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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

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## SPALDING COUNTY OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES PREPAREATHON FOR THE ANNUAL SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK



Spring brings budding leaves and new flowers, but spring weather can be unpredictable. Powerful tornadoes and devastating floods can occur with little warning, so it's crucial to prepare for these destructive events to protect your property and your loved ones.

Knowing what to do during a tornado is the message of *Ready Spalding County's Prepareathon*, a grassroots campaign for action to increase community preparedness and resilience. This campaign is being held in coordination with Georgia's Severe Weather Preparedness Week, February 4-8, 2019, and is supported by the Georgia Emergency and Homeland Security Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other partners.

### **Before the Drill:**

- Register for the [Civic Ready](#) emergency notification system and choose what type of alerts you want to receive. The registration link can be found on the [spaldingcounty.com](http://spaldingcounty.com) home page.
  - Weather alerts can give you the critical seconds you need to take action, but only if you're aware of them. You may not be home to hear the television or radio when they're announced. That's why it's important to receive notifications about tornadoes, floods and other disasters where you live, work, learn and worship.
- Install a [NOAA Weather Radio](#), if you haven't already done so. Make sure it's programmed to receive alerts for Spalding County and check that it has a battery back-up
- Review your severe weather emergency plan with your organization or family and encourage them to learn how to [prepare for tornadoes](#).

- Make sure everyone knows where tornado shelter areas are located. Basements and interior rooms or hallways on the lowest floor are safest

**Around 9:00 a.m. on the Day of the Drill:**

- Listen for the tornado sirens or monitor your NOAA Weather Radio for the message from the National Weather Service. This is your cue to begin the drill
- If you are conducting the drill at your workplace, announce the drill using your building's notification system
- Follow the steps in your emergency plan
- Everyone should proceed to their tornado shelter area
  - Use stairs instead of elevators
- Crouch low, sitting or kneeling against a wall and covering head with hands
- Take a photo and share on your social media platforms using #PrepareAthon

**After the Drill:**

- Evaluate the drill and document any issues. Modify your plan accordingly.
- Email the number of participants and photos to [gpolk@spaldingcounty.com](mailto:gpolk@spaldingcounty.com)
- Finally, be sure to prepare financially for a tornado or other disaster by having an emergency fund to help pay for unexpected expenses like your insurance deductible, hotels, food and other incidental costs. Start by setting aside a small amount from each paycheck to go into a savings account.

A 2016 FEMA survey found that more than half of American adults have not practiced what to do in a tornado by participating in a disaster drill or preparedness exercise at work, school or home. In addition, just 45 percent of the national population reported having a household emergency plan and less than half have an emergency fund. With the number and severity of weather-related disasters on the rise, *Ready Spalding County's Prepareathon* is an opportunity for individuals, organizations, and communities to take action to prepare for specific hazards through group discussions, drills and exercises.

***For questions or assistance, please contact the Spalding County Office of Homeland Security at (770) 228-2129.***

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