



# Opinion Editorial

## SAMPLE OP-ED

### **Be a Force of Nature in Your Hometown**

*FEMA, NOAA Launch National Severe Weather Preparedness Week March 3-9*

The past few years have been an important reminder to all of us that severe weather can strike anytime and anyplace. Nearly every region of the country experienced some form of extreme weather, from hurricanes to snowstorms to tornadoes, and even a historic derecho, a rare and violent line of thunderstorms. **[Include specific weather event local to area if applicable]**

Each year, many people are killed or seriously injured by severe weather, **[specific risk in region – tornadoes, flash floods, severe thunderstorms in our area]**, despite advance warning. In 2012, there were more than 450 weather-related fatalities and nearly 2,600 injuries nationwide. Severe weather knows no boundaries and affects every individual. It is time for bold preparedness actions.

The **[Organization]**, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have partnered to highlight the importance of making severe weather preparedness a nationwide priority.

We all want the peace of mind of knowing that our families, friends, homes and businesses are safe and protected from threats of any kind. And while we can't control where or when the next, **[tornado, flash flood]** or other disaster will hit, we can take responsibility for preparing ourselves and loved ones for emergencies.

As we reflect on the tragic weather during the past year[s], we're calling on you to "*Be a Force of Nature.*" Knowing your risk, taking action and being an example for others are just a few steps you can take to be better prepared and assist in saving lives.

For example, **[include examples of local people, businesses, or communities that have taken steps to prepare – or have successfully executed a preparedness plan during a disaster]**.

Join us in becoming "*A Force of Nature,*" by Pledging to Prepare and follow these steps before severe weather affects our area.

*Know your risk:* The first step to becoming weather-ready is to understand the type of hazardous weather that can affect where we live and work, and how the weather could impact you and your family. Check the weather forecast regularly and visit [ready.gov/severe-weather](http://ready.gov/severe-weather) to learn more about how to be better prepared and how you can protect your family during emergencies.

Check the weather forecast regularly, sign up for local alerts from emergency management officials, check to see if your cell phone is equipped to receive [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#) and obtain a weather radio. Severe weather comes in many forms and your emergency preparedness and shelter plan should include all types of local hazards.

*Pledge and Take action:* [Pledge](#) to develop an [emergency plan](#) based on your local weather hazards and practice how and where to take shelter before a severe weather event. Post the plan in your home where family members and visitors can see it. Learn how to strengthen your home and business against severe weather. Download FEMA's mobile app so you can access important safety tips on what to do before and during severe weather. Understand the weather warning system and become a [certified storm spotter](#) through the National Weather Service. Stay informed by having multiple sources for weather alerts - [NOAA Weather Radio](#), [Weather.gov](#), and [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#). Subscribe to receive alerts at [www.weather.gov/subscribe](http://www.weather.gov/subscribe).

*Be an Example:* Once you have taken action, tell your family, friends, and co-workers about how they can prepare. Share the resources and alert systems you discovered through your social media network. Studies show that individuals need to receive messages a number of ways before acting – be one of those sources.

Building a Weather-Ready Nation requires the action of each and every one of us. A weather ready nation is building community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather and water events. Pledge to be prepared and learn more at [ready.gov/severe-weather](http://ready.gov/severe-weather) and [Weather-Ready Nation](#) and encourage your community to *Be a Force of Nature*.