

September is National Preparedness Month. The National Preparedness Community is one of the nation's largest public online networks organized to improve the nation's resilience against all hazards. It is made up of individuals, as well as, public and private sector organizations engaged in preparedness committed to strengthening the resilience of their communities. The NPC suggests that September is a time to prepare ourselves and our families for emergencies and disasters. Emergencies can happen at any time in communities just like ours and to people just like us. We've seen tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, flash floods, and even water main breaks and power outages across the United States, which have affected millions of people, sometimes for days at a time. Safety forces may be unable to reach you quickly in an emergency or disaster. The most important thing you can do in helping our local responders is to be able to take care of yourself and those in your care. The more people who are prepared, the quicker a community will recover.

In planning for an event where you would be without electricity, water service, access to the grocery store or local services for several days, follow these four steps: Stay informed: information is available from federal, state and local resources. In fact, there are several links on the City's website to various agencies such as Ready.gov to help you learn what to do before, during and after an emergency. Next, make a plan. Discuss, agree on and document an emergency plan with your family. Sample plans are available on Ready.gov. Make sure everyone in the family understands where to go and what to do. Keep up to date contact information for family, friends and neighbors and make sure the information is posted in visible places throughout your home. Work together with neighbors to help build greater resilience. Build a kit for emergency supplies. Keep enough water, nonperishable food, first aid, prescriptions, flashlights and a battery-powered radio for your family. Keep some at work, home and in your car. Remember to include your pet while making your plan. If you would evacuate your home, do not leave your pets behind. Pets most likely cannot survive alone and if by some chance they do, you might not be able to find them when you return. Keep in mind that some public shelters may not allow animals inside, so make alternative plans with friends or relatives to care for your pets if you are unable.

Emergency alerts are sent out to those with wireless phone that are WEA (Wireless Emergency Alert) capable and whose wireless carrier participates in the program. You will automatically receive those alerts without registering for them. Local organizations, such as our county Mass Notification System also sends out alerts to those who have registered. These early warning alerts can be instrumental in saving lives.

Check your insurance policy to see what changes might be necessary. When a disaster strikes, you want to know that your coverage will help get you back on your feet.

Resources: Emergency Financial First Aid Kit, [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov),