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## **Don't Wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today**

September is Preparedness Month in Wisconsin

(MADISON) – This summer, several areas of Wisconsin have been hit hard by severe storms, flash floods and tornadoes. That's why Governor Scott Walker has declared September as Preparedness Month to encourage people across the state to take time now to prepare before disaster strikes.

"Developing a family emergency plan is important," says Major General Don Dunbar, Adjutant General and Wisconsin's Homeland Security Advisor. "Everyone should have a plan that includes information on where to go during an emergency and how to communicate with loved ones if separated in a crisis."

An emergency plan should include:

- Family meeting places to make sure everyone is safe. One designated location should be close to your home and the other in your neighborhood.
- A contact list in both paper copy and electronic with current contact information for those individuals you may need to reach during an emergency. Make sure you keep a paper copy in your wallet and in your emergency kit.
- The plan should contain alternative methods of communications in case phone service is not available.

Consider text messaging during an emergency. Often times in a disaster, phone service may be overwhelmed and unavailable. Cell phone text messages may still get through because they take less band width to send and receive messages.

Also, calling long distance may be easier than making a local call. Ask a friend or family member to be your "out of town" contact. During an emergency, you can contact that person to let them know you are ok and that they can share that information with your family.

Developing an emergency communications plan is just one step to get ready for emergencies. Each week this September, ReadyWisconsin will highlight easy and inexpensive ways for you and your family to prepare for emergency situations. You can visit <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov> for more information. You can also follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

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