

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact Julie Beeman  
Family Resource Management and Entrepreneurship Agent, Wildcat Extension District  
[juliesmith@ksu.edu](mailto:juliesmith@ksu.edu) (620) 331-2690

## **Americans Stand Ready: Three Steps Every Family Should Take During National Preparedness Month**

September is National Preparedness Month. This year's theme - "Americans Stand Ready" - reminds us that preparedness begins long before an emergency occurs. Whether facing severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, flooding, or other disasters, families who plan ahead are better able to protect themselves and potentially recover more quickly in the face of an unfortunate event.

Here are three steps you can take this month to better prepare yourself and your family. I encourage you to take note and also share with those around you as we build stronger communities through preparedness.

### **1. Make a Family Emergency Plan**

When an emergency occurs, family members may not be together. Children may be at school, parents may be at work, and cell phone service may be limited. Taking time now to discuss emergency procedures can reduce confusion and stress later.

Every family should identify a meeting location and create an emergency contact list. It's good to discuss how you will best try to communicate if you are separated. Consider special needs within your household, including medications, pets, older adults, and family members with disabilities. A written plan helps everyone know what to do before a crisis occurs. FEMA identifies having a family plan as one of the most important preparedness actions households can take.

### **2. Build or Update an Emergency Supply Kit**

Preparedness does not require expensive purchases. Start with the basics: water, nonperishable food, flashlights, batteries, medications, first-aid supplies, important documents, and pet supplies. Experts recommend maintaining enough supplies to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

If you already have an emergency kit, take time in September to check expiration dates, replace batteries, update contact information, and adjust supplies to meet your family's changing needs. Small improvements made over time can create a well-stocked emergency kit without straining the family budget.

### **3. Know Your Risks and Stay Informed**

Preparedness looks different depending on where you live. In Kansas, we often face tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flooding, extreme heat, winter weather, and power outages. Understanding local risks allows families to make informed decisions about preparation.

Sign up for local emergency alerts and know where to find reliable information during emergencies. Thinking about which hazards are most likely in your community helps you prepare the right supplies and develop appropriate response plans.

The "Americans Stand Ready" theme reminds us that preparedness is not only about protecting ourselves. When families are prepared, first responders can focus on those facing the greatest needs, and communities recover more quickly after disasters. Taking a few simple steps today can make a significant difference tomorrow.

For more information, contact Julie Beeman at (620) 784-5337 or by emailing [juliesmith@ksu.edu](mailto:juliesmith@ksu.edu).

# # #

#### **Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts