

Mark Valacak, MPH
Health Officer



Gary K. Johnson, MD, MPH
Medical Director

Current Date: September 1, 2016

Release Date: Immediate Release

End Date: September 30, 2016

Contact Person: April Swartout
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Phone: (810) 424-4441

RE: September is National Preparedness Month

In light of recent natural disasters in: Louisiana, Italy, and Bangkok and in observance of National Preparedness Month (NPM) in September, the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) in partnership with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) urges everyone to develop their own emergency plan. In recent years Genesee County residents have experienced flooding, tornadoes, extreme heat, extreme cold, ice storms, large snow storms, and prolonged power outages. “The need to have an emergency plan and communicate the plan whether it is for your home or business cannot be stressed enough,” stated Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Public Health Program Coordinator, April Swartout. As we have all witnessed on TV, emergencies, whether they are natural disasters or family crises, can happen anytime and anywhere.

The loss of life and physical destruction most disasters bring are totally out of our control. However, the aftermath of a disaster can be reduced by simply taking the time to develop an emergency plan. With free guidance from Genesee County Health Department’s [Family Emergency Plan template](#), which can be found on the Health Department’s website: gchd.us anyone can develop an emergency plan that meets their specific needs.

This year’s National Preparedness Month’s theme “Don’t wait. Communicate.” reminds us all to not stop at just developing our own emergency plan. We need to take the next step. We need to communicate our plan with everyone involved including an out-of-town contact.

When developing your plan, you may want to consider the following tips:

- It may be easier to make a long distance phone call than to call across town. Teaching family members how to text 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 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.
- Consider elderly family or neighbors that might need your assistance in an emergency.

Once you have developed your plan, make sure to practice it with your family. Updating your plan on an annual basis is important! For more information regarding emergency preparedness and to access an emergency plan template, visit www.gchd.us or www.ready.gov.

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work.