

Are You Prepared for a Disaster?

September is National Preparedness Month. Are you prepared? Disasters can strike anyone, anywhere, and sometimes without notice. They may come in the form of catastrophic disasters such as a tornado, hurricane or flood with substantial damage to property. Disasters may also come as the result of something fairly common such as a power outage due to wind, snow or ice. Regardless of the type of disaster, it is wise for you and your family to be prepared.

The theme for the 2017 National Preparedness Month is “Disasters don’t plan ahead. You can”. In addition to being aware of your surroundings through paying close attention to local weather conditions and emergency alerts, it is also very important that you plan to take care of yourself and your family’s needs in case you are either unable to leave your home, or you have to evacuate your home due to safety concerns.

One of the first things that you can do is assemble an emergency kit for your home, your car and one to take with you if you need to leave your home quickly. An emergency kit should contain enough items to supply food and water for your family for at least three days. Examples of some items your home kit may contain are:

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- Non-perishable food for at least three days
- A battery powered or crank weather radio with extra batteries
- A flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Prescription medications

- Non-electric can opener
- Personal care products
- Food and water for pets

For more information on building an emergency kit, go to <http://www.ready.ga.gov/build-a-kit>

In addition to an emergency kit, every family should have a communications plan with phone numbers of individuals to contact in case of emergencies. Since it is possible that family members may get separated during a disaster, and may not be able to get in touch with each other, you should identify a contact in another locality or even in another state that each person would contact. You may also identify a common meeting place in your community should you not be able to access your home. A written plan should be given to each family member to keep with them at all times.

In an emergency, you may have to leave your home quickly. If evacuation is necessary, listen to the radio for more information and follow the guidance of emergency personnel. Always keep your car at least half-full of fuel, because in an emergency you may not be able to get fuel. Make sure that all family members are familiar with:

- Best exits out of your home
- Community meeting place
- Local radio station
- Location of emergency grab bag
- Plans for care of pets and livestock

- Plans for movement of family members with special needs such as the elderly or disabled

For more information on making plans for disaster preparedness go to:

<http://www.ready.ga.gov/make-a-plan>