National Preparedness Month (NPM)

Pennsylvania has a state flag 🏛, state dog 🐶 (Great Dane), and state beverage 🥛 (milk). We would argue that we also have a state dessert: PIE. Some of our favorite pies are Partners In an Emergency so you can be Prepared In an Emergency. This year, the theme for National Preparedness Month is, “Disasters Don’t Plan Ahead. You Can.”

What does this have to do with National Preparedness Month in September?

We know disasters start locally and it takes a whole community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from when disaster strikes. Your local responders such as fire, ambulance, police, community government, volunteer organizations, neighbors, and you, come together when skies are blue to learn, prepare, and practice for when skies go gray. No one can do it alone, together we are Partners In an Emergency that are prepared for an emergency.

Recipe for being Prepared in and Emergency:

- Be Informed
- Be Prepared
- Be Involved.

Because disasters don’t plan ahead, but you can. You can’t be prepared with just one step, but every one counts.

Your Recipe for Success?

1. Start with a pledge to be Prepared in an Emergency, included in the ReadyPA Monthly.
2. Visit www.readypa.org and learn how you can plan, prepare, and Be Ready, PA!
3. Follow ReadyPA and PEMA on Facebook and Twitter: #PAPrepared, #NatlPrep, and #ReadyPA. We will provide tips and tools throughout the month and beyond.
4. Share your pledge on social media by using #PAPrepared, #NatlPrep, and #ReadyPA.
National Preparedness Month
Getting Started: How to be Prepared In an Emergency

Be Informed
Know what to plan for.
1. Understand which disasters are likely in your area and what you must know to stay safe. Visit www.ReadyPA.org to find out common hazards in your county.
2. Identify how you will receive alerts and updates. Learn more about Weather Radios and Emergency Alerts for your mobile phone in this month’s ReadyPA Monthly.
3. Know the different weather alerts and what action to take in each. Visit www.ReadyPA.org to learn more.
4. Share what you have learned with your family, household and neighbors and encourage them to be informed.
5. Follow your local emergency management agency online.

Be Prepared
Know what to do and have what you need when disaster strikes.
1. Sign the Preparedness Pledge on the Action Sheet and post the Tip Sheet on your refrigerator.
2. Determine how your family will communicate during an emergency and where to go if you are not together when disaster strikes.
3. Identify and gather essential supplies you would need if disaster strikes and you lose power for an extended period of time or if you have to evacuate your home. Consider special medical needs and your pets.
4. Visit www.readypa.org for special planning tools that you can complete and have ready.

Be Involved
It takes a community. Learn how you can help.
1. Volunteer and receive training to support disaster and preparedness efforts in your community.
2. Take a first aid class. There may be times, during a disaster, when responders cannot come to your aid immediately.
3. Get others involved and share your preparedness on social media. Include #PAPrepared and #ReadyPA.
Weather Alerts
Be Informed: Learning About Weather Alerts

Regardless of the season, Pennsylvania faces threats from snow to floods. *Take some time this month to ensure you have at least two methods for receiving important, potentially lifesaving weather alerts from the National Weather Service.*

**Weather Radio:**
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radios are designed to provide only the information you need. It can be programmed to receive alerts for your specific county, alerting you only when severe weather is close to your home. Why have a Weather Radio when you can get the same information on your cell phone? Consider it similar to a smoke detector for fires in the home, a weather radio will activate while you sleep to wake you and alert you of potential severe weather. These units work radio waves and can be operated by crank power. Battery operated units also are great for travel or time outdoors.

**TXT & Email Notifications:**
Mobile phones and computers can be a great method for alerting you of severe weather. Sign up to have emergency and weather alerts sent to your phone or email. Pennsylvania’s AlertPA is free and available at https://alert.pa.gov/. Media outlets and weather companies offer similar products. Many of these are customizable to your county, and you can even sign up for alerts for family and friends living in other counties or states. Weather apps may enhance the layer of alerts.

**Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):**
For certain severe weather events immediately threatening to life and property, a special message will be broadcast across all TV and radio stations and a loud alert will be sent to your cell phone. While you cannot sign up for these alerts, as they are automatic, if you receive an EAS or WEA, you should take action immediately.
Alert Terms

Be Ready: Know what to do when you receive an alert or when disaster strikes.

Know Your Alert Terms

When the weather turns bad, the National Weather Service lets us know with special phrases. Do you know the difference?

**Watch:** There is a chance for dangerous weather. Time to prepare!

**Warning:** Dangerous weather is occurring or will occur in your area. Take action! Watch and warning messages sent from the National Weather Service are based on weather in your county.

