

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Contact:**

Diana L. Klink  
757.514.4104  
757.359.1845

Tim Kelley  
757.514.4103  
757.871.3039

### **SEPTEMBER: NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

SUFFOLK, VA (September 1, 2017) Today marks the official first day of National Preparedness Month. Throughout this month we will bring attention to the importance of readying ourselves for disasters, both natural and man-made. We recognize that by educating ourselves on how to prepare and respond to emergencies, we can save countless lives. This September, the Suffolk Department of Emergency Management and the Ready Virginia campaign are focusing on planning, with the theme “Disasters Don’t Plan Ahead. You Can.”

Everyone can take actions to prepare, and everyone can help first responders in their community by training how to respond during an emergency and knowing what to do before, and when, disaster strikes. According to Ready campaign officials, their goal is to increase the overall number of individuals, families and communities that engage in preparedness actions at home, work, businesses, schools and places of worship.

“There is no better time than now to make sure that your family, pets and home are safe in the event of a disaster,” said Deputy Chief Brian Spicer, Emergency Management Coordinator with Suffolk Fire & Rescue. “There are a lot of things you can do to maximize your protection against danger and loss, like having a

preparedness plan for severe storms, high winds, flooding, and extended power outages. It's also important to keep your home stocked with essential supplies in the event of an emergency.”

Most importantly, how can you prepare for disasters?

- Be Informed. Know what disasters could affect our area, how to get emergency alerts and where you would go if you need to evacuate your home.
- Make a Plan. Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it's important to know how you'll contact one another and reconnect, if separated. Establish a family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find.
- Build a Kit. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Most of the items in a basic kit are inexpensive and easy to find. You might already have many of the items in your home. After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Your basic disaster supplies kit should have enough food, water and other supplies to sustain everyone in your home (including pets) for at least three days.

In recognition of National Preparedness month, we'll cover each of the following weekly theme topics in more detail moving forward throughout the month:

- Week 1 (Sept. 1-9): Make a Plan for Yourself, Family and Friends;
- Week 2 (Sept. 10-16): Plan to Help Your Neighbor & Community;
- Week 3 (Sept. 17-23): Practice and Build Out Your Plans;
- Week 4 (Sept. 24-30): Get Involved! Be a Part of Something Larger.

Additional helpful tips related to severe weather and preparedness information can be found on the City's website at <http://www.suffolkva.us/severe-weather-updates> .

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