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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 2, 2017

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**SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: MAYOR EMANUEL, CITY OFFICIALS URGE RESIDENTS TO PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES BEFORE THEY HAPPEN**

As the country recognizes National Preparedness Month in September, the City of Chicago is reminding residents to prepare for potential hazards and ensure readiness if a crisis occurs through a new #PrepareChicago campaign. Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that throughout the month, the Office of Emergency Management and Communication (OEMC), the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Fire Department will conduct public education around emergency preparedness, including an advertising campaign providing tips for Chicagoans on how to prepare for large-scale emergencies and natural disasters in five languages.

There is no known threat in Chicago, though the City recommends plan for the unexpected by making an emergency plan and building a kit of supplies, including for medical, financial and pet needs. It is also important to stay informed of ways to mitigate hazards and respond to emergencies, and to be aware of current events.

"Emergencies can come in many forms and we are taking the lessons learned from incidents around the country and around the world to inform our own public safety efforts and emergency plans. We urge individuals to do the same," said Alicia Tate-Nadeau, OEMC's Executive Director. "We all have a part to play in planning, practicing and updating emergency responses and this is a good time for everyone to make sure they are ready should the unexpected happen."

Throughout the month of September, OEMC is making extra efforts to continue to provide readiness messaging throughout Chicago with outreach measures including speaking engagements, school events and social media. We encourage everyone to utilize the emergency preparedness tools available at [www.GearUpGetReady.org](http://www.GearUpGetReady.org) or [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) as well as sign-up for emergency alerts at [www.NotifyChicago.org](http://www.NotifyChicago.org).

As part of National Preparedness Month, CDPH is launching its #PrepareChicago public education campaign, providing tips for Chicagoans to prepare for large-scale emergencies and natural disasters. #PrepareChicago educates residents on how they can prepare their families, how to work together as a community and how they can volunteer during public health emergencies.

"Chicago is best prepared when we are all prepared, which is why we are working to reach residents in every neighborhood in a variety of languages and formats," said CDPH Commissioner Julie Morita, M.D. "Making sure all Chicagoans have the knowledge and resources they need to

protect themselves in an emergency is imperative to our mission of ensuring the health and safety of our residents.”

As part of CDPH's efforts to reach all Chicagoans where they live, work and play, emergency preparedness messages will be displayed throughout Chicago via the CTA and Metra transit systems, billboards, newspaper and social media ads. This year's campaign also includes foreign language online and print publications as well as bus shelter ads in the five most commonly spoken languages in Chicago: English, Spanish, Polish, Chinese and Tagalog.

Residents looking for additional ways to help can volunteer their skills by signing up for the [Chicago Medical Reserve Corps](#) (CMRC). CMRC has over 400 medical and non-medical professionals who assist in public health emergencies and local disasters. Chicagoans can sign up to volunteer [online](#) or via email at [ChicagoMRC@cityofchicago.org](mailto:ChicagoMRC@cityofchicago.org). For more information, visit [www.CityOfChicago.org/HEALTH](http://www.CityOfChicago.org/HEALTH).

Throughout the month, the Chicago Red Cross is partnering with the CFD and OEMC to install 2,000 lifesaving smoke alarms in high-risk neighborhoods. This is part of the American Red Cross' "Sound the Alarm. Save a Life" campaign to install 100,000 free smoke alarms in cities across the country and educate residents about fire safety .

“Being prepared means making sure your family is safe from the dangers that can be cause by fire and carbon monoxide,” said Fire Commissioner Santiago. “Make sure you have detectors for both smoke and carbon monoxide and that each unit has a fresh battery. The majority of deaths and injury from fire and carbon monoxide occur in homes that do not have working detectors. Make sure yours are working because your life may depend on it. And its the law in Chicago.”

"Be sure your family is ready to help your pets in a disaster by preparing a disaster-preparedness kit and having it at the ready," said Executive Director of Chicago Animal Care and Control Susan Russell "Your kit should include essential items like food and water for at least five days and a portable food and water bowl; your pet's rabies, license and microchip information; any medications and medical records; current photographs of your pet; written information about your pet and veterinarian information; and a pop-up kennel. If you have a cat, include little pans, litter, a scoop, garbage bags, Lysol wipes and an anxiety soothing product like Feliway. If you have a dog, bring sturdy leashes; if your dog is not great with other people or animals, a Baskerville muzzle."

### **If You See Something, Say Something**

OEMC encourages the everyone – residents, visitors, businesses - to always be aware of surroundings and report suspicious activity by calling 9-1-1, notifying on-site security or by calling the toll free local number for Chicago and Cook County at 855-RPRT-2-S4 (1-800-777-8274).

### **Notify Chicago**

Get Chicago emergency alerts by signing-up for OEMC's NotifyChicago alert system at [www.notifychicago.org](http://www.notifychicago.org). This is a free service provided by the City of Chicago.

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