

Narration: [00:04](#) Welcome to Prep Talk, the emergency management podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness, get all the latest tips from experts in the field, and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes. From the Emergency Management Department in the city that never sleeps, here are your hosts, Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne: [00:27](#) Hello, everyone. Thank you for listening. I'm Omar Bourne.

Allison Pennisi: [00:31](#) And I'm Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne: [00:32](#) And you are our listeners, and we thank you for joining us. It's a new year. We've got a new sound, new segments, new guests, and as Janet Jackson likes to say, "It's all for you."

Allison Pennisi: [00:46](#) That's right. We want you to come back as often as you can, so feel free to add Prep Talk to your favorite RSS feed. You can also follow us on social media.

Omar Bourne: [00:53](#) That's right, Allison. And it looks as if we've made it to the end of another year. And I have to say, over the last year, Prep Talk had the chance to speak with great guests to discuss some important topics. But now it's time to look ahead to the future, and we have some exciting things in the works.

Allison Pennisi: [01:11](#) I agree, Omar. I think it is safe to say Prep Talk is ready for 2019.

Omar Bourne: [01:16](#) That's right.

Allison Pennisi: [01:16](#) This episode, we will be talking about making new year's resolutions, but not diet, exercise. Nope, we are going to be talking about how to be ready for disasters. But before we dive in, it's time to give our listeners the latest hot topics in the emergency management field. Are you ready?

Omar Bourne: [01:33](#) I'm ready, let's do it.

Allison Pennisi: [01:33](#) Okay.

Narration: [01:36](#) Here's your Prep Talk Situation Report.

Allison Pennisi: [01:40](#) All right listeners. It's time to sound off on this week's topics for the Situation Report. Here we go. So flu season is in full swing across New York. According to the latest weekly report from the New York State Department of Health, there were more than 3,000 confirmed cases of influenza for the week ending 2018, a nearly 50% increase from the prior week. And state health

commissioner, Howard Zucker, declared the flu officially prevalent in New York, kind of scary.

- Allison Pennisi: [02:11](#) If you remember, last year's flu season had broken records in New York and even nationally, causing the deaths of more than 80,000 people according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To our listeners, it is not too late to get a flu shot, so please get your flu shot.
- Omar Bourne: [02:27](#) In other news, new year, new passwords. Splash Data, the company behind management software like Splash ID, has released it's eighth annual list of worst passwords used in 2018. Now the info comes after they've evaluated more than 5 million leaked passwords. Coming in at number five is the password "12345." At number four, we have "12345678." At number three, we have "123456789." I wish I were making this up. Number two, Allison and our listeners, is "password." So people have used "password" for their password. And the worst password of 2018, take a guess, "123456."
- Allison Pennisi: [03:19](#) I think I have that combination on my luggage.
- Omar Bourne: [03:24](#) I can't make it up. Now experts warn that generic and predictable passwords can leave you vulnerable to hackers. So a word of advice, use intricate passwords that include letters, numbers, and special characters. Experts also say you should not use the same password for all of your accounts.
- Allison Pennisi: [03:43](#) Good to know. All right, so can exercising in frigid temperatures make you healthier? One man seems to think so. I personally have to say no to this. I cannot workout in the cold weather. Omar, I know that you are a 60 degree-
- Omar Bourne: [03:58](#) You already know.
- Allison Pennisi: [03:59](#) ... And above guy.
- Omar Bourne: [04:00](#) That's right.
- Allison Pennisi: [04:00](#) So here we are.
- Omar Bourne: [04:01](#) And 60 degrees is a cold day for me.
- Allison Pennisi: [04:03](#) There you go. So we have a Dutch athlete named Wim Hof who says that he can control his body temperature in extreme cold through a sheer force of will. You can't make this up.

Omar Bourne: [04:13](#) Nope.

Allison Pennisi: [04:13](#) Exercising in the cold, he argues, makes people healthier by burning extra calories, exercising the blood vessels, and training the immune system. Now a researcher from the National Institutes of Health says he is not ready to dismiss any potential benefits to Hof's theory. But says there is no obvious added benefit to exercising in the cold. So the bottom line is the important thing is to just exercise.

