



# NEWS RELEASE



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **(9/13/24) Be Ready When Disaster Strikes (September is National Preparedness Month)**

In recent years, devastating earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, wildfires and a pandemic have highlighted the need for Americans to prepare for disasters. However, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), half do not have an emergency plan.

September marks National Preparedness Month, the annual campaign to remind everyone that preparing for emergencies and disasters can keep them, their families, and their communities safe. This year's theme is "Start a Conversation". Southern 7 Health Department is encouraging everyone to make time this month to talk to their families about their own safety plans.

Starting a conversation can help you and your family to take more actions to prepare. By taking these simple steps, you can build your preparedness at your own pace:

- Set aside a time when everyone is calm and relaxed.
- It may help to hold the discussions over a set time period, so decisions aren't rushed, and people feel more comfortable talking about the topic.
- Talk about steps you've taken to prepare and encourage others to ask questions about preparedness actions that might work for them.
- Know what disasters and hazards could affect your area and where you would go if you and your family need to evacuate.
- Download the FEMA App to get preparedness strategies, real-time weather, and emergency alerts.
- Make sure your family has a plan and practices it often.

For more information on preparing for an emergency, visit [www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september) and follow Southern 7 on social media. To learn how to become a disaster volunteer through Southern 7 Health Department, contact Bobi Cavins, S7 MRC Coordinator at 618-634-2297, ex 971123, download the Southern 7 App, or visit [www.southern7.org](http://www.southern7.org).

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