

## ★Featured Article: Stay Prepared during National Preparedness Month★

Throughout this past year, disasters have inflicted damage and adversity upon communities nationwide. Hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, floods, and volcanic eruptions are among the many natural disasters that have affected our states and territories. The hurricane season last year included three catastrophic storms that occurred within a month, followed by a series of destructive wildfires in California. These disasters collectively affected nearly 50 million people, displacing people from their communities, destroying homes and businesses, and injuring thousands of people. With over 3,000 estimated deaths, 2017 was reported the deadliest hurricane season in history. As communities continue to recover from these disasters, and others anticipate the effects of another hurricane season, we are reminded of the importance of preparedness. As you may already know, September is recognized as National Preparedness Month, a time dedicated to focusing our attention to the significance of preparing our families, homes, and greater communities for disasters that threaten our lives and national security. During this month, we also honor the men and women who selflessly respond to the disasters and render aid to those in need. These tragedies that have occurred over the past year are somber reminders that preparedness is both a personal and collective responsibility to ensure readiness nationwide.

During emergencies and natural disasters, immediate aid is never guaranteed. As the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintains: you are the help until help arrives. This illustrates the need to not only learn life-saving skills, but also to be prepared within your home and greater community. We have continually expressed the importance of making an emergency preparedness plan, which you can read about [here](#). You can also download an emergency plan [template](#) from FEMA that can be individualized to your home, business, or community.

In recent years, as the threat of emergencies and natural disasters have become increasingly imminent, the “prepping” phenomena has become more popular. Despite an abundance of misconceptions surrounding it, prepping is simply the process of preparing for the future by acquiring necessary supplies, learning requisite skills, and building a strong community. With the rise in popularity of prepping, the demand for bug-out gear has increased as well. A bug-out kit typically includes a 3-day supply of food, water, and other safety tools, which altogether gives you the ability to evacuate quickly in the event of an emergency. The supplies can vary by individual need, but in general should include a first-aid kit, fire sources, a flashlight, and blankets, in addition to non-perishable food and water.

When creating our newest product, the [Bug-Out Vest](#), we used information gathered from a focus group of preppers to ensure its design would meet their unique needs, while also maintaining concealability to wear discreetly while traveling, during outdoor activities, or when “bugging out.” The vest offers a revolutionary new way to stay prepared. It was designed to pair perfectly with your other bug-out gear, ensuring you can easily slide the vest on and evacuate during an emergency situation. Its 10 pockets ensure that you will have ample space to store your flashlight, gun, medical kit, important documents, and other bug-out necessities. The vest’s lightweight and breathable material ensures you will be comfortable during extended wear, and the non-slip shoulder pads keep your backpack in place throughout the day. Like all of our

products, the vest is equipped with two NIJ IIIA anti-ballistic panels, making the vest a perfect option for safety-conscious preppers.

We have always expressed the importance of preparedness, aiming to give you the latest safety tips and news. In a nation prone to disasters, the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is to maintain preparedness well in advance. Emergencies can happen anywhere, at any time-- sometimes when you least expect it. Each year, September reminds us of the importance of both individual and nationwide preparedness. This month, and throughout the year, we encourage all Americans to take proactive action in their personal and community-wide disaster preparedness.

## **September is National Preparedness Month**

September is National Preparedness Month, otherwise known as Preptember. This month is the ideal time to review your personal, home, and community safety practices, and make the necessary changes to better protect yourself and those around you. Preparing for any type of emergency is important regardless of the time of year, but we encourage you to use this month as a way to start if you have not already. As September begins, we look forward to bringing you a month of preparedness and safety strategies.

### **Week 4: save for an emergency**

Throughout the month, we have provided you with tips for making an emergency plan, learning life-saving skills, and checking your insurance policies and coverage. For the final week of National Preparedness Month, we will focus on the importance of saving for an emergency and planning financially for the possibility of a disaster. Americans at all income levels have experienced the challenges of rebuilding their lives after a disaster or other emergency occurs. During these circumstances, it is crucial to have access to financial, insurance, medical, and other records in order to start the process of recovery quickly and efficiently. Preparing in advance and taking the time to collect and secure these records will both give you peace of mind and will also ensure that you have the necessary documentation in the event of an emergency. Here are some tips from FEMA this week:

1. Gather financial and critical personal, household, and medical information.
2. Consider saving money in an emergency savings account that can be used in a crisis. Keep a small amount of cash at home in a safe place. Keep small bills on hand because ATM's and credit cards may not work during a disaster if you need to purchase necessary supplies.
3. Obtain property, health, life, and flood insurance if you do not have them. review existing policies for the amount and extent of coverage to ensure that what you have in place is enough for you and your family for a variety of emergencies.
4. Store important documents either in a safety deposit box, or an external drive for ease of access during an emergency.