Omar Bourne: [04:37](#) Sounds good.

Allison Pennisi: [04:38](#) Yep. And that is your Situation Report.

Omar Bourne: [04:42](#) Thank you, Allison, lot's of good information in there for our listeners. Now up next, we break down how you can resolve to be ready in 2019, but first, here's a message from Notify NYC, New York City's official source of information for emergency events and important city services.

Narration: [05:03](#) Make a New Year's Resolution to be in the know when an emergency happens. Whether it's a storm, a mass transit delay, or an unexpected event, get free alerts from Notify NYC, New York City's free emergency communications program. Download the Notify NYC app today. Visit NYC.gov, or call 311. Remember, a notified New Yorker is a prepared New Yorker.

Speaker 4: [05:31](#) You're listening to Prep Talk, the emergency management podcast.

Omar Bourne: [05:38](#) Yes you are listening to Prep Talk, and we are back. Now earlier, Allison and I were talking about the future and being ready for 2019. In the field of emergency management, we are all about planning. And Allison, you know this, we say it often, winging it is not an option. But how can our busy listeners make a new year's resolution to be prepared?

Allison Pennisi: [06:02](#) You know, it's funny you should ask. So our guest educates New Yorkers all year long about how to be ready for emergencies. And she will even be giving us the scoop on how preparedness can be worked into people's busy schedules. I know, believe it or not, we might be busy New Yorkers, Omar and me, but we make time to be prepared for emergencies. And now you can too.

Omar Bourne: [06:22](#) That's right.

Allison Pennisi: [06:23](#) Please welcome to Prep Talk, Katie James, community engagement program specialist at New York City Emergency Management.

Katie James: [06:30](#) Hi, Omar and Allison. Thank you so much for having me.

Omar Bourne: [06:33](#) Katie, thank you for being here. And I'm going to let our listeners in on a little secret. Katie is a superhero. Now Katie, you educate communities about preparing for emergencies, especially children. Tell us more about your role.

Katie James: [06:49](#) So my role at New York City Emergency Management is to teach children all throughout New York City about how to be safe and prepared for emergencies. So my program goes to schools, we go to public schools, private schools, charter schools, community organizations, and churches. And we teach kids the important steps on how to be prepared. And we do that, as part of it, includes our superhero character Ready Girl.

Allison Pennisi: [07:11](#) Awesome. So Katie, we say this, new year's resolutions can be tough to keep. I actually heard something the other day that says New Yorkers, even anyone, might only be able to keep their resolutions for the first 12 days of the new year, and then they sort of let it fall by the wayside. I try to keep ones that are realistic, that are actionable, but in any event, we also stress that it doesn't take a lot of time or money to be prepared for emergencies. So with demanding schedules, what are some of the ways people can, as we like to say, resolve to be ready?

Katie James: [07:48](#) So Allison, I was actually researching this as well, and some of the reasons why people's resolutions fail and fail so early is because they're either too broad or they're too overwhelming, and they're not personalized enough. So one way that people can be prepared and really resolve to be ready is by downloading our Resolve to Be Ready calendar. And what this is, is this calendar that you can download right onto your Google calendar, and it provides these small, almost bite-sized preparedness tips to remind you to be prepared. So sort of taking this approach where they're not too overwhelming, they're not too big. It really provides people quick and easy steps on how they can make preparedness resolutions that they keep all year long.

Omar Bourne: [08:26](#) Sounds good. Good information. Now there's a reason for every season to be prepared as we like to say. Does the Resolve to be Ready calendar discuss ways people can get ready for specific emergencies?

