

September is National Preparedness Month & Tennesseans Should Start Now to Get Ready for the Next Emergency

Release Date: Août 30, 2018

Nashville, Tenn. – The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) is recognizing September 2018 as National Preparedness Month and reminding Tennesseans to learn how to be ready now before disasters happen.

“Just one year ago, TEMA was coordinating the deployment of emergency personnel to help with the hurricane response in Texas, Florida, and the Caribbean,” said TEMA Director Patrick Sheehan. “Tennesseans should not wait for the next disaster to strike and then hope for help to come. Most likely, neighbors and friends will be the first help at the disaster scene before the first responders arrive. So, it’s important to prepare in advance in order to help yourself, your family, and your community.”

Gracia Szczech, the regional administrator for FEMA Region IV, pointed out that preparedness is a shared responsibility.

“While government plays a role, individuals, organizations, and businesses have important things to do to be ready for the unexpected,” she said. “National Preparedness Month is a reminder that we all must take action to prepare, now and throughout the year, for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live, work and visit. Disasters don’t plan ahead, but you can.”



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Disaster planning will be the key theme of National Preparedness Month with different topics, such as life-saving skills and disaster costs, highlighted each week in September. The planning topics include:

Week 1, Sept. 1 to Sept. 8: Manage and Practice Your Plan

Week 2, Sept. 9 to Sept. 15: Learn Life Saving Skills

Week 3, Sept. 16 to Sept. 22: Check Your Insurance Coverage

Week 4, Sept. 23 to Sept. 29: Save for an Emergency

National EAS and WEA Test

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), will conduct a nationwide test of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) on Thursday, Sept. 20, 2018.

The national IPAWS test will include both a Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) message, sent to mobile devices, at 2:18 p.m., Eastern, and an Emergency Alert System (EAS) message, to be broadcast on radio and television, at 2:20 p.m., Eastern.

The WEA message will display on mobile devices as a Presidential Alert and will read: THIS IS A TEST of the National Wireless Emergency Alert System. No action is needed.



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FEMA will send only one WEA message to mobile devices and because the WEA message is a Presidential Alert, users will not be able to opt out of receiving the message, even if users have deactivated alert notifications in their mobile devices.

Only wireless providers who have chosen to participate in the national WEA test will deliver the WEA message to their customers' mobile devices.

The EAS portion of the test is expected to last one minute and will allow FEMA to verify the delivery and broadcast of a national test message and assess the infrastructure for its distribution.

FEMA has selected Oct. 3, 2018 as the alternate national test date should anything interrupt the primary national test date of Sept. 20, 2018.

This is the fourth time FEMA has conducted a national EAS test and is the first time for a national WEA test.

Prepare for Emergencies

National Preparedness Month is designed to raise awareness and encourage Americans to take steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, schools, organizations, businesses, and places of worship.

"Preparedness starts with each of us. For ourselves, our families and other loved ones having a plan and a kit are key because it is obvious emergency responders can't always take care of everyone in a short amount of time," said Tennessee



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"We should talk about, or better, write down our household emergency plans and our kits should include easy to carry food, water and medication to sustain us and our loved ones, including pets, for at least three days along with important documents. Make it portable in case you have to move quickly to get to a safe place."

The first step in emergency preparedness is to create a written emergency plan for you and your family. Basic emergency plans include information such as:

- The evacuation procedure for your home, in case of fire or flood, so everyone will know which exits to take during a home emergency;
- How family members should contact each other if they are separated in a disaster;
- Where family members should meet after evacuating their home, or if your neighborhood is being evacuated; and,
- The important contact phone numbers for work locations, medical providers, and insurance carriers.

Also, check the emergency plans and preparations for places where you and your family spend time such as schools, day cares, sports facilities, and faith organizations. It is also important to have an emergency kit in every automobile your family uses.

Finally, make sure you exercise your plans with your family. Practice a family fire drill or try out your communication plan on a day when you know family members will be separated.



Emergency Kit Basics

The contents of a well-stocked disaster kit vary depending on household needs. There are certain essentials for any kit:

- Water – at least a gallon per person per day, for three to five days
- Nonperishable food (such as dried fruit or peanut butter) – enough per person for three to five days
- Pet supplies
- Pet food and water
- Baby supplies (formula, diapers)
- Weather radio (battery-powered or hand-crank) and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Prescription medications and glasses
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Dust mask (to filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Cellphone (with charger, inverter or solar charger)
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap
- Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Whistle (to call for help)
- Can opener (manual)
- Local maps
- Extra batteries



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More information on emergency plans and preparedness can be found at www.ready.gov, with sections that include family emergency communication plans and emergency plans for kids.

About the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency: TEMA's mission is to coordinate preparedness, response and recovery from man-made, natural and technological hazards in a professional and efficient manner in concert with our stakeholders. Follow TEMA on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, and, at www.tn.gov/tema.

About National Preparedness Month: National Preparedness Month is an opportunity to share emergency preparedness information to help Americans understand what it truly means to be ready. For more information, visit www.ready.gov/september.

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