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National Preparedness Month: FEMA and Ad Council Urge Americans to 'Make a Plan Today'

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Damaged property on St. Croix after Hurricane Maria in 2017, which impacted the island on Sept. 20 of that year. By. IRENE ALI PHOTOGRAPHY.

FEMA and the Ad Council have begun National Preparedness Month with new public service announcements informing Americans how they and their families can best prepare for disaster while accounting for the reality of COVID-19.

FEMA's most recent [National Household Survey](#) finds nearly 60% of Americans perceive themselves to be prepared for a disaster emergency, and 10% still see no need to prepare. That's why the theme of National Preparedness Month 2020 is "Disasters Don't Wait. Make Your Plan Today," FEMA said in a recently issued release. It encourages people from all communities to

prepare for the possibility of natural disasters, which could range from wildfires to hurricanes to tornadoes.

"This year, we've seen that preparedness actions save lives," said FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor. "Hurricanes and wildfires aren't waiting for COVID-19 to end, and neither should your preparedness activities. I encourage you to make the most of this time you have with your families and have those discussions about your emergency plans, specifically how they may look different this year in a COVID-19 environment."

According to the release, the 2020 campaign encourages parents and caregivers to visit [Ready.gov/plan](https://ready.gov/plan) to find tools and tips for making an emergency plan with their family. Ad agency Newfangled Studios [created pro bono TV, radio spots, print, digital and out-of-home ads](#). The TV component of the campaign will feature a family preparing for disasters, to run on broadcast TV.

"This year's message is grounded in the fact that natural disasters won't wait for the pandemic to pass. However, people are already preoccupied with coronavirus messaging and we did not want to scare or overwhelm them," said Newfangled Studios' Founder & Executive Creative Director, Macaela VanderMost. "Building upon last year's campaign, we re-imagined an animated world that strikes the right balance of playfulness and gravity. It's our hope that this creative work will make a significant impact on the number of families who are prepared for a natural disaster."

"The pandemic has only reinforced that disasters can strike at any time, in any community, and drastically change people's lives in an instant," said Ad Council President & CEO Lisa Sherman. "Now more than ever, it is vital that people are prepared so that when an unexpected disaster does strike, they're ready."

This round of creative work for the Ready Campaign is the latest in 17 years of educating the American public about disaster and emergency preparedness

Each week of [National Preparedness Month](#), the Ready campaign will emphasize a unique aspect of preparedness:

- September 1—5: [Make a Plan](#)
- September 6—12: [Build a Kit](#)
- September 13—19: [Prepare for Disasters](#)
- September 20—26: [Teach Youth about Preparedness](#)