

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATE AGENCIES OFFER INFO, RESOURCES TO HELP TENNESSEANS PREP FOR SEVERE WEATHER HAZARDS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee's Severe Weather Awareness Week is Feb. 23, to Feb. 29, 2020, and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI), and Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) are using this week to promote preparedness to Tennesseans.

"Preparedness is critical to helping Tennesseans be resilient when faced with a disaster or in its aftermath," said TEMA Director Patrick Sheehan. "Resiliency means understanding hazards and threats, like severe weather, making sure you have multiple ways to receive disaster warnings and information, and having an emergency plan and supplies so you can keep yourself and your loved ones safe before and after an emergency."

Tennessee's National Weather Service offices in Nashville, Memphis, Morristown, and in Huntsville, Ala. are planning a series of education and training events, using each day of Severe Weather Awareness Week to focus on a different severe weather threat. Information on the NWS activities is available at www.weather.gov/ohx/swaw2020.

A highlight of the week will be the statewide tornado drill NWS will conduct at 9:30 a.m., CST, on Thurs., Feb. 27, 2020. The drill will also include a statewide test of NOAA weather radios.

Protect Your Life and Home from Severe Weather

TDCI is reminding consumers that flood insurance can lower consumers' financial burden in the event of devastating flooding. Flooding damages are not typically covered through most insurance policies for homeowners and renters. Flood insurance can be purchased through an agent or insurer participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

"By raising greater awareness about preparing before a disaster strikes, we hope to help the recovery process go smoother and to build resiliency in Tennessee," said TDCI Commissioner Hodgen Mainda. "Today, I urge Tennesseans to learn more about flood insurance so they can better prepare themselves and their families in the event of a disaster."

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If your home is damaged following severe weather or flooding, protect yourself by getting more than one bid from contractors and requesting references.

Visit TDCI's disaster recovery resources webpage, <https://www.tn.gov/commerce/disasters>, for more information.

The Tennessee Department of Health urges Tennesseans to prepare for severe weather to help prevent injuries and deaths. Individuals and families should have plans that include a place to take shelter and a meeting site if loved ones become separated.

"Severe weather can strike quickly, so it's important to be prepared and discuss your plan with your loved ones before you're in an emergency situation," said Tennessee Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP. "Have a plan and a kit of emergency supplies so you can take action if needed to protect yourself and your family."

Severe Weather Preparedness Tips

TEMA's website includes an emergency preparedness section at <https://www.tn.gov/tema/prepare.html>, with practical information on creating emergency plans for yourself and your family, emergency planning for children, the top threats in Tennessee, local contact information for county-level emergency management agencies, and an area devoted to active shooter preparedness.

Some basic severe weather advice includes:

- Never venture into high water, either on foot or in a vehicle.
- If you're outside and hear thunder, go indoors immediately.
- Go to a basement or an innermost, first floor room in your home if you're told to take shelter during a tornado warning.
- Know the location of and route to your office or building's tornado shelter.
- Never try to outrun a tornado.
- Have an emergency plan ready at places where your family spends time – work, school, daycare, commuting and outdoor events.
- Emergency plans should include where to meet, and who family members should check in with, if you are separated from family members during a severe weather emergency.

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TEMA's ReadyTN mobile application, available for Apple and Android devices, provides emergency preparedness, response, and recovery information, with features including:

- Basic emergency kit checklists and emergency checklists for special populations;
- Detailed descriptions and information on the major hazards in Tennessee;
- Notices of public alerts and warnings issued in Tennessee;
- A regional list of local emergency management agency contacts by county
- Traffic updates from the Tennessee Department of Transportation's SmartWay resource;
- Information on American Red Cross shelters that may be open near their locations in emergency situations; and,
- Immediate visual notification on TEMA's operational status and whether a State of Emergency exists.

A complete list of ReadyTN's features, as well as direct links to download, is available on TEMA's website at www.tn.gov/ready-tn.html.

At a minimum, emergency preparedness kits should include one gallon of water per-day, per-person, and per-pet, for three to five days. The kit should also have enough non-perishable food for each family member, and pets, for three to five days.

Other items for an emergency kit include: flashlight, battery-powered radio, extra batteries, first aid kit, personal hygiene items, cell phone charger or solar charger, copies of important family documents, and extra supplies of medications, especially for those with chronic health conditions.

A number of websites have resources to help individuals and families create emergency plans. The website, <https://www.ready.gov/>, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, <https://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/kit/disasters/>, have information, fill-in-the-blank documents, and other resources to help individuals and families assemble the basic components for personal emergency plans.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has emergency preparedness information for businesses at www.sba.gov/managing-business/running-business/emergency-preparedness. The Ready website also includes a workplace preparedness section at <https://www.ready.gov/workplace-plans>.

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About the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency: TEMA's mission is to coordinate preparedness, response and recovery from man-made, natural and technological hazards in a professional and efficient manner in concert with our stakeholders. Follow TEMA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#), and, at www.tn.gov/tema.

About ReadyTN: ReadyTN is a mobile device application from the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) providing emergency preparedness, response, and recovery information to Tennesseans. Ready TN is available for mobile devices running Apple and Android operating systems. For more information on ReadyTN's features and on downloading, visit www.tn.gov/tema/ready-tn.html.