

This September: Be Disaster Aware - Take Action To Prepare.

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM). It is a time to prepare yourself and those in your care for emergencies and disasters. If you've seen the news recently, you know that emergencies can happen unexpectedly in communities just like yours, to people like you.

In just the past few months Minnesota has seen tornadoes, river floods and flash floods, water main breaks and power outages that have affected communities for days, weeks or even months. And while we can't control mother nature, we can control how we prepare and respond to any situation.

Police, fire and rescue may not always be able to reach you quickly in an emergency or disaster. The most important step you can take in helping your local responders is being able to take care of yourself and those in your care; the more people who are prepared, the quicker the community will recover.

During September, HSEM urges citizens to prepare and plan for an emergency. A good rule of thumb is to plan for three days without electricity, water service, access to a supermarket, or local services for several days. The simplest way to do that is to follow these steps:



1. Create an Emergency Kit

Families should also have at least one emergency kit in their home. At the bare minimum, this kit should include a three day supply of water and non-perishable food. The kit should also have a first aid kit, a flashlight, a battery-operated radio, a whistle, dust masks, plastic bags and toilet paper along with a wrench in case you have to turn your utilities off.



2. Make an Emergency Plan

First and foremost, families should take the short amount of time necessary to make an emergency plan. Where would you and your kids meet if a disaster struck and you weren't all together? What if your cell phones didn't work? Determining a pre-designated location to gather will lessen the panic.



3. Be Informed

Most communities may be impacted by several types of hazards during a lifetime. Americans also travel more than ever before and people may be in areas impacted by hazards they are unfamiliar with. Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.



4. Get Involved

In the face of disaster, Americans come together with courage, compassion and unity and ask, "How can I help?" There are many ways to Get Involved, especially before a disaster

occurs. The whole community can participate in programs and activities to make their families, homes and communities safer from risks and threats. Community leaders agree the formula for ensuring a safer homeland consists of volunteers, a trained and informed public and increased support of emergency response agencies during disasters.

For more information about National Preparedness Month or other Homeland Security/Emergency Management (HSEM) programs and resources, go to: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/Pages>