### How can you Be Ready?

#### Before
- Know what a watch and a warning mean for you.
- Know what county you live, work or go to school in.

#### During
- **Thunderstorms:** Head indoors and stay off electronics and away from water.
- **Tornadoes:** Head to the basement or the lowest floor.
- **Floods:** Head to higher ground.
- **Heat:** Drink lots of water.

### Warning | Take Action!
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**Lightning/Thunder** | “When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors”
| “When you see a flash, dash inside”

**Flooding (Severe or Flash)** | “Turn Around, Don’t Drown”

**Tornado** | “If a tornado is around, get low to the ground”

**Heat** | “Beat the heat, stay cool”
National Food Safety Awareness Month

Food Handling Safety Risks are More Common Than Most People Think.

Did you know that in the United States each year:
• 76 million cases of foodborne illness occur.
• More than 325,000 people are hospitalized for a foodborne illness.
• 5,000 people will die from a foodborne illness.

Follow These Four Easy Steps to Help Your Family Be Food Safe.

Clean. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get on hands, cutting boards, knives, and countertops. Frequent cleaning can help prevent this from happening.
• WASH hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
• RUN cutting boards and utensils through the dishwasher or wash them in hot soapy water after each use.
• KEEP countertops clean by washing with hot soapy water after preparing food.

Separate. Cross-contamination is how bacteria spreads. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from ready-to-eat food.
• USE one cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and seafood and another for salads and ready-to-eat food.
• KEEP raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices apart from other food items in your grocery cart.
• STORE raw meat, poultry, and seafood in a container or on a plate so juices can't drip on other foods.

Cook. Even for experienced cooks, the improper heating and preparation of food means bacteria can survive.
• USE a food thermometer—you can't tell food is cooked safely by how it looks.
• STIR, rotate the dish, and cover food when microwaving to prevent cold spots where bacteria can survive.
• BRING sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.

Chill. Bacteria spreads fastest at temperatures between 40 °F and 140 °F, so chilling food properly is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of a foodborne illness.
• COOL the refrigerator to 40 °F or below, and use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature.
• CHILL leftovers and takeout food within 2 hours and divide food into shallow containers for rapid cooling.

Thaw. Meat, poultry, and seafood in the refrigerator, not on the counter, and don't overstuff the refrigerator.
National Child Passenger Safety Week  
(September 17-23)

Child Passenger Safety
PennDOT cares about protecting our children and encourages all adults to take the responsibility of keeping them safe when riding in a vehicle. It is our job to make sure they buckle up — from the time when children are too young to do it themselves to the time they climb behind the wheel for the first time.

Child Passenger Safety Week 2017
PennDOT is working with its highway safety partners and law enforcement officials for the upcoming Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs from September 17-23. Throughout this week, trained car seat technicians will be available to make sure your car seat is properly installed. Look for a car seat check near you. (www.pakidstravelsafe.org/news-events/events)

Pennsylvania’s Seat Belt Law
Under Pennsylvania's primary child passenger safety law, children under the age of four must be properly restrained in an approved child safety seat. Children under two must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until the child turns two or outgrows the maximum weight and height limits designated by the car seat manufacturer. Children from age four up to age eight must be restrained in an appropriate booster seat. Children from age eight to age 18 must be in a seat belt no matter where they sit in a vehicle.

Car Seat Recommendations for Children
- Select a car seat based on your child’s age and size, fits in your vehicle, and use it every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions; read the vehicle owner’s manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat up to age 12.

Birth to Two Years
Under a law passed in 2016, children under age two must be restrained in a rear-facing car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats: Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing; convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer time.

Two to Three Years
Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. Although the current law says age two, it also says “or” the height and weight limit of the seat. That means you don’t need to automatically turn your child around at age two. Rear-facing is the best way to keep your child safe. Once they outgrow the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.
Four to Eight Years
Once your child has outgrown a forward-facing seat, they are ready to transition to a booster seat. There are a few kinds of booster seats: a combination seat moves from harnesses to booster in the same seat; a high-back booster provides head/neck protection in the event a vehicle does not have a head restraint; and a backless booster still provides the protection from having the lap/shoulder belt fit properly across the hips and collarbone. Although Pennsylvania’s law for booster seats stops at age eight with guidelines of 4’9” and 80 lbs., national recommendations are moving back the age to ten to twelve years of age, based on the small size of some children.

Eight to Eighteen Years
To determine if your child is ready for a seatbelt, have them sit all the way back in the seat, as upright as possible. Their knees need to bend at a 90 degree angle and their feet must be flat on the floor. In addition, the shoulder portion of the seatbelt must come across their collarbone and sternum. If these guidelines are not met, it is safest for your pre-teen to continue using a booster seat.
Staying Safe While Traveling for Business

Traveling for business can be fun but it comes with hazards such as traveling to the site, the hotel stays, and the unfamiliarity. Below are tips to avoid business trip hazards. It is important that employees remain vigilant and safety-conscious wherever their work assignments take them and for many employees, that includes traveling across Pennsylvania—and beyond—for overnight stays.

