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EASY WAYS FOR YOU TO BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES



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Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) wants the public to know the importance of personal, family, and pet preparedness for an emergency. There are some easy ways to make sure you and your family are prepared for any emergency or disaster that might arise.

- **Make a plan.** DOH-Okaloosa encourages all individuals and families to have a plan for hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and any type of emergency that is possible in your community. For helpful guidance on how to make a plan, visit www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself/make-a-plan/index.html
- **Prepare a kit.** To stay safe and ready for any disaster, it is important to prepare your family disaster kit by gathering some of the basic supplies. Go to www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/prepare-yourself/build-a-kit/index.html for a suggested supply list for your kit.
- **Know your risks.** Different communities might have different possible types of emergencies. Research your community's history for past emergencies and possible future emergencies. If your house is in a flood region, knowing this ahead of time will help guide your plans for heavy rain or coastal flooding events. Visit community.fema.gov/take-action/hazards to learn about risks for your community.
- **Special needs registry.** Individuals with special medical needs might require assistance that exceeds the basic level of care provided at the general population shelter during a mandatory or voluntary evacuation. A special needs shelter is available for these individuals in Okaloosa County. The special needs shelter should not be your primary plan, but a plan of last resort. DOH-Okaloosa encourages anyone that might utilize the special needs shelter during an emergency or disaster to register at snr.floridadisaster.org/okaloosa. DOH-Okaloosa will contact you to inform you if you are eligible.
- **What about pets?** Our furry loved ones are part of our families too. Don't forget to include them in your emergency plans to ensure their safety! DOH-Okaloosa is hosting the second annual Pet Preparedness in the Park event at Liza Jackson Park in Fort Walton Beach on September 19, 2015. Visit www.HealthyOkaloosa.com for more information.

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?

About the Florida Department of Health

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