

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

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NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: SEPTEMBER 18 – SEPTEMBER 24 – INDIVIDUAL PREPAREDNESS

SUFFOLK, VA (September 19, 2016) September is recognized as National Preparedness Month (NPM) which serves as a reminder that we all must take action to prepare, now and throughout the year, for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live, work, and also where we visit.

In keeping with the successful theme, “Don’t Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today,” the Suffolk Division of Emergency Management and Virginia Department of Emergency Management are using the week of September 18th through September 24th to promote individual preparedness.

The week will focus on:

- Understanding actions you can take to be prepared for emergencies
- Being aware of specific needs you may have if an emergency strikes like: medication, power needs, devices that you may count on, pet needs, etc.

- Understanding safety tips and protective actions you can take before or during a disaster.
- Downloading the FEMA app for disaster resources, weather alerts, and safety tips: www.fema.gov/mobile-app

Areas of note when it comes to individual preparedness is making a plan and creating a support network for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. By evaluating your own individual needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you and your loved ones can be better prepared.

Here are three easy steps to start your emergency communication plan:

1. Collect information. Create a paper copy of the contact information including phone, email, and social media info for your family, friends, caregivers, neighbors and other important people/offices, such as medical facilities, doctors, schools, workplace contacts or service providers.
2. Share your emergency plans with the trusted people in your support network. Tell them:
 - Where your emergency supplies are kept
 - What you need and how to contact you if the power goes out
 - If you will call, email or text agreed upon friends or relatives if you are unable to contact each other directly
 - What medical devices or assistive technology devices that you need to have with you if there is an evacuation order from local officials
 - Your plans to remain independent if you require oxygen or mechanical ventilation

3. Practice your plan with your support network, just like you would a fire drill.

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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