September is “Be Prepared” Month

Disasters can happen at any time. We can count on influenza and possible power outages due to severe weather this winter. In addition, there is potential for foodborne outbreaks, a hazardous materials accident, another pandemic influenza outbreak, or a wild fire during the year. While the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is working to protect the community in the event of an emergency, health officials are urging everyone to take responsibility for the safety of their family and be prepared for all emergencies.

In an emergency, your safety and the safety of your family may depend on decisions made in a few seconds. Be prepared - have a plan and supplies, remain calm, stay informed, and be ready to activate your disaster plans.

Here are some things that families can do to prepare for a potential disaster:

- Be proactive, not reactive. Create a family emergency plan and talk about it ahead of time – taking action before an emergency occurs helps people deal with disasters of all sorts much more effectively when they do occur.
- Get a flu shot every year.
- If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your household. Your family emergency plan must include your pets. Being prepared can save their lives.
- If a winter storm, power outage, or other disaster strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water, and electricity for several days. You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. Have your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days in the event of a weather-related disaster or at least two weeks in the event of a severe influenza outbreak or prolonged emergency.
- Keep a battery operated NOAA weather radio as well as a regular radio nearby with extra batteries to stay informed.
- Help vulnerable family members and/or neighbors prepare, if you are able.

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September 2010 was the first National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, established by presidential and congressional proclamations. Nothing can be more important than protecting the health and well-being of our children for years to come. With a strong unity of purpose, we can make a difference for our kids. The Health Department looks forward to parents, health care providers, educators, civic leaders and organizations joining the effort to end childhood obesity.

October 7-11 is Drive Safely Work Week. Your mind will stay better focused on your driving if your body is properly fit to a clean, organized vehicle with a clear field of vision.

MIND

A clean, well-organized vehicle makes for a more tranquil environment where you can better focus on your driving. Just like in your home, if you don’t maintain an organizational strategy in your car, things can quickly get out of hand.

SECURE THE CARGO

- Begin each trip by securing the most important cargo—yourself and your passengers. Always BUCKLE UP—It’s the most important thing you can do to prevent injury in a crash.
- Think of everything in your vehicle as a potential projectile in the event of a crash and you’ll see anything you choose to carry in a whole new light.
- Be sure to utilize all secured storage spaces, such as your glove box, front arm rest and center console compartments; keep your dash clear.
- Utilize compartments such as seat-back and door pockets.
- Whenever possible, heavy items such as luggage, tools and even laptops should be stored in the trunk if you have one. Nets, straps and bungee cords should be used to secure large or heavy items in hatchbacks and SUVs.

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Gear Up for Safe Driving  
Mind • Body • Vehicle  

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- Try to avoid packing above the line of the seat backs. As well as obscuring the view, anything packed higher than this may fly forward in a crash or after sudden/emergency braking, potentially causing head injury.

- If you have young kids, choose soft books and toys when selecting things to keep them busy.

- The safest way to carry a pet for both its safety and yours is to have it secured in the appropriate pet restraint system.

- The back seat is the best place for pets. Similar to a young child, the front air bag system in a vehicle can be deadly to a dog during a crash, even if restrained.

CLEAR THE CLUTTER

- Each time you fill up with gas, use that time to toss the trash and clean out the cup holders.

- Make a habit of removing unnecessary items from the vehicle once per week. Choose a weekday when you know you will have some extra time, and commit to clearing out unnecessary cargo upon parking at home.

- Lastly, make rules for family members who also ride in or drive the car that what comes in must also go out at the end of each trip.

BODY
GET THE RIGHT FIT TO YOUR VEHICLE

The right posture is key. The best angle for the back of your seat is 100°, just shy of straight. Place your hands in the 3 and 9 o’clock positions on the steering wheel and position your seat so there are 10 inches (25.4 cm) of space between the steering wheel and your chest. This should be close enough so that you’re not leaning forward, but far enough to allow for safe airbag deployment; Support your lower back. Adjust the seat’s lumbar support to fill the space at your lower back. If driving a vehicle not equipped with lumbar support, a small pillow or rolled towel placed against the bottom part of your seat back will maintain the right shape for support; Support your head. When properly adjusted, your vehicle’s head restraint works in tandem with the seat belt and can help prevent neck, brain and spinal cord injuries in the event of a collision. Whether you are the driver or a passenger, follow these guidelines for a proper fit:

- Position the top of the head restraint so it is in a straight line with the top of your head.
- The center of your head restraint should be slightly above the top of your ear.
- The distance between the head restraint and the back of your head should be between 2-4 inches (5-10 cm).

Recheck your fit. If members of your family also drive your vehicle, be sure to share these tips with them so they are safely fitted to the vehicle and remember to recheck your fit each time you’re behind the wheel.

VEHICLE
MINIMIZE BLIND SPOTS TO HELP YOU SEE THE BIG PICTURE

While all blind spots cannot be eliminated, properly positioned mirrors are the key to maximizing your field of vision. To set your mirrors, with the vehicle safely parked, sit in the normal driving position and center the rearview mirror. Next, lean your head about 4” to the left and adjust the driver’s side view mirrors until you can barely see the edge of the rear of your vehicle in the mirror. Do the same thing for the passenger side mirror by leaning 4” to the right. While you won’t see your vehicle in your side view mirrors when sitting in the normal driving position, this mirror adjustment will enable you to see more of the adjoining traffic lanes, as well as hazards next to the vehicle. Even with properly adjusted mirrors, you should always glance over your shoulder to check blind spots any time you turn, merge or change lanes.

(Source: Network of Employers for Traffic Safety)
American Diabetes Month is a time to raise awareness of diabetes prevention and control. In the United States, more than 25 million people are living with diabetes and 79 million more are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Over time, if it’s not controlled, type 2 diabetes can cause serious health problems like heart disease, stroke, and blindness.

You may be at risk for type 2 diabetes if you:
- Are overweight
- Exercise less than 3 times a week
- Are over 45 years old
- Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Are African American, Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American or Pacific Islander
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes

You can do a lot to lower your chances of getting type 2 diabetes by:
- Eating healthy
- Watching your weight
- Being active
- Controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol

For more information on diabetes and diabetes prevention, please visit: www.diabetes.org.