



**DATE:** August 31, 2016  
**TO:** DeKalb County News Media  
**FROM:** Lisa Gonzalez, Public Health Administrator

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:***

September is National Preparedness Month and the DeKalb County Health Department reminds residents that this is a good time to communicate with family about how you will stay safe and communicate during an emergency or disaster. This year's national theme for September is "Don't Wait, Communicate. Make your Emergency Plan Today."

Some disasters strike without any warning, and family members may not all be in the same place. How will you get in touch with each other? Where will you meet? How will you get out of your house in case of a fire? What if your neighborhood is being evacuated? It's important to make a plan now so that you will know what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate in an emergency. Emergencies can happen at any time, not just when everyone is together. Create a communication plan and make sure that everyone in your family has it with them at all times.

**Make a Plan.** There are three easy steps to start your emergency communication plan:

- 1. Collect information.** *Before* an emergency happens, have a family discussion to determine how you will get in touch with each other if you are not in the same location.
- 2. Share your emergency plans.** Make sure everyone carries a copy in his or her backpack, purse, or wallet.
- 3. Practice your plan with family.** Review and practice your plan with your family on a regular basis. It is also important to have two places to meet: right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire, and outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate.

Be sure to visit the DeKalb County Health Department's Facebook and Twitter throughout September for additional tips to keep your family safe during an emergency. You can also visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) for additional tools to help you and your family prepare!

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