Narrative:

September is National Preparedness Month. During this observance, people are reminded to take action throughout the year to prepare for emergencies that can affect them where they live and work.

The Department of Homeland Security provides disaster information, planning tools and other helpful resources in support of National Preparedness Month. This year's overarching theme is “Disasters Don't Plan Ahead. You Can.”

The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase the number of individuals, families and communities that engage in preparedness actions at home, work, business, school and place of worship.

Make a plan for yourself, family and friends, and signup for alerts and warnings in your area. Be sure to practice your plans.

Planning and preparing for a disaster could save your life.

Key Messages:

- The Army's focus remains steadfast to educate, empower and involve the Army community in preparedness activities that enhance the Army's resiliency and increase the nation's readiness for all hazard events.

- Make a plan and remember that your family may not be together if a disaster strikes. It's important to know which types of disasters could affect your area.

- Consider specific needs in your household. Discuss your needs and responsibilities and how people in the network can assist each other with communication, care of children, business, pets or specific needs like the operation of durable medical equipment.

- Let someone know your travel plans, to include anticipated time of departure, route and expected time of arrival at your destination. If these change, update that person.

- Don’t be in a hurry. Give yourself sufficient time to complete your journey and add extra time to your planning to accommodate unexpected developments.

- Weather-related fatalities in automobiles in ice and snow conditions represent 70 percent of all weather-related deaths, according to the National Weather Service.

- Technology such as smartphones and GPS devices can only help you if they're charged.

- If you think the weather is too hazardous for travel, or if it changes when you're on the road, don't try and force the issue. Waiting for better weather is worth the delay.
• Staying warm and well hydrated are the most important things to consider if you become stranded in your car.

• A list of recommended items that should be in your vehicle for winter travel is available at Ready.gov and other sites.

Talking Points:

• National Preparedness Month is observed each September to emphasize the importance of preparedness and serve as a reminder of the simple actions we can take to be prepared when disaster strikes.

• Knowing how to shut off utilities like gas, water and electricity is key after a disaster.

• If you don’t know where the shut-off valves for water, gas and electricity are, call your utility company and ask someone to show you.

• Participate in an emergency drill and know how to access community resources (e.g., shelters, food banks).

• Have at least a one-week supply of medications on hand.

• Gather and store critical personal, household and medical information for easy access during a disaster.

• Staying warm and hydrated are your most important considerations should you find yourself stranded in a vehicle during winter weather.

Statistics:

The following is a summary of 2016 weather-related fatalities in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands:

Flood, 126; lightning, 38; tornado, 18; hurricane, 11; heat, 94; winter, 30; cold, 31; wind, 46; and rip currents, 58.

*Source the National Weather Service

Resources:

Make A Plan, Ready.gov

Emergency Plan for Parents

Steps to make a plan

U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center