



Make Your Plan Now

September is National Preparedness Month

There is no better time for Virginians to get ready for emergencies than September, which is National Preparedness Month and the height of hurricane/flood season.

Virginia residents have suffered through many disasters, including recent severe winter weather and extensive flooding from last year's November Nor'easter. Emergencies such as these motivate many to prepare ahead of time, but research shows that there is still plenty to do. Take these simple, low-cost steps during September to prepare and protect your family:

- ***Make a family emergency plan.*** In a recent survey, just 15% of Virginia respondents had a written family emergency plan. This may be the single most important thing you can do for your family. Sit down as a family and plan in advance what you will do in an emergency and how you will get in touch with each other. Write it down. *Get a family emergency plan worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov.* Making a plan is free and simple and will make a difference.
- ***Choose an out-of-town emergency contact.*** The same survey showed that 56% of Virginia respondents said they have not identified an out-of-town person for family members to contact in case of emergency. It's very important to choose an out-of-town relative or friend for your family to call because families may not be together when an emergency happens, and often it's easier to make a long distance call than a local call during emergencies. *So choose someone now as your family's emergency contact, and make sure each person in your family has that phone number.* When an emergency happens, no matter where your family members are, they each should call the out-of-town contact and say they are OK. Then the out-of-town contact can in turn call the other family members to relay messages.
- ***Store a three-day supply of water.*** About 90% of those who took the survey said they have a three-day supply of canned and packaged food on hand, but only 57% had enough water. *The rule of thumb is to store one gallon of water per person per day.* It's best to plan to be self-sufficient in an emergency for a minimum of three days. So if there are four in your family, you need to stock 12 gallons of water. This is enough for drinking and personal hygiene.

Preparedness is everyone's responsibility. If you're not ready, make your plan during National Preparedness Month. For more, go to www.ReadyVirginia.gov.

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