



**News Release**  
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## **Study finds Americans largely unprepared for a public health crisis**

### ***SLVHD to distribute 200,000 additional Family Preparedness Guides***

(Salt Lake County) –As part of a National Public Health Week (April 2 – 8) campaign to urge citizens to “Take the First Step” towards effective emergency preparedness, the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) will distribute an additional 200,000 Family Preparedness Guides to help them prepare. In November, an initial 100,000 guides were distributed – 80,000 of which were sent home with students in the Jordan School District.

“Our second distribution will begin next week and will target residents in the Murray, Salt Lake City and Granite School Districts,” explained Bob Jeppesen, SLVHD Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Jeppesen says that residents can request additional copies on a first-come, first-served basis. The guide is also available to download and print at the SLVHD web site, [www.slvhealth.org](http://www.slvhealth.org).

On Monday, the National Public Health Association announced the results of a national preparedness survey that found that only 27 percent of the American public says they are very or fairly well prepared for an emergency, and 32 percent of the public have taken no special steps to prepare for an emergency situation such as a public health crisis.

“While statistics on citizen preparedness in Utah are not yet known, we suspect that it may be higher than the national average,” says Gary Edwards, SLVHD Executive Director. “The LDS Church has always advocated food storage and preparedness among their members. There’s also a real sense of self-sufficiency in Utahns that may come from the strong pioneer heritage many of our citizens have.”

Agencies involved in emergency planning are now starting to believe that, while community preparedness is often measured by the number of products and services that can be provided to the public in an emergency – such as 100,000 vaccinations, 500,000 antibiotics, 2,000 hospital beds, and 1,000 volunteer nurses – it isn’t the whole story.

“Perhaps the best indicators of preparedness are the specific and measurable actions of individuals, families and businesses *within* the community,” Edwards suggests. “More important numbers might be something like 250,000 residents with adequate supplies of food and water, 100,000 homes with a family disaster plan, or 10,000 businesses that exercise their emergency evacuation plan. Those are the numbers that may make the difference in survival.”

The theme of this year’s National Public Health Week is “Take the First Step! Preparedness and Public Health Threats.” For more information on National Public Health Week, visit the website at [www.nphw.org](http://www.nphw.org).

“Whether it’s an earthquake, pandemic influenza or an act of terrorism, we want people to be protected from health dangers that could arise in the event of an emergency, and the more prepared we are, the more protected we will be,” Jeppesen says. “Our Family Emergency Preparedness Guide will help them.”

For more information on the SLVHD Family Emergency Preparedness Guide, call 468-2424 or visit [www.slvhealth.org](http://www.slvhealth.org).

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