

## MEMO

### From Darryl Madden, Director of FEMA Ready Campaign:

For many, the [New Year](#) is a time for setting goals and making new resolutions for the year to come. If you are anything like me, each year you find yourself resolving to achieve a healthier lifestyle - eating right, exercising more, losing a few pounds.

Setting personal health goals in the [New Year](#) is great, but improving overall well-being involves taking actions to be prepared. Knowing what to do in an emergency is vital to the health and safety of you and your loved ones.

This year, the Ready Campaign is challenging you to be [Prepared in 2014](#). Start the [New Year](#) by connecting with family and friends on the importance of preparedness. Not only can the information shared potentially save a life, connecting with those you love has an added benefit. People who have strong social connections tend to be healthier and more resilient.

I know the hardest part of keeping a resolution is sustaining it after those first few weeks of the year, but you don't have to do it all at once.

First, start by simply having the conversation: who to call, where to meet and what to pack in an emergency.

Build your family's emergency supply kit by picking up [recommended emergency items](#) over the first month or two of the year.

Create a preparedness checklist. This should include things such as emergency phone numbers and copies of important documents, and information on how to register for programs such as the [American Red Cross Safe and Well website](#).

Set reminders throughout the year to talk about and update your family emergency communication plan. If you have children, include them in conversations and planning activities. The Ready Campaign has [age-appropriate tools and resources](#) you can use to introduce disaster preparedness to them. And you can learn more about [talking with kids](#) after disasters so you're ready to help them through tough situations.

Have pets? Make sure they are a part of your planning process. Create a [pet go-bag](#) to help keep them safe during an emergency. Find helpful [tips from FEMA](#) on how to plan for your furry friends.

[Older adults](#) often have special needs in a disaster and may depend on medications or other special requirements. If older adults are a part of your social connection, be sure to include them in your preparedness planning efforts.

Emergencies can and will happen, but being ready can minimize the impact they have on the overall well-being of you and your family.

This year, make disaster preparedness part of your [New Year's resolution](#). On January 1st 2014, join the [Resolve To Be Ready Thunderclap](#) to promote a message of preparedness to your social connections on [New Year's Day](#).

Don't forget to use the hashtag #Prepared2014 whenever you discuss family preparedness on Twitter.