



Virginia Department of Emergency Management

News Release

Virginia Department of Emergency Management
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Ready Virginia encourages citizens to Resolve to Be Ready in 2010

RICHMOND, VA – To welcome the New Year, Virginia families can *Resolve to be Ready in 2010* by putting emergency preparedness at the top of their list of resolutions.

“Everyone should have a family emergency plan, so resolve now to make yours,” said Michael Cline, state coordinator for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. “This is a New Year’s resolution that is free, easy to do and will make a big difference.”

No matter what winter has in store for Virginians – floods, ice storms, heavy snows, tornadoes or other surprises – being prepared ahead of time can protect families, speed up recovery, and reduce losses and suffering. By following guidance from **Ready Virginia**, preparing for emergencies can be a simple and realistic resolution that can be kept all year long.

Making a family plan is a critical step in emergency preparedness because families may not be together when an emergency happens. Decide in advance how family members will contact each other, how they will reunite, and what they will do in different situations.

Start a family emergency plan by taking these steps:

- **Choose an out-of-town friend or relative as an emergency point of contact.** During emergencies it is often easier to make a long distance call than a local call. An out-of-town contact can help communicate among separated family members. Be sure everyone in your family knows the phone number for that person.
- **If you have cell phones, teach family members how to use text messaging.** Text messages can often get around cell network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- **Decide on a meeting place in case you cannot return home.** Choose a neighborhood meeting place and another meeting place outside your neighborhood in case you can’t return there. For example, your neighborhood meeting place may be a friend’s house on the next street. A meeting place outside your neighborhood may be a nearby church, store or another friend’s home.
- **If you are a parent, ask your schools and daycare providers about their emergency plans.** Find out how they will communicate with families during a crisis. Ask if they are prepared to “shelter in place” if needed and where they plan to go if they must leave.
- **Talk with your family about the types of emergencies that could happen to you.** Include weather emergencies, health crises and human-caused situations.
- **Write down your family emergency plan.** Get printable worksheets to make a plan at www.ReadyVirginia.gov. This Web site also provides information about collecting emergency supplies and responding to all types of emergencies.

“Every family and neighborhood that is prepared for emergencies frees up first responders to take care of those who are in dire need,” said Cline. “That’s another important reason to resolve to make your own personal plan for emergencies.”

Research shows that families with written emergency plans are better able to handle and recover from unexpected situations, emergencies and disasters. For more information, visit www.ReadyVirginia.gov or the Spanish-language Web site, www.ListoVirginia.gov. The Web sites include free information, family plan worksheets, checklists and guidelines about the two other key components of emergency preparedness – getting an emergency supply kit and staying informed.

To reach the **Ready Virginia** office at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, call toll-free 1-866-782-3470.

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