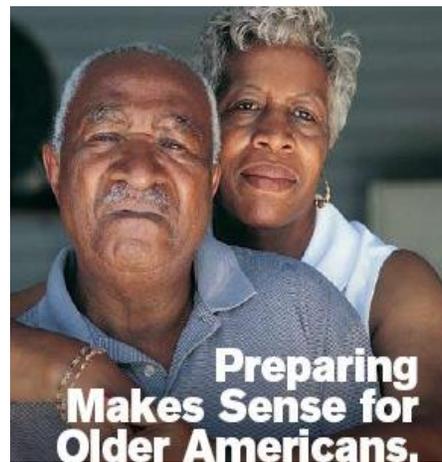




For Immediate Release
May 4, 2016

May is Older Americans Month Seniors Encouraged to Prepare



“As we celebrate our seniors during May, **“Older Americans Month,”** we also encourage them to join our teamand get prepared for disasters,” said Dale Lane, Shelby County Office of Preparedness (SCOP) Director. Seniors are asked to follow these steps to get ready:

1. **Learn the Risks:** Find out what to do before, during, and after inclement weather events (flooding, tornadoes, heat, and winter storms), earthquakes, terrorism, hazardous materials accidents, outages, and epidemics. Write down your plan and practice it twice a year.
2. **Assessment:** Create a list of your functional abilities, needs, and resources. What can you do now with and without assistance? What will you need help with during a disaster?
3. **Get a Kit:** Create a portable disaster kit with bottled water, non-perishable food, tools, personal protective equipment, cash, maps, whistle, clothing, portable toilet, and hygiene items. Include items specific for you such as medication, copies of important documents (as well as electronic versions), wheelchair, oxygen, hearing aid batteries, eye glasses, or cane.
4. **Create a Support Network** of family, neighbors, and friends who can help you during a disaster. Make sure your support group knows of your medical conditions, travel requirements, how to operate your special equipment, and the best way to communicate with you. Give them a key to your home.
5. **Make a Plan:** Learn how to shelter-in-place and evacuate. Have an escape plan out of your home. Create a communications plan (have an emergency phone lists programmed into cell phones with a back-up paper copy). Have an out-of-state contact to call if you are separated from your group. If you have a service animal or a pet, have a plan to evacuate with your animal or have support members take care of them. Confer with your medical

providers about how to obtain emergency treatments if you must evacuate. Find out about local assistance programs in your area ahead of time.

6. **Stay Informed:** Have a NOAA all-hazards weather radio with a battery back-up with you. Alerting accessories can be attached to weather radios (strobe lights, LED screens, and bed shakers). Upload emergency and weather apps to mobile devices. Learn to text and text your support group members if you need assistance.
7. **Register** yourself or senior loved one with the local fire station and Memphis Light, Gas and Water if you have special needs.

For more information about senior preparedness, please visit:

www.fema.gov, www.ready.gov

www.staysafeshelby.us

www.weather.gov

www.thearcmidssouth.org

www.redcross.org

End of Release