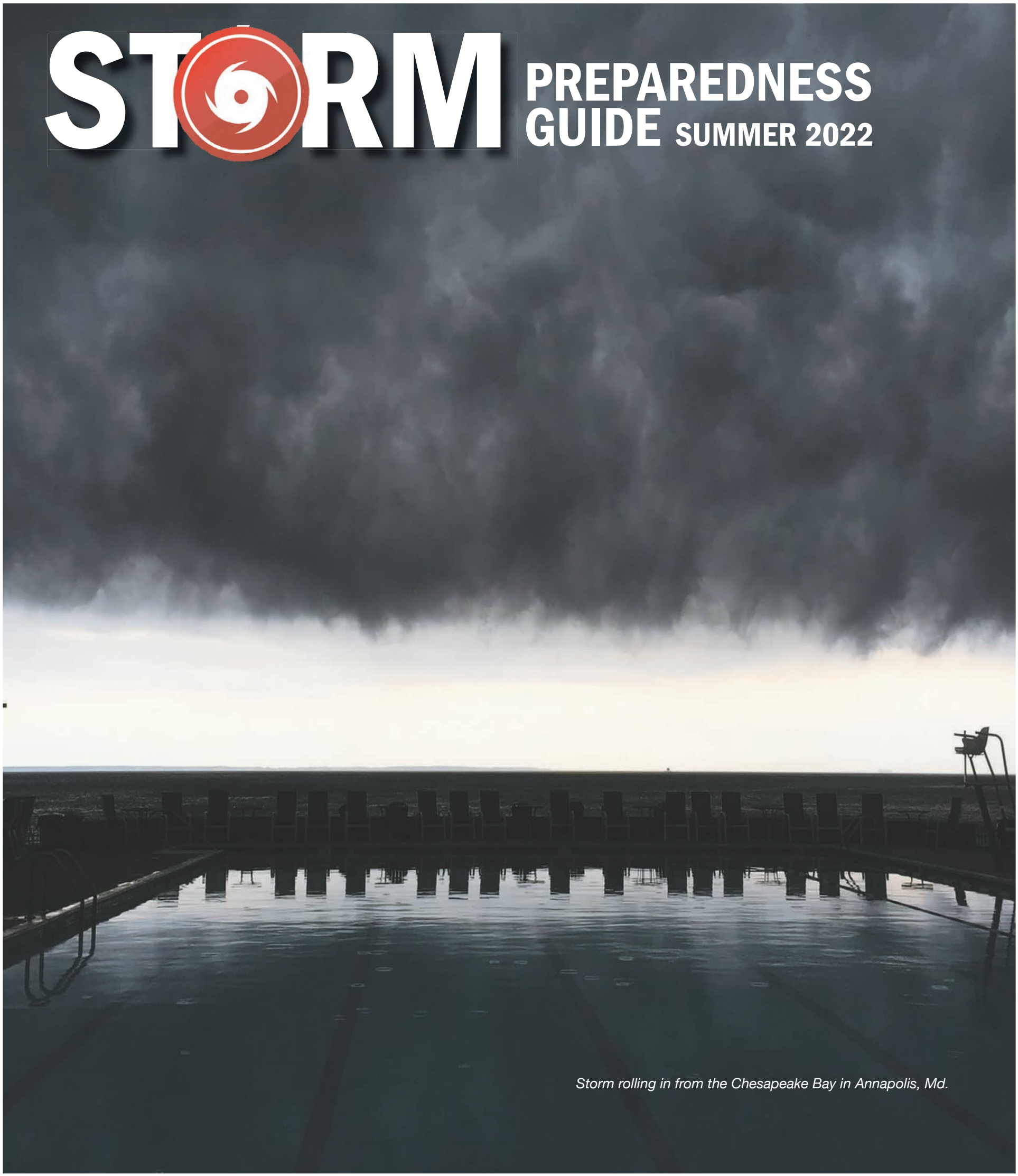
STORM PREPAREDNESS GUIDE SUMMER 2022



Storm rolling in from the Chesapeake Bay in Annapolis, Md.

STORM PREPAREDNESS GUIDE SUMMER 2021

2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season Preparedness Guide

What You Need to Know to Get Ready for Storm Season

It's officially Atlantic hurricane season. Now more than ever, residents of the Mid-Atlantic Region are tuning into the daily forecast to stay updated on weather reports. Flooding from torrential downpours has become common, and this threat is more likely to be top of mind for locals than the possibility of a hurricane making landfall in the area.

This is exactly why it's important to be prepared for whatever Mother Nature may unveil, as any storm has the potential to be destructive, even if the region doesn't experience direct impact from a hurricane.

