

News Release

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Oregon Department of Human Services urges Oregonians to help one another be prepared before the next disaster

Honor those impacted by the 2020 wildfires by proactively preparing for future disasters.

(Salem, Oregon) – The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) joins the national observation of Preparedness Month during September by encouraging Oregonians to help one another in their readiness efforts.

“This past year’s extreme heat, wildfires and ice storms remind us of the importance of preparing ourselves for any kind of disaster, as well as our responsibility to help our neighbors, friends and family,” ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht said. “We urge Oregonians to use this heightened awareness and take action today to ensure their community is prepared before the next emergency strikes.”

“If you already have an emergency plan and kit, that’s great! Now’s the time to help others be prepared,” Ed Flick, director of ODHS’ emergency management unit said. “If you haven’t started, or haven’t finished your emergency planning, why not use this time to work with others to get it done? The experience of working together with another person can make this essential task easier.”

ODHS suggests Oregonians act now by taking these steps:

- Be aware of potential hazards in the area and [sign up for emergency alerts](#).
- Be “2 Weeks Ready” with at least two weeks’ worth of food, water and critical supplies. Learn how to assemble an emergency supply kit at [Ready.gov](#) or [American Red Cross](#).
- Talk with your friends and family about being prepared. Ask if they have a plan yet and what concerns them about disasters. That can help you know where to prioritize planning efforts.
- If your family or friends includes [people with disabilities](#) or [older adults](#), learn about specific steps they might need to take to be prepared. Many of the tips for people with disabilities also apply to older adults. Understanding and preparing for needs like medications, mobility devices, equipment that needs

electricity and specialized transportation can make the difference in a person being able to remain safely in place or evacuate.

- Do your friends, family or neighbors have language, cultural or religious considerations that need to be addressed? Have an early conversation about how to address those needs before disaster strikes.
- Talk with your neighbors. Are they prepared? Do any neighbors have specialized equipment, like a generator that could help another neighbor use their life-saving equipment? Or expertise like medical training? Develop a plan on who will check on neighbors in need during an emergency.

“Let’s all use the valuable lessons of the disasters we’ve experienced in 2021 to plan together so we can be more resilient and prepared for the future,” Flick said.

About ODHS and disasters: Oregon’s emergency and recovery plans give ODHS responsibility to support impacted Oregonians during emergencies and recovery, at the request of and in partnership with local and tribal governments. This is in keeping with the agency’s primary role to assist people in meeting their basic needs while moving toward independence. ODHS is responsible for supporting the sheltering, feeding, emergency assistance and human services needs of people impacted by disasters. In this role, ODHS coordinates efforts among local and Tribal governments and nongovernmental organizations.

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