

## **September is National Preparedness Month**

By Jessica Miles, Emergency Preparedness Planner

September is National Preparedness Month, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The goal of this month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action.

First, you should “**Get A Kit.**” A family disaster supply kit should have enough supplies in it for at least three days, for each member of the family. Supplies included in the kit should be:

- Water: One gallon per person per day
- Food: Canned foods, dry goods, plates, and utensils
- Tools: Flashlights, batteries, manual can opener, scissors, and small tool kit
- Medications: Prescription and over-the-counter
- First Aid Supplies: Band-Aids, antibiotic ointment, and wet wipes
- Clothes, bedding, and sanitation supplies
- Any Special Items: Diapers, cards, and financial information

Keep these items in an easy-to-carry container, like a plastic storage container, a camping backpack, or a duffle bag. Keep this kit in a designated area and make sure that all family members know where the kit is kept. Rethink your needs every year and update your kit as your family’s needs change.

Second, you should “**Make A Plan.**” Talk to your family about a disaster communication plan and what to do if a disaster happens when you are separated and away from home, such as at school or work. Make a plan on:

- Where to meet away from your home in case of a fire (like a neighbor’s house or corner of the street);
- Where to meet outside your neighborhood if you must evacuate. You should pick a friend’s or relative’s house;
- Where to call to “check-in” if you become separated from your family during a disaster. You should memorize the phone number or have a contact card stored in your wallet, purse, or backpack with the information of a family member who lives out-of-town. You would call there to report where you are so the members of your family can find each other.

Third, you should “**Be Informed.**” Talk to your family about the types of disasters that may occur where you live and the appropriate ways in which to respond to them. In Medina County we are prone to:

- Floods
- Tornados
- Thunder Storms
- Winter Storms
- Earthquakes
- National Security Emergencies

Finally, you should “**Get Involved.**” Get training in first aid and emergency response. Get involved in preparing your community. Call your Medina County Health Department for

information about volunteering for the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC is a volunteer organization where various professionals, medical and non-medical, assist during an emergency.

Additional information about National Preparedness Month can be found at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security website at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or the Federal Emergency Management Agency at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov). You may also request emergency preparedness materials and checklists by calling Jessica Miles at 330-662-0517 or toll-free at 1-888-723-9688. The Medina County Health Department has protected the health of Medina County citizens since 1918. Services are partially funded by your local property tax health levy. For more information about our services, call us at 330-723-9688, toll-free at 1-888-723-9688, or visit us at [www.medinahealth.org](http://www.medinahealth.org).