If you aren't ready for the 2022 storm season, now is the time to take action. This special guide will put you on the path to emergency preparedness so you can protect your home, family and furry friends from flooding, hurricanes and high winds.

WHY AND HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

Dramatic images from Texas, Louisiana and Florida often come to mind when picturing the destruction caused by hurricanes. We think of people standing on roofs as water levels rise or homes flattened by tornadoes or high winds. It is common to think, "That won't happen to me." This line of thought leads to inaction—making people and their property vulnerable when the unexpected occurs.

With climate change intensifying storms and the destruction they leave behind, it's important to prepare for seasonal weather conditions, from hurricanes to blizzards. Heavy rains in the Mid-Atlantic region this summer, like those that caused a concert at Merriweather Post Pavilion to be canceled, demonstrated why we can no longer assume that a passing overnight storm will not cause property damage.

Additionally, a storm does not need to be considered deadly in order to cause extensive and expensive damages to your home or property. (See the "Prepare to Face Floods" sidebar for more information.)

With this in mind, it's important to survey the exterior of your home and make preventative repairs or upgrades. Key areas include the roof, walls, windows, doors, gutters and downspouts.

On the roof, replace loose, worn or missing shingles. Walls are vulnerable to water damage, so look for gaps or holes where liquid can seep in, including around doors, windows, cables, pipes and other areas where materials enter the wall of your home from the outside. Gutters and downspouts need to be secured to your home and cleaned often to prevent backup or poor drainage.

Your yard also poses a threat to your home. Loose branches, for example, can become dangerous projectiles during periods of strong winds. Keep trees and bushes trimmed, and encourage neighbors to do the same so that their oversight does not become your expensive problem.

Likewise, make a plan for the decorations, furniture and any other items you have around your front, side and back yard spaces. You will need to either secure them to the ground or bring them indoors before a storm.

If you are planning to go on a long vacation during hurricane season, take all of these precautions ahead of your departure just in case a strong storm arrives while you're away.

Keep in mind friends and family who may not be able to complete these safety measures on their own. If you are able to help, reach out and see what kind of assistance you can provide.

5 Top Storm-tracking Apps

Access real-time weather updates by installing some of these top apps on your phone. All are free on both iOS and Android, although there may be certain features that are only available with a paid upgrade or subscription.

CLIME: NOAA WEATHER RADAR LIVE

Popular features and tools:
- Track active hurricanes and forecasted paths
- Minute-by-minute rain predictions
- 14-day wind forecast

STORM SHIELD

Popular features and tools:
- Weather alerts for floods, tornados and hurricanes
- Add severe weather overlays to a local map
- Hurricane and tropical storm forecasts

HURRICANE: AMERICAN RED CROSS

Popular features and tools:
- Interactive storm tracker
- Send "I'm safe" alert to social media or via email or text
- Available in English and Spanish

TORNADO: AMERICAN RED CROSS

Popular features and tools:
- Immediate alert when tornado warning is issued for a saved location
- Informative content about tornado preparation
- Available in English and Spanish

FEMA

Popular features and tools:
- Real-time weather and emergency alerts
- Locate Disaster Recovery Centers
- Disaster resources and preparedness content

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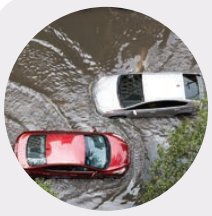
What to do DURING AND AFTER a Storm

Severe storms are uncommon, so it's important to remind ourselves of the dos and don'ts so we are prepared during hurricane season. Review the information in this table to familiarize yourself with what to do and what not to do during and after a storm passes.

DO	DON'T
Stay indoors and away from windows and glass doors during a storm. Unplug appliances that you don't need to use.	Stay home during a storm if officials have issued an evacuation order.
Shut off your gas, water and power if there is flooding, structural damage, downed power lines or if you need to evacuate.	Exit your shelter during a storm to walk your dog, check on a neighbor or clean up debris.
Ensure your carbon monoxide detector has working batteries. If it goes off, immediately exit your home and call 911.	Operate a portable generator indoors, as it produces carbon monoxide.
Listen to the radio or check weather apps to stay up to date on the storm's trajectory and impact, and wait until officials say it is safe to go outside before leaving your shelter.	Open your refrigerator or freezer if the power goes out, as loss of cold air can cause your food to spoil.
When it is safe to go outside, **document any property damage** with photos, video and a written account.	Use candles if your power goes out, as it is easy to knock them over and start a fire. Flashlights are best.
Stay away from downed power lines. Report the issue to your electric company.	Walk or drive into flooded areas. Floodwater contains contaminants, and it is also possible for a car to stall on a flooded road.



