

Plan ahead during National Preparedness Month

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AUSTIN, Texas — Disasters don't plan ahead, but you can. Get yourself and your family ready for the unexpected during National Preparedness Month this September.

This year's theme for National Preparedness Month is: "Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How." This message recognizes that community members often will be the first ones to take action after a disaster strikes and before first responders arrive, so it is important to prepare in advance.

All Americans are encouraged to take time this month to learn lifesaving skills, such as CPR and first aid; check your insurance policies and coverage for the hazards you may face, such as floods, earthquakes, and tornadoes; consider the costs associated with disasters and begin saving for an emergency; and learn how to take practical safety steps like shutting off utilities.

National Preparedness Month includes a "National Day of Action" on Sept. 15, when groups across the country will host preparedness events such as CPR classes, Community Emergency Response Team training events and opportunities to volunteer with local recovery agencies.

Each week in September also has its own theme. For Sept. 1-8, the emphasis is to "Make and Practice Your Plan."



Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. For assistance creating a family emergency communication plan, use the form found by following this link: <https://go.usa.gov/xPcCF>.

Everyone should also have an emergency kit ready, so you can grab it and go at a moment's notice.

Necessary items include water, food and medications as well as some cash, a first aid kit, a flashlight, batteries and any important documents you will need if you evacuate. For tips on assembling supplies, visit www.ready.gov/build-a-kit.

Families also should establish meeting places that are familiar and easy to find. It is best to choose multiple destinations in different directions so you'll have options in an emergency. Create a plan that will enable you to evacuate quickly and safely under a variety of circumstances, and practice your evacuation. To learn more about your evacuation zone and creating an evacuation plan, visit www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family.

During an emergency, it is important to stay up to date on the latest alerts, warnings and disaster information. Public safety officials use timely and reliable systems, like Wireless Emergency Alerts, to provide information in the event of a disaster. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's radio network also broadcasts continuous weather information from local National Weather Service offices.

You can sign up for alerts and warnings in your area, and learn more about staying up to date, at www.ready.gov/alerts. Also download the @fema app, with weather alerts for up to five locations, at www.fema.gov/mobile-app.



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To learn more about National Preparedness Month, visit www.ready.gov/september. To find out more about creating an emergency plan, go to www.ready.gov/make-a-plan.

For additional information on Hurricane Harvey and Texas recovery, visit the Hurricane Harvey disaster web page at www.fema.gov/disaster/4332, Facebook at www.facebook.com/FEMAHarvey, the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at www.twitter.com/FEMARegion6 or the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at <https://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/>.



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