**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Ohio Department of Aging offers preparedness tips and resources for older adults**

*September is National Preparedness Month*

**Columbus, Ohio** – During National Preparedness Month, the Ohio Department of Aging reminds all Ohioans that older adults may have a harder time adjusting during emergencies and extreme conditions than younger people do. This makes it even more important that older Ohioans have a plan for what to do if disaster strikes.

“Emergencies and disasters can happen quickly and without warning. Ensure the best by planning for the worst,” said Ursel J. McElroy, director of the department. “Take time this month to know what you will do if you are confined to your home or must leave it quickly.”

The Department of Aging recommends that all older Ohioans have a plan that will allow them to remain in place in their home or another location for at least three days. This includes:

* **A home emergency kit** that contains, at a minimum, a battery-operated radio, a loud whistle or horn, food that can be opened and prepared easily, one gallon of water per person per day, extra blankets, and a first aid kit;
* **A “go-bag”** with essentials you might need if you must leave your home quickly, including food and drink, toiletries, medication, a flashlight and batteries, a radio, a phone charger, important paperwork, identification, and some cash;
* **A backup supply of medications**, and extra copies of your prescriptions from your health care providers (include a cooler and ice packs for medications that must be refrigerated); and
* **Any medical equipment or assistive devices** (such as canes, walkers, wheelchairs, lifts, and oxygen tanks) you may need, with operation instructions and spare batteries or non-powered alternatives.

Be prepared to explain to rescuers how to move you or help you move safely and quickly, such as where to find any equipment or medications you will need. Ask a reliable family member, friend, or neighbor to visit or call you in severe weather or another emergency to make sure you are okay. Agree on what they should do if they are unable to reach you or find you needing help.

Your area agency on aging can point you to local resources to help you and your older loved ones be prepared. Call 1-866-243-5678 to be connected to the agency serving your community. Visit [www.ready.ohio.gov](http://www.ready.ohio.gov) and [www.aging.ohio.gov/safeathome](http://www.aging.ohio.gov/safeathome) for more tips and resources.

*Video message from Director McElroy*: [youtu.be/y5u\_Bs0GL88](https://youtu.be/y5u_Bs0GL88)
*Radio/podcast partners*: [Download audio clips on this topic from Director McElroy.](https://aging.sharefile.com/d-s74c7d52861f4e2e9)

**About ODA –** The Ohio Department of Aging serves and advocates for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older, as well as their families, caregivers and communities. Programs include home and community based long-term supports and services, as well as initiatives to promote health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Visit www.aging.ohio.gov.

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