PREPARE TO FACE FLOODS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) warns that homes don't need to be located near a river or large body of water to be at an elevated risk of flooding. Severe storms coupled with poor drainage, for example, can pose an enormous threat to homes in a neighborhood. FEMA calculated that even one inch of water can cause extensive property damage that costs upwards of $25,000 to repair without flood insurance.

Therefore, in addition to making home repairs, an important way you can protect yourself against flood damage is to obtain flood insurance and familiarize yourself with what the policy does and doesn't cover so you understand your potential liabilities.

FEMA offers detailed information about flood risk and a thorough overview of flood insurance at floodsmart.gov/DMVflooding.

IN THE EVENT OF TORNADOS

Hurricanes are known to bring high winds, and they can also produce tornadoes. If you receive a tornado alert while you're at home during a storm, protect yourself by taking these three steps:

1. Go to the lowest floor of your home. If you have a basement, this is the perfect spot. If not, go to an interior room that does not have windows, like a bathroom, closet, pantry, laundry room or hallway.
2. Crouch under a sturdy structure, like a heavy table or secure cabinet.
3. Place a protective cover over your head and body to help protect against flying objects. This could be a pillow, cushion or mattress.

HELPING YOUR PETS

As you stock up on supplies for your family, keep your pet's needs in mind, too. Consider what they require on a regular basis in addition to food and water, and then add those items to your purchase list. Aim for a 1-2 week supply of anything they use daily or weekly. This might include prescriptions, cat litter, cleaning supplies for accidents and pee pads and waste bags in the event you are unable to go outside for a walk during a particularly bad storm.

If you must evacuate, you will additionally need a crate or carrier with bedding, food and water bowls, toys and treats, your pet's medical records and a collar or harness with an identification tag and leash.

PACKING YOUR EMERGENCY BAG

No one wants to imagine that they may lose power, not have access to clean water or be unable to leave their home during or immediately after a major storm. This outlook often causes us to neglect proper disaster preparation that can reduce stress and even save lives.

Creating an emergency kit is a crucial part of storm preparation, as it ensures you have access to basic necessities while you shelter in place or if you are forced to quickly evacuate. You can save a lot of time by buying a pre-made kit instead of building your own piece by piece. Then, all you need to do is add items that are unique to your needs, like pet supplies, medical necessities, prescription information and insurance and identification documents in a waterproof envelope.

If you would prefer to put together your own emergency kit, make sure you include a three-day supply of these important items in addition to those mentioned above:

- Water (1 gallon per person, per day)
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Tarpaulin
- A multi-tool that includes a knife, can opener, wire cutters, screwdriver, etc.
- Battery-powered radio
- Portable, fully charged power banks to recharge cell phones
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation

This list includes basic disaster essentials you will typically find in an emergency go bag. Personalize it by adding items you need daily, as well as important documents you would need in the event of an evacuation, like insurance, medical and identification information.

Q&A with Pepco

Pepco's Chief Operating Officer, Tamla Olivier, shares how Pepco prepares for storm season and what steps residents should take after a power outage.

What is the best course of action after a power outage?

A: The safety of our customers and communities is always our top priority. We urge customers to stay away from downed wires and assume any downed wire, or other equipment, is energized. To report an outage or downed wire, call 1-877-PEPCO-62. You can also report your outage through our mobile app, by texting "OUT" to 48710, or at **pepco.com/Outage.**

What ongoing work is Pepco doing behind the scenes?

A: We're working every day to modernize the local energy grid and make it more resilient, from trimming trees to reduce the potential for damage, to installing smarter and stronger equipment. This work is essential to help prevent those outages that can be prevented, and to restore service faster when outages do occur. In the last 10 years, this work has helped deliver record reliability for our customers, reducing the frequency of outages by 69 percent.

We're also proud to partner with the District Department of Transportation on the DC PLUG initiative, through which some of the most vulnerable distribution power lines in D.C. will be placed underground. To learn more about other reliability projects taking place in your community, please visit us at **pepco.com/Reliability.**

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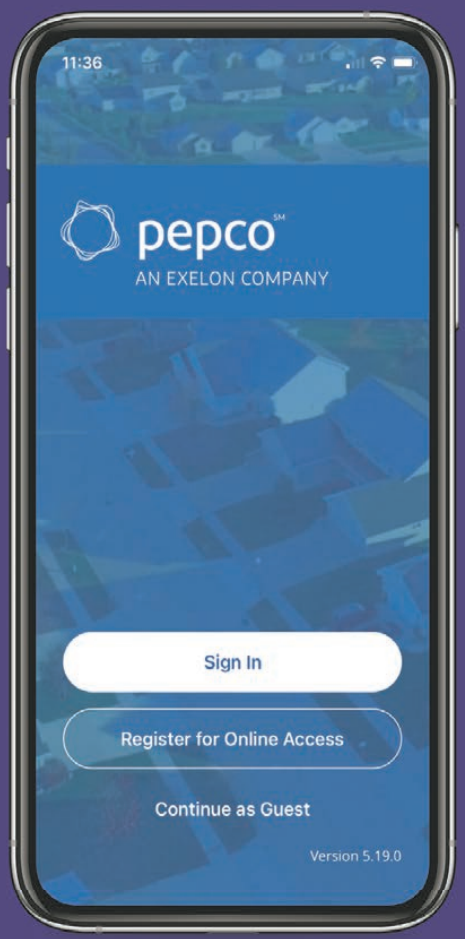

