

Dept. of Military Affairs: Disasters don't wait. Make your plan today. September is preparedness month in Wisconsin.

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MADISON, Wis. — Disasters can strike without warning, and knowing what to do during an emergency can mean the difference between life and death. Gov. Tony Evers has declared September Preparedness Month in Wisconsin, and ReadyWisconsin is encouraging everyone to spend time this month developing their disaster plan.

“When an emergency happens, quick decisions often need to be made to ensure you and your loved ones remain safe,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “Having a plan that’s been practiced and regularly reviewed by everyone can save you precious time. Remember that disasters don’t wait, so make your plan today.”

ReadyWisconsin offers several resources to help families with the process of creating plan at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. Your plan should focus on how to safely exit your home, office, or school, identifying safe meeting places, and making sure everyone knows how to communicate if you are separated. Plans should be regularly reviewed and practiced by everyone in your family.

In addition to creating a plan, building an emergency kit is an important part of making sure your home is prepared for a disaster. Kits should include items such as bottled water and non-perishable foods, first aid supplies and medications, and safety items such as flashlights, extra batteries, and a NOAA Weather Radio. Your kit should be kept in a safe place where it can be easily accessed, just in case you

need to leave home quickly during a disaster.

Preparedness month also stresses the importance of getting children ready for an emergency. With the start of the school year different in communities across the state because of COVID-19, now is a great time to review and revise plans for what to do if an emergency were to take place during the school day.

“Children may not know what to do during an emergency, so it’s up to parents, teachers and others to help them find their way to safety,” Williams said. “During Preparedness Month, we encourage families to make sure kids have the tools needed to stay safe.”

To help prepare students, ReadyWisconsin offers the Student Tools for Emergency Planning (STEP) program to schools across the state each year. Designed for 4th and 5th grade classrooms, this curriculum developed by FEMA has helped teach thousands of Wisconsin students about how they can prepare their families for a disaster. More information on STEP, including information on how schools can register for this free program, is available at <https://readywisconsin.wi.gov/step/>.

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