Prepare at NOVA

September Is National Preparedness Month

It is hard to believe that Fall is just around the corner! Emergencies can happen here on campus or at home, so it is important to be prepared wherever you are. As you get back into your school routine, take time to prepare for an emergency.

Review emergency procedures. Knowing what to do during an emergency is everyone’s responsibility. NOVA has several resources available to help faculty, staff, students and visitors learn important emergency procedures.

- The NOVA Office of Emergency Management and Planning (OEMP) website (www.nvcc.edu/emergency) has procedures to help you during an emergency. Specific procedures for various scenarios can be found at http://www.nvcc.edu/about-nova/emergency/campus/index.html. Check out the Safety video while you are on the site!
- NOVA’s Emergency Action Plan (EAP) provides detailed procedures for several emergencies that may occur on campus. You can find the EAP at http://www.nvcc.edu/about-nova/emergency/emergencyactionplan-032013.pdf.
- Emergency Procedures Posters are located in classrooms and across campus. These are quick reference sheets that you likely walk past several times a day. Look for them and take a few minutes to review one.

Preplan based on your surroundings. Too often we are busy worrying about our hectic schedule and we sometimes forget to preplan and answer “what if.” What if there were a fire? What if I needed to find shelter? Walk around your classroom or office buildings so you can identify:

- The two safest and most direct evacuation routes outside of your classrooms and offices.
- The location of campus emergency phones, Automated External Defibrillators (AED), and fire extinguishers.
- The location of designated assembly locations outside the facility.
- Locations to shelter-in-place for a severe weather event.
Sign up for NOVA Alert. When an emergency occurs, NOVA Alert will send you text messages and emails with real-time updates and safety information. To receive these alerts, sign up at https://alert.nvcc.edu.

Program NOVA Dispatch (703) 764-5000, available 24/7, into your cell phone. Report developing emergency situations on campus.

Prepare at Home

Families and individuals should plan as though they will be without electricity, water service, access to a supermarket, or other local services for at least three days. How can you prepare at home?

Make a plan. This may be the single most important thing you can do, and it’s free. Make sure everyone in your family understands where to go and what to do in an emergency. Update your contact information and post it in visible places in your home and workplace. Get a free emergency plan worksheet at www.ReadyVirginia.gov or www.ready.gov.

Set aside emergency supplies. Don’t wait for a storm! Buy non-perishable preparedness items throughout the year instead of all at once. Choose the essentials that fit your needs and budget. If you don’t have emergency supplies, September is a good time to get started. Get a list at www.ReadyVirginia.gov.

Store water. You don’t have to buy expensive bottled water. Just make sure your water containers are disinfected and airtight. Have at least a three-day supply of water – that’s one gallon per person per day.

Check your policy. Take a few minutes to review your insurance policy during National Preparedness Month. Get with your agent to make any necessary changes. Consider adding flood insurance because most policies don’t include it. Renters can also get flood insurance. Visit www.floodsmart.gov for more.

Stay informed. Stay aware of changing weather conditions by monitoring local media reports. Get a battery-powered and/or hand-crank radio with a weather band so you can hear emergency information when the power is out.

Within the past two years, many Virginians – including NOVA – have been affected by natural disasters, from the historic Mineral earthquake to hurricanes Irene and Sandy, to Tropical Storm Lee to a severe derecho wind storm and winter storms. Being ready for emergencies is essential, and there is no better time to prepare than September, which is National Preparedness Month.

Ask Questions

Don’t hesitate to ask questions! NOVA’s Office of Emergency Management and Planning (OEMP) is available to address your questions. Contact OEMP at oemp@nvcc.edu.

To learn more about emergency preparedness at NOVA, National Preparedness Month, or other emergency preparedness resources, please visit the following links:

- www.nvcc.edu/emergency
- www.Ready.gov
- www.ReadyVirginia.gov