**Household identification documentation includes:** photo identification of household members, birth certificates, social security cards, pet ID tags.

**Financial & Legal Documentation includes:** housing payments, insurance policies, tax statements.

**Medical Information includes:** medications, immunization records, copies of health insurance information, physician information.

We offer a variety of backpacks that will meet the needs for a basic emergency kit, spacious enough for important documents and supplies. Our Guardian and Everyday backpacks both offer NIJ IIIA Bulletproof protection and have the storage space available to create an efficient emergency supply kit for the workplace, household, or vehicle. Additionally, our NIJ IIIA Bulletproof Survival Pack and Safety Kit is a great option. The backpack has both a well-stocked first aid kit and a basic survival supplies kit with a 5-year guaranteed shelf life. The first-aid kit contains enough supplies for 25 people, and includes bandages, gauze dressing pads, antiseptic towelettes, cold compresses, and gloves, among other essentials. The basic survival supply kit includes water, blankets, a flashlight, crank radio, a whistle, tools, and tissues, among others.

As the end of National Preparedness Month nears, stay safe and be prepared. The best way to prepare for any emergency is to practice regularly, stay informed, and be equipped with adequate supplies and resources in your household, workplace, and community. Being proactive in emergency preparation could save your life!

### **Week 3: Check your coverage**

When a disaster strikes, the last thing you want to worry about is a financial emergency. Insurance is your first line of defense; that's why this week is dedicated to learning more about your insurance coverage. About 80% of households impacted by Hurricane Harvey last year did not have flood insurance. During natural disasters like floods and hurricanes, many individuals can lose their home and belongings. Most homeowners' and renters' insurance does not cover flood damage. Luckily, flood insurance can give you the financial protection you need to get back into your home easier, and it allows communities and families to recover more quickly and more fully.

FEMA recommends that everyone visit the [FloodSmart](#) website to learn more about buying and renewing flood insurance, understanding their risk, and how to reduce policy cost. As they mention, no home is completely safe from potential flooding—more than 20% of flood claims come from properties outside high-risk flood zones. Just one inch of water in a home can cost more than \$25,000 in damage, and without flood insurance, most residents have to pay out of pocket or take out loans to repair and replace damaged items. The average flood insurance claim is nearly \$30,000, and does not have to be repaid. You can also look at [a flood map](#), which shows flood zones defined by FEMA according to varying levels of risk and type of flooding. Everyone lives in an area with some risk of flood—it's just a question of whether it is a low, moderate, or high-risk area.

At BulletBlocker, we feature a variety of products that can be used in the event of a disaster or emergency. Our bulletproof Tactical Organizer is a great place to store your emergency plan and additional necessary documents and supplies. The NIJ IIIA Bulletproof organizer is waterproof

and lightweight, with six separate storage compartments. Additionally, our Defender Notebook Folio is a great option for retaining emergency plans and documents, with ample pockets for storage and supplies, both of these products will also act as a ballistic shield if it becomes necessary to protect yourself or your family. Our NIJ IIIA Bulletproof Tactical Backpack is an ideal choice for your bug-out-bag or when you are seeking a safe place for emergency supplies and tools that also will aid you in defending your friends or family. This backpack features multiple storage compartments, mesh pockets, and thickly padded straps, and is large enough to store essential supplies for the whole family.

This week, consider checking your coverage and updating your insurance policy if necessary. Insurance is both financial protection and peace of mind in the event of an emergency.

