



Shelby County Office of Preparedness HLS / EMA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Be the Hero this September - National Preparedness Month!



The Shelby County Office of Preparedness, under the direction of Bob Nations, Jr., invites you to “**Be the Hero**” this September, as we recognize and celebrate **National Preparedness Month!**

During a disaster, citizens will be first on the scene – essentially, the “first responder.” When the next unexpected event occurs in Shelby County, what part will you play - a victim or the hero?

Becoming the hero in preparedness simply means taking ownership of your own survival. The time between the event and the professional responder arrives on the scene is when trained citizens make a difference. The more trained and knowledgeable you are, the more likely you will be able to survive the emergency and lead others to safety.

The Shelby County Office of Preparedness enthusiastically supports our Citizen Corps initiatives that trains and encourages citizens to respond appropriately and effectively - such as, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. The Office of Preparedness offers SKYWARN classes instructed by the National Weather Service at the EOC and conducts disaster preparedness presentations throughout the county.

- To become a preparedness hero, the first step is to learn what potential events may occur here, such as earthquakes, flooding, hazardous materials accidents, power outages, major fires, terrorism, and inclement weather events (tornados, straight-line winds, flash flooding, snow, and ice storms).

- Second, heroes should create a disaster kit for home, work and auto that will sustain you, your family, and your pets for at least seven days. It should be portable in case evacuations are ordered. Don't forget to include medications and essential personal papers for insurance, medical, finance, and household inventory.
- Third, heroes should make a plan for every hazard. Designate a "safe place" at home and work. For wind events, go to the lowest floor of the building with the most walls surrounding it, away from windows. For hazardous materials events, go to an interior room, not in a basement, that can be easily closed off to seal you in until the all clear. Have a communications plan with everyone in your family by programming ICE (in case of emergency) phone numbers in your cell phone and designating an out of state contact everyone will check in with. Decide on a meeting place outside of the home. Practice your plans!
- Fourth, heroes need to stay informed. Purchase an All-Hazards, NOAA Weather Radio with a battery back-up, S.A.M.E. feature, and tone alert or an ALERT FM personal messaging system. Take advantage of the free social media alerts from the local TV stations, FEMA, and the National Weather Service.
- Fifth, heroes should make it a point to "be a buddy" to those who may need extra help if a disaster occurs.

It has been a decade since Citizen Corps and the Ready Campaign was created in 2003 to encourage and include citizens in the quest for everyone to prepare for disasters. Since 2003, the Shelby County Office of Preparedness has trained hundreds of citizens, church groups, and businesses in how to prepare, how to shelter-in-place or evacuate. The agency continues its goal to be an instrument of change in our county and to increase our collective awareness of how to stay safe.

This September, decide to be heroic in your preparedness efforts! Take CERT with your family or co-workers, become certified in Basic Life Saving, take a course in First Aid, or become a SKYWARN Weather Spotter. Your efforts now may save your life and those you most care about. **Be the hero!**

Resources:

Shelby County CERT: email Eugene.jones@shelbycountyttn.gov

www.staysafeshelby.us
www.fema.gov
www.citizencorps.gov
www.ready.gov/build-a-kit
www.ready.gov/be-informed
www.ready.gov/natural-disasters
www.ready.gov/get-tech-ready
www.ready.gov/alerts
www.ready.gov/today
www.ready.gov/caring-animals
www.ready.gov/evacuating-yourself-and-your-family



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