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**For Immediate Release**  
September 2, 2021

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## **September is National Preparedness Month in Illinois**

*Prepare to Protect. Preparing for disasters is protecting everyone you love.*

SPRINGFIELD – This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil. The events of that fateful day ignited a culture of preparedness which is now instilled in the fabric of our emergency response mechanism. National Preparedness Month is recognized each September to promote family and community disaster and emergency planning. Disasters don't wait, and they can strike at anytime and anywhere. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), and local emergency managers, are encouraging Illinoisans to take time to prepare for potential emergencies at homes, at work, and in the community.

“This is the perfect time to prepare yourself and those you love for unexpected emergencies or disasters,” **said IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau.** “Preparedness is more than building a kit, it's about communication, mitigation and education. While being prepared will not prevent a disaster, it will provide the foundation for an expedited recovery and instill the confidence to meet challenges when they arise.”

This year, residents are encouraged to consider COVID-19 guidelines when evaluating and improving their family emergency plan. Some things to consider include:

- **Make a Plan for When a Disaster Strikes:** Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know which types of disasters (tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, etc.) could affect your area, and know how you will contact one another or reconnect if separated. How will your family adjust its routine should a member of your family require quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19? Plan today for different scenarios that could impact your work, school or family routine.
- **Build a Kit:** Once a disaster strikes, you will not have time to shop or search for supplies, so it's important to have supplies pre-assembled. A kit should contain basic survival items necessary during an emergency, such as food, water, weather radio, batteries, medication, supplies for each member of your family. It is also

recommended that you include face masks, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes in your emergency supply kit to address the current COVID-19 environment. Because a disaster can strike anywhere, [Emergency kits](#) should be kept at home, at work and in your car.

- **Prepare for Disasters:** Limit the impacts that disasters have on you and your family. Learn how to make your home stronger in the wake of a storm or other hazards by implementing low-cost home improvement projects. Review your insurance policies to determine what would be covered in the event of a flood or storm. Also, practicing tornado drills and fire drills aren't just for school. Walking through this procedure at home with your family, and at work with your co-workers, is a great way to prepare for a disaster.
- **Teach Youth how to Prepare for Disasters:** Disaster planning, response, and recovery efforts should take into account the unique needs of children, who make up roughly a quarter of the U.S. population. Get kids involved in building their own emergency kit. Make sure to include your child's favorite stuffed animals, board games, books or music in their emergency kit to comfort them in a disaster. [Ready Kids](#) website has a variety of tools and information that can be incorporated into lesson planning for educators statewide.

IEMA offers disaster preparedness information on the Ready Illinois website ([www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov)), a one-stop resource for detailed information about what to do before, during and after disasters. During large-scale disasters, IEMA uses the Ready Illinois website, Facebook and Twitter pages to provide critical information about the incident, including shelter locations, road closures, safety information, photos and more.

For more information about emergency and disaster preparedness, visit [ready.illinois.gov](http://ready.illinois.gov).

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