## **Week 2: Learn Life-saving Skills**

This week of Preptember will focus on the importance of learning life-saving skills. Prior to an emergency, it is necessary to stay up-to-date on relevant safety information, and prepare yourself for a variety of situations—whether it is a natural disaster or man-made. Not only should you prepare yourself personally, but you should also ensure that your home, workplace, family members, and greater community are prepared as well. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) put together a comprehensive list of safety measures to take this week to ensure your preparedness is up to date:

- Put smoke alarms on every level of your home, test them monthly, and replace them when they are after 10 years.
- Learn basic home maintenance to protect your family and home. Learn [how to protect your home](#) against flood damage, or protect the impacts of earthquakes.
- Know the [ways to keep your home safe](#) from cooking, heating, and electrical fires.
- Turn off utilities (like natural gas) in your home.
- September 15th is a National Day of Action. Consider hosting a preparedness event within your community and bringing greater awareness toward the importance of National Preparedness Month.
- As we discuss in this month's newsletter, consider making an emergency supply "bug-out" kit. This kit should prepare you to last for 72 hours, and be stocked with adequate food, water, medication, and other necessary supplies for you and other household members.

Learning life-saving skills like the ones above can be an asset and advantage in the event of a disaster. Taking a local CPR/First Aid training course is an inexpensive way to ensure that you are prepared. These classes teach basic life support and practical skills that can be utilized while waiting for external support. Volunteering to help local emergency responders is another great way to get involved in your community and better prepare yourself for emergency situations. Unfortunately, most people are not as prepared for disaster as they may think they are. [Research](#) shows that 40% of people do not have emergency household plans, 80% have not conducted home evacuation drills, and about 60% do not know their community's evacuation route. Many individuals rely on their neighbors following an emergency, especially the frail, elderly, and disabled, so additional considerations should be taken for individuals requiring special care.

Organizing and facilitating community meetings among your school, workplace, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood is the best way to ensure that all members are prepared and equipped with knowledge on how to respond to various emergencies.

This month, consider taking proactive steps in your safety by learning life-saving skills, and encouraging those around you to do so as well.

### **Week 1: Making & Practicing your Emergency Plan**

This week, we will discuss the importance of making and practicing an emergency plan within your household, which can also be extended to your workplace, school, or greater community. According to the [CDC](#), about half of all adults do not have an emergency plan in place, or the proper resources needed to be prepared in the event of an emergency. Implementing a plan and preparing in advance can make emergency situations less stressful for you and your loved ones. Many people may think it is not necessary to make a plan, but the last thing you want in an emergency is to be unprepared and in need of help. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, you should consider the following [4 questions](#) when making your plan with your family, friends or within your household:

1. **How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?** Consider signing up for various emergency alerts and warnings through your phone. There is a list of relevant alert systems that you can sign up for located [here](#).
2. **What is my shelter plan?** Taking shelter is appropriate when conditions require that you seek security outside of your home when disaster strikes. Shelters could include a family or friend's house, commercial lodging, or a mass care facility.
3. **What is my evacuation route?** A variety of emergencies may cause an evacuation. Sometimes you have a day or two to prepare, while other situations may call for immediate evacuation. Planning a comprehensive evacuation route ensures that you can leave quickly and safely at a moment's notice.
4. **What is my family/household communication plan?** How will you stay in contact? Where is the specific meeting place for all household members? This is important to prepare for well in advance of any emergency.

In addition to these four questions, it is also important to consider specific needs in your household to tailor the plan to your unique situation. Are there specific dietary needs of any individual? Medical necessities including prescriptions and equipment? Pets or service animals? Disabilities that require special devices or attention? Once you have considered these things, create your emergency plan by making your own, or downloading a [template](#) to use as a guide. The final and arguably most important step is to practice your plan. There is no use in having an emergency plan if only one household member knows about it, or if it is never properly practiced. It is necessary to run through the emergency plan multiple times to ensure efficiency and readiness in the event of an emergency.

At Bullet Blocker, we offer a variety of safety solutions to add to your preparedness. Our NIJ IIIA level bulletproof products can be a great addition to any individual's safety solutions. Among our most popular products are the [bulletproof backpack panel inserts](#) that fit inside pre-

owned backpacks. The inserts conveniently come in different shapes and sizes, and even have the option to be customized to fit the unique dimensions of your bag. Weighing in at only 10-20 ounces, the panels are a lightweight way to make your bag safer without sacrificing on comfort or concealability. The panel is versatile and can easily be swapped into a variety of bags and other small items, ideal for students, business professionals, and those who travel frequently. As you begin to make your family emergency plan and better prepare your household for emergency situations, consider purchasing panel inserts for the whole family.