

September is National Preparedness Month - Are You Ready?



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We often don't think about emergency preparedness until we're in the midst of a disaster and by that time it's probably too late to start gathering important belongings! House fires, floods, tornadoes, and power outages all pose a threat to us here in the Midwest. Research shows that disaster events are increasing in frequency and also intensity. Take time in September to get prepared for unexpected emergencies.

By planning ahead for the unseen, we can bounce back faster and more successfully both as a family and community. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that individuals and families prepare to be on their own for at least 72 hours after a disaster.

There are many things to consider when working on your disaster plan and this is a great time of year to get your documents and emergency supplies in order. September is National Preparedness Month and if you're looking for ways to get involved or help spread the word, visit ready.gov.

Here are some important tips and resources to help you plan and be prepared when disaster strikes:

Make a plan

Consider specific needs in your household, prepare an emergency kit and emergency communications plan, then practice your plan with your family or household.

Be informed

Learn community warning systems, download the FEMA app, and familiarize yourself with local relief organizations such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Items for your emergency kit or "go-bag"

- Extra cell phone battery/charger
- Hand-crank weather radio
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle
- Waterproof matches or lighter
- Local maps
- List of medications, and emergency contacts.

For more info and a printable checklist, visit ready.gov/kit

Build an emergency food and water supply

A minimum of three days is recommended but two weeks is preferable. Food that doesn't require refrigeration or cooking is ideal. You'll also want enough water on reserve for everyone in your household, including your pets! Aim for 1-2 gallons of water/person/day.

Consider other sources of water in case your supply gets low. Have a couple of disinfecting/filtering methods on hand in case the water isn't safe to drink after a disaster. For more on food safety before, during, and after disasters, visit extension.illinois.edu/food/food-safety-and-disasters

Tap into emergency food relief organizations

Visit the Find Food Illinois Community Food Map to locate food resources in your zip code by visiting, go.illinois.edu/FindFood.

Have you given much thought to the trees on your property?

Caring for trees in the years before a weather event occurs can help grow strong, resilient plants. Selecting the right tree species for the site, pruning for structural strength and balance, and watering trees in times of drought are ways to promote weather-sturdy trees. If your trees are damaged, contact a certified arborist to assess damage and remove large limbs.

Last but not least, let's not forget about financial emergency preparedness.

6 out of 10 households in the United States experience at least one financial emergency in a year, and 1/3 of American families do not have any savings. Start small and contribute to an emergency fund when able. Also consider how you have your financial documents stored. Keep them all in one place with account numbers and passwords to make things easy to find following a disaster.

A graphic for Illinois Extension featuring a tornado and the text "be prepared when Disaster Strikes". The graphic includes the Illinois Extension logo and the text "UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN".

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be prepared
when
**Disaster
Strikes**

Illinois Extension has a series of webinars to help you with Disaster Preparedness. Watch them @go.illinois.edu/DisasterPrepVideos