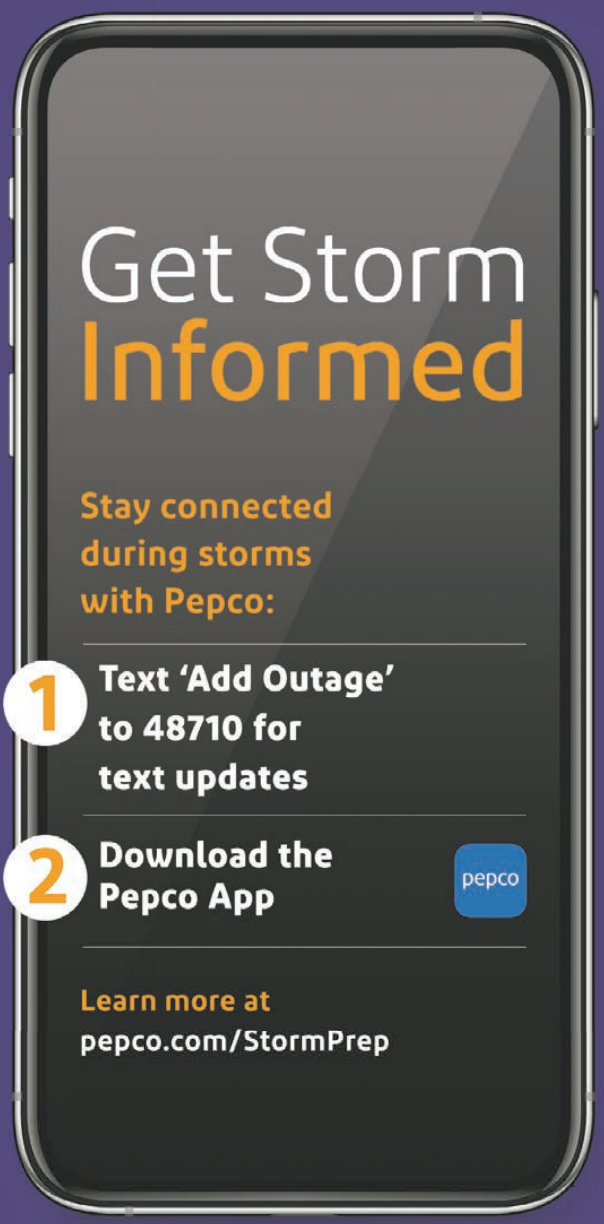

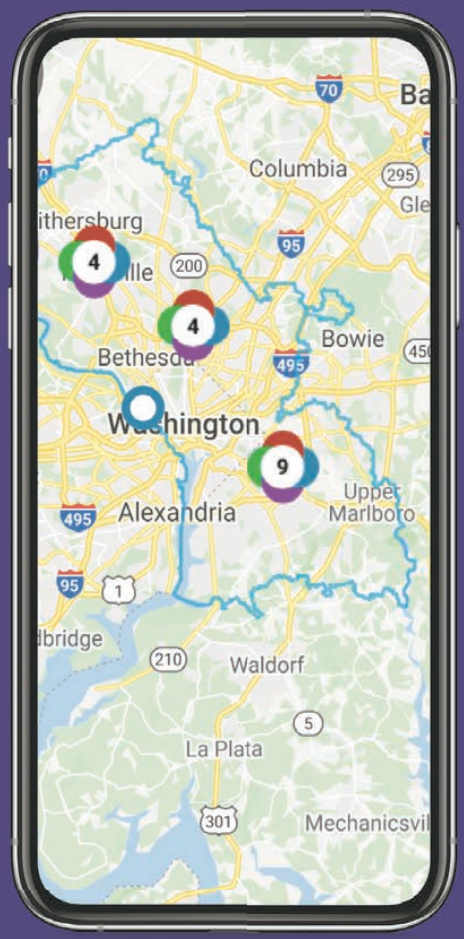

Stay connected during storms with the Pepco app.

pepco.com/StormPrep

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