



Genesee County Health Department

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RE: September is National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM). This year's theme is "Don't wait. Communicate. Make your emergency plan today." The Health Department encourages all individuals, households, businesses and communities to prepare and plan for emergencies.

A public health emergency or a natural disaster can occur at any moment without warning. An emergency or disaster can force you either to evacuate or stay in your home. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes so it is important to have an emergency plan. Think about how you will contact each other and how you will communicate in different situations. Consider what is most likely to occur in your area, for example, in recent years Genesee County residents have experienced flooding, tornadoes, extreme heat, extreme cold, ice storms, large snow storms, and prolonged power outages. The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) has a Family Emergency Plan template to help get you started in your preparedness efforts. Visit www.gchd.us and click on Family Emergency Plan under the popular pages section.

When creating your family plan identify an out-of-town contact. It may be easier to make a long distance phone call than to call across town. Teach family members how to text because text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through. Subscribe to alert services. Many communities have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather or local emergencies in your area. Purchase a

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portable crank or battery operated emergency radio to keep your family informed during severe weather. When preparing your plan and your emergency supplies keep in mind that you may be without power, water, and access to local stores and services.

Consider where your family members spend their time. Do you have kids in school or daycare? Do you have parents or close relatives in long term care? Find out what their emergency plans are so you know what to expect in an emergency. Also, think about your workplace and your car. It is important to know what emergency plans your work has in place and it is important to keep emergency supplies in your car and at work.

Remember to plan for household pets and any other special needs your family may have. Also consider elderly family or neighbors that might need your assistance in an emergency. Once you have established your plan, make sure to practice it with your family and to update it annually or whenever important information changes. For more information regarding emergency preparedness, visit www.gchd.us or www.ready.gov.

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