

Dept. of Military Affairs: Disasters happen. Prepare now. Here's how.

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by ReadyWisconsin

Roughly one foot of rain falls overnight, leading to widespread flooding and emergency evacuations. Highways are closed, and some roads are washed out in places. Continued heavy rains saturate the ground, increasing the risk for flash floods. In addition to torrential rains, strong winds and tornadoes cause damage in communities across the state, including power outages.

That's not the synopsis of a disaster movie — that's the past two weeks in Wisconsin.

Disasters can strike at any time, which is why it's important to prepare in advance and make sure you have plans for how to respond. To encourage people to think about how they can be ready for disasters, Gov. Scott Walker has declared September Preparedness Month in Wisconsin.

"Knowing what to do during a disaster is essential to keeping you and your family safe," said Maj. Gen. Don Dunbar, Wisconsin's adjutant general and Homeland Security Advisor. "Preparedness Month is a great opportunity to learn more about the steps you can take to be ready."

During each week of the month of September, ReadyWisconsin is asking people to learn more about a different area of preparedness. The first week is focused on encouraging people to make and practice a disaster plan.

"Developing a family emergency plan is important," said Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Brian Satula. "Make sure everyone in your home knows where to meet during a disaster, how to get in contact with each other, and what to do if your home can't be reached. Review and practice those plans annually."

Emergency plans should include details like how you will receive alerts and emergency warnings, where your family should take shelter, and where everyone should meet if you are forced to leave home or are unable to return there. They should also include a list of everyone's contact information, along with contact information for a friend or family member who lives outside of the area.

During the coming weeks, ReadyWisconsin will provide more information on additional steps people can take to help ensure the safety of their loved ones and others around them. Those include encouraging people to learn a lifesaving skill such as CPR and first aid, checking their insurance to make sure they have adequate coverage, and building up an emergency reserve fund.

"Good preparedness starts before a disaster even strikes," Satula said. "Disasters will happen, so learn how to prepare now, before you find yourself in a dangerous situation."

For more information go to readywisconsin.wi.gov. For daily safety tips and information, follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/readywisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/readywisconsin).