



**DALLAS COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

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**September is National Preparedness Month**

September 2, 2008 (Dallas) — Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is joining with organizations nationwide to sponsor the fifth annual National Preparedness Month. The nationwide effort encourages Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes. Hurricane Gustav serves as a stark reminder of the need for advance planning and preparation at all levels.

“DCHHS, in concert with national, state, regional and local response agencies, has been working for the past week to create a smooth and coordinated response to Hurricane Gustav,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS Director. “The success of the evacuation of residents of the Gulf Coast region is due to the preparedness efforts we work on every day. Many of us were deeply involved with the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In the three years that have past, we have taken the lessons learned from these early response efforts and have fine tuned our response plans so that we are better able to effectively meet the needs during a natural or manmade disaster,” Thompson continued. “While September has been designated as National Preparedness Month, I urge every resident and business owner in Dallas County to let Hurricane Gustav serve as a reminder that advance planning works. The community that prepares is the community that recovers,” Thompson concluded.

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, DCHHS suggests that it's best to think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth. There are four simple steps every household should follow to ensure it is prepared for any emergency.

- **Make A Plan** - Make sure you have a family emergency plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance: how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others, such as work, daycare and school, in advance. A family emergency plan template is available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- **Get a Kit** - In some emergencies, you may be asked to shelter at home for an extended period of time. There are eight basics you should stock in your home to be prepared: water, food, first aid

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supplies, clothing, bedding, tools, emergency supplies, and special need items. DCHHS recommends that you keep a two week supply of these items, update your stockpile every six months, and re-think your family needs once a year. A DCHHS Personal Preparedness Guide is available to help families prepare for a public health emergency on our website at [www.dallascounty.org](http://www.dallascounty.org)

- **Be Informed** - Know what types of emergencies and natural disasters could happen where you live. While having a plan and go kit are important first steps, knowing what could happen in your immediate area, such as flooding and tornados, can determine the ways you will respond. Check with your City to see how you would be notified and what plans are in place for your neighborhood. During an emergency, you should watch local media outlets for updates and instructions.
- **Get Involved** - After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies by **getting a kit, making a plan** and **being informed**, take the next step and **get involved** in preparing your community. Consider joining the Dallas County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). MRC volunteers are people just like you, who have been trained to support public health and other first responders during a health crisis. Volunteers fill many critical roles during a disaster such as greeting and directing people, manning registration and triage stations, helping distribute medicine, food or supplies, managing traffic flow and parking volume, providing security and answering phones, and making sure people feel comfortable and safe. For more information, call (214)819-1922 or visit [www.metroplexvolunteers.org](http://www.metroplexvolunteers.org)

For more information on DCHHS' Preparedness efforts and for information on how you can prepare your family and business [www.dallascounty.org/department/hhservices/personal\\_preparedness.html](http://www.dallascounty.org/department/hhservices/personal_preparedness.html).

*Photo Attached*



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Photo Caption: Dallas County Health and Human Services Delivers Supplies to Prepare Shelters for Hurricane Gustav evacuees. Shown on the truck left to right: Steve Mize, Dallas County Public Service Coordinator and Marvin Cadenhead, Dallas County Assistant Crewman.