Driving Safety

Even if utilizing the National Safety Council’s defensive driving techniques, vehicle emergencies may still occur. In the event of a vehicle emergency, stay at the scene and call 911 as soon as possible. Assess the situation and provide appropriate assistance to others that may need it. Remain calm and cooperate fully with law enforcement. Lastly, remember to report the vehicle accident to your direct supervisor as soon as possible.

Hotel Safety

Preparing for your overnight stay at a hotel is very important. Identifying the fire escape route and emergency exits prior to falling asleep is a highly recommended practice and will make evacuating less stressful in the event of an emergency. Also, when practical, don’t accept a room on the ground floor of a hotel. Most experts recommend staying somewhere between the third and sixth floors—where rooms are high enough to be difficult to break into, but not so high that they’re out of reach of most fire engine ladders.

On Site Safety

Employees that work or spend most of their time in the field are exposed to a variety of hazards that vary based on their type of work, geographic region, and season. Whether you are attending a meeting or training, working outdoors, or any other reason you may find yourself in unfamiliar facilities, the most important thing to remember is safety first. In the event of a fire or other emergency, it is vital to be able to respond quickly and evacuate the area swiftly, if needed. Having a plan focused on what to do and where to go can save lives. Commonwealth workplaces are required to develop and educate employees on safe evacuation and assembly procedures. Upon arriving at a new office or jobsite, familiarize yourself with the evacuation plan.

www.oa.pa.gov
PEMA is Social!

Find us, visit us, like us, tweet us, retweet us!

Twitter
https://twitter.com/ReadyPA
https://twitter.com/PEMAdirector

Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA

PEMA Can Also be Found on the Web!

Be Informed, Be Prepared, and Be Involved!

Additional Resources

ReadyPA:  www.ReadyPA.org
SERVPA:  www.SERVPA.gov
National Weather Service:  www.weather.gov
PA State Animal Response Team:  www.pasart.us
PA511Connect:  www.511pa.com
Pennsylvania State Police:  www.psp.pa.gov
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation:  www.penndot.gov

Preparedness Events in September

National Preparedness Month
www.ready.gov

9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance
https://www.serve.gov/site-page/september-11th-national-day-service-and-remembrance

www.nsc.org

National Food Safety Education Month
www.foodsafetymonth.com
### Take the pledge to prepare and Be Ready, PA!

I know that disasters don’t plan ahead, but I can. To help prepare myself and my family, I pledge to take steps now to:

- **Be Informed:** about what kind of disasters might happen where I live, work or visit
- **Be Prepared:** and make a plan. I will include specific health and safety needs.
- **Be Involved:** Spread the word on social media using #PAPrepared, #NatlPrep, #ReadyPA

Your name: ___________________________ Date: ____________

### FIRE

**Crawl low** under any smoke to your exit.

**Feel the door** before opening. If cool, open slowly and leave. If hot, use your second way out.

**Use the stairs.** Avoid elevators.

**Stay out** once you get out. Call 911.

**If you can’t get out,** close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1. Tell them where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

### POWER OUTAGE

**Use flashlights** for emergency lighting, candles can cause fires.

**Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.** Most food requiring refrigeration can be kept safely in a closed refrigerator for several hours.

**Take steps to remain cool** if it is hot outside. If you remain at home, move to the lowest level of your home, since cool air falls. Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty.

**Wear layers of warm clothing** if it is cold outside. Never use your oven or grill as a source of heat.

**Turn off or disconnect appliances** and other equipment in case of a momentary power “surge”.

### READY TIPS

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<th>FIRE</th>
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<td>Test smoke alarms monthly</td>
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<td>Find 2 ways out of each room. Practice your escape route.</td>
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<tr>
<th>POWER OUTAGE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Store batteries, phone chargers, flashlights and a wind up radio.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have alternate plans for medical devices needing power.</td>
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### GET INFORMATION

- Subscribe to emergency alert systems in your community.
- NOAA Weather Radios provide weather warnings directly from the National Weather Service.
- Listen to local TV and radio stations for information and instructions
- Follow local emergency response agencies and media on social media

### GET HELP

- Police: Call 911 or: ___________________________
- Fire Dept.: Call 911 or: ___________________________
- Ambulance: Call 911 or: ___________________________
- Poison Control Center: 800-222-1222
- Other local numbers: ___________________________

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**www.ReadyPA.org**