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## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE: COUNTY OFFICIALS OBSERVE SEPTEMBER AS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**



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**Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.**— Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety and Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) are observing September as National Preparedness Month in order to remind residents of easy ways to keep their families prepared and safe during emergencies. Weekly messaging will be released to news media outlets and community partners to help spread the word about the importance of emergency preparedness.

“Emergencies can happen at any time, so individuals and families should start planning and preparing now,” stated Alvin Henderson, Director of Public Safety for Okaloosa County. “Stay tuned in the following weeks for specific messages that will help prepare our communities for all types of emergencies.”

“Preparing and planning for all types of emergencies is important to make sure everyone remains safe and healthy,” stated Katie McDeavitt, Public Health Preparedness Section Chief for DOH-Okaloosa. “There are simple steps that your family can take to prepare, and this month will be an opportunity to highlight those steps.”

The overall theme of the month is *Don't Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.*

The following is the schedule of press releases and topics:

- Week 1—Family Emergency Communications Plan
- Week 2—Emergency Supply Kit and Pet Plan
- Week 3—Emergency Preparedness and Information Apps
- Week 4—Special Needs Shelter Registry

For more information, please visit [www.co.okaloosa.fl.us](http://www.co.okaloosa.fl.us) or [www.healthyokaloosa.com](http://www.healthyokaloosa.com)

### **About Okaloosa County Public Safety**

*The Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety mission is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our community with pride and professionalism and consists of the following divisions: 911 Communications, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Emergency Management and Beach Safety. Since 2002, Okaloosa County has been an official **Storm Ready County**, and meets several emergency management criteria: the 24 hour Warning Point, the six different means of receiving National Weather Service warnings, the ability to monitor real time data at both the Emergency Operations Center in south Okaloosa and the 24 hour Warning Point in the north.*

**About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

**For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).** Follow us on Twitter: [\\_@OKALOOSAEOC](#) or [@FLHealthEmerald](#) or on Facebook: [Okaloosa Public Safety Emergency Management](#) or Florida Department of Health.

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