

September 8, 2015

## SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER DURING A COMMUNITY EMERGENCY NOW



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**Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.** — The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) is urging residents that are willing or desire to volunteer during a local emergency to sign-up before one takes place.

“Spontaneous volunteers are individuals that want to assist after an emergency occurs. In most cases, spontaneous volunteers cannot be utilized due to gaps in credentialing and training. In order to mitigate this, we encourage individuals to identify a volunteer organization and pre-credential BEFORE the disaster.” stated Katie Holbrook, Public Health Preparedness Section Chief for DOH-Okaloosa.

The Okaloosa-Walton Medical Reserve Corps (OWMRC) is hosted by DOH-Okaloosa, but it serves both Okaloosa and Walton Counties. OWMRC is an organization of medical and non-medical volunteers who are pre-trained and pre-credentialed to contribute their skills and expertise during public health emergencies, and when available, during skills-building activities throughout the year.

For more information about OWMRC and how to register, please visit [www.HealthyOkaloosa.com](http://www.HealthyOkaloosa.com) or call Steven Rendon at (850) 833-9240 extension 2304.

DOH-Okaloosa is observing September as National Preparedness Month in order to remind residents on easy ways to keep their families safe during emergencies. DOH-Okaloosa will be releasing weekly messaging to media outlets and community partners to help spread the word on how families can better prepare for the possible emergencies and disasters in Okaloosa County.

The overall theme of the month is **Preparedness Ready means a healthy plan for yourself, the family, kids and pets too! It's that simple!**

The following is the schedule of press releases and topics:

Week 1—Personal Preparedness

Week 2—Education and Training

Week 3—Emergency Preparedness Kits

Week 4—Prepar-a-thon/Know Your Local Risks

Week 5—Are you prepared?

For previous DOH-Okaloosa National Preparedness Month press releases, please visit <http://okaloosa.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/index.html>

**About the Florida Department of Health**

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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