

## **Prepare Now: It Only Takes One**

*September is North Carolina Preparedness Month*

It only takes one to cause lasting impacts – one tornado, one hurricane, one earthquake, one landslide, one explosion. While most North Carolinians focus on hurricanes, especially during these peak hurricane season months, there are other natural and man-made emergencies that can damage or even destroy communities.

Do you know what to do during an earthquake? What about a landslide? Or a public disturbance? Would you know where to go in your office building if any of these occurred while at work? Do you know where to pick up your children if a weather-related emergency occurs at school?

If you answered “no” to any of those questions, you need to become aware and get prepared. Those who are better prepared will fare better after disasters strike.

This September is North Carolina Preparedness Month, which coincides with National Preparedness Month, and the goal is to increase residents’ preparedness levels across the state.

Whether you are at home, work or play, being prepared is easy. Just follow these four simple steps:

1. Have a plan,
2. Practice the plan,
3. Build an emergency supplies kit, and
4. Talk about it with your family, neighbors or coworkers.

It’s simple to make a plan and will only take a few minutes. Just record what you need to do, where to go and how to get in touch with your family members. Your plan should list any special considerations for older adults, people with functional needs and/or pets, and the location of your emergency supply kit. Mold your plan to your family’s needs and discuss it with every member in the house.

While having a plan is key, it is important to specify what to do in specific emergencies. For example, what you would do during a tornado is different than what you would do during an earthquake. Be sure to include what you would do if an emergency occurs while you are at work or your child is at school. Contact your child’s school to get a copy of the school’s emergency plan.

You may not always be in the same place when an emergency hits. That’s why it is important to create a plan that contains phone numbers of each family member, a number for a pre-assigned out-of-state contact person who can keep track of family members, and an ‘in case of emergency’ contact for emergency personnel to use. Be sure to identify a meeting place where all family members can meet in case of an emergency. If you are not together, having a designated spot can reassure family members of one another’s safety. Once you have a plan, be sure to practice it!

An emergency supplies kit should contain enough non-perishable food and bottles water (1 gallon per person per day) to last three to seven days. Kits should include: copies of insurance papers and identification, first aid kit, weather radio and batteries, prescription medicines, bedding, weather-appropriate clothing, hygiene items, cash, and supplies for any household pets. A complete list of kit items can be found at [www.ReadyNC.org](http://www.ReadyNC.org).

Plan now to be prepared for when emergencies do occur. Know the risks to your area, and then prepare for them. Remember, disasters don't plan ahead, you can!

For more information about ways to prepare for any emergency or to download a household emergency plan, go to [www.ReadyNC.org](http://www.ReadyNC.org). You can also download the free ReadyNC mobile app, which provides real-time traffic and weather.