

MEDIA RELEASE

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RE: September is National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM). This year's theme is "Disasters Don't Plan Ahead. You Can." The Health Department encourages all individuals, households, businesses and communities to prepare and plan for emergencies.

A public health emergency or natural disaster can occur at any moment, without warning. An emergency or disaster can force you either to evacuate or stay in your home. It is likely that members of your household may be at work, school, or away from home. However, the aftermath of a disaster can be reduced by simply taking the time to develop an emergency plan. The Genesee County Health Department's website has free emergency plan templates for your use, located under the *Resources* tab. These emergency plan templates can help you begin thinking how to prepare for an emergency. When developing your plan, consider these tips:

- It may be easier to make a long distance phone call than to call across town. Being capable of sending and receiving text messages can often get around network disruptions - when a phone call may not 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.

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- 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, review and practice it with the people who are in the plan. Update your plan every year, as changes do occur! For more information regarding emergency preparedness and to access an emergency plan template, visit www.gchd.us or www.ready.gov.

Your Health. Our Work.

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