

Script – Broadcast - Preparation Key to Handling Emergencies

September is National Preparedness Month, and emergency preparedness experts are reminding people to take action now. This year's theme is "Disasters don't wait, make your plan today."

SOT: Jeff Brown, Disaster Preparedness Program Manager, OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center

"When we look at emergency preparedness we're looking at lessons learned and that's where National Preparedness Month came from. After 9-11, national leaders looked at how can we get the word out to citizens of the country to be better prepared and thus was born National Preparedness Month in 2004." (:20)

There are a number of emergencies that could impact any community, including home fires, active shooters, and power outages. But the chief concern, particularly in the Midwest, is weather-related activity such as floods, tornadoes, and extreme temperatures.

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"We're no strangers to severe weather in the Midwest, but that doesn't make us prepared because every storm is going to be unique, whether it's the storms we had in August or the severe cold we had years ago. There's always a challenge with severe weather." (:17)

The first step for families to be prepared for any type of emergency is to come up with a plan. Families should discuss details of their plan, including emergency alerts and warnings; shelter plan; evacuation route, household communication and assembling an emergency preparedness kit.

Some homes could lose power for days or weeks during an emergency so make sure to stock up with non-perishable food items, batteries and flashlights. The same goes for your car. If you have to leave your home quickly, make sure to fill your vehicle with water, food, first aid kit, extra clothes and warm blankets.

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"Look at it as an all-hazards approach. What do I need to do to be ready if something were to occur, no matter what the incident? Do I have enough medications on hand? Do I have a contact list? We rely on our cellphones but what if it's lost in an incident or you lose power and you're not able to charge it? Do you have phone numbers handy that you can get to?" (:20)

Being prepared also means being ready to help others. Brown says there's a role for everyone in their respective communities, whether it's volunteering in a soup kitchen, donating blood,

volunteering for the American Red Cross, churches or joining a local emergency planning committee.

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“Communication and learning about preparedness is the most profound tool we have in our toolbox. Communicate with local partners or agencies or your neighbor. Are you prepared? What does your plan look like? Talk to your neighbors, talk to your co-workers and make sure you are all trained and ready.” (:25)

For more information about emergency preparedness, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).