- Katie James: [08:37](#) Yes, absolutely. So given that it's a monthly calendar, it has two to three tips per month, and it follows the calendar seasons. So for example, in January, we have tips on how you can prepare your home and your car for winter weather. During hurricane season, we talk about hurricane preparedness. And we also have information on how to spring clean your preparedness tips, so restocking your go bag and taking inventory of what you have. The calendar also has information about how to prepare your vehicle, how to prepare your pets throughout the year as well. So it follows the seasons.
- Katie James: [09:08](#) One of my favorites is the holiday preparedness where we have information on how to make sure your home is safe when you have holiday decorations and to keep those things in mind. So it really takes inventory on the seasons and what happens throughout the year, but also additional information that people should be practicing all year around.
- Allison Pennisi: [09:24](#) I love that, and I love that you said bite-sized. Get a taste of preparedness rather than trying to gobble it all at once. Because I think that what happens a lot of times is that people will make a plan and they sort of set it and forget it.
- Katie James: [09:38](#) Exactly.
- Allison Pennisi: [09:40](#) And in this case, this allows people to take this little snippet of information, keep it in mind, but also be able to keep their plan fresh.
- Katie James: [09:47](#) Yeah, and one of my favorite steps actually includes practicing your plan. And that's something that we talk a lot about when we go to schools and we talk to children about being prepared is to practice it with their families. So I like how that's one reminder of ... One week is to actually take a moment and practice working through your emergency plan because that's something that I think everyone should do. And having that reminder on your calendar, on your phone is a great way to ensure that people do it and stick to it.
- Omar Bourne: [10:12](#) And practice makes perfect. And this is why we talk about winging it is not an option. If you practice, then that repetition, in the emergency, you understand what you have to do, and you're not winging it. And going back to the bite-size comment that Allison made, it's really good that you can get this information in snippets because it helps people to take it in better. People always are overwhelmed it seems when it comes to having to talk about preparedness. So if we can give it to them in small bites, it's easily digestible, they understand it, and

then it helps when they have to practice it because it's an easy step.

Katie James: [10:55](#) Right. And it's more likely to get done if it's just take a moment and write down your emergency contacts and you do that one week and then you move onto the next thing next week. You're more likely to get that one step done rather than having a whole list of all these things and perhaps not getting to any of them.

Allison Pennisi: [11:10](#) Talking about so many food analogies here, it's almost like we're all getting hungry talking about this. But besides the Resolve to Be Ready calendar, which I think is an excellent resource and we really encourage everyone to check that out, how can communities learn how to be prepared?

Katie James: [11:26](#) Sure, so New York City Emergency Management has our Ready New York program, and we have events that we do all throughout the city, all year around. So by attending some of the events, we go to community fairs and different organizations. We're at different parades. We're at different community groups teaching people about how to be safe and prepared, churches, senior centers. We go to schools, of course, all throughout the city. And we talk to a range of New Yorkers about how they can be prepared.

Katie James: [11:54](#) We also have guides and resources that are available for people to request. We can mail them to them or they could look on our website which is NYC.gov/emergencymanagement to learn more about the different resources that we provide. One way to also be prepared is to follow us on social media because there's a lot of information and tips that come out year round as well. And it's a great tool and resource for people to stay prepared. We also have our Ready New York app, which is another great way for people to be prepared. And it's right on your phone, and you can download it and fill out your emergency plan, have your important contacts. And that's a great way for people also to remain being prepared.

Allison Pennisi: [12:29](#) And is that one of the Resolve to Be Ready tips too?

Katie James: [12:32](#) It is. Yes, it is within the calendar. And I think that we should add having the podcast on your RSS feed as part of the Resolve to Be Ready calendar.

Omar Bourne: [12:39](#) I like it.

Allison Pennisi: [12:39](#) I like it.

Omar Bourne: [12:41](#) I am not averse to that at all.

Katie James: [12:41](#) It's a great way to stay prepared year round.

Omar Bourne: [12:43](#) That's right.

Allison Pennisi: [12:44](#) Go make that update.

Omar Bourne: [12:46](#) Now, where can people access the Resolve to Be Ready calendar and find out more about how they can be ready?

Katie James: [12:52](#) Sure. So you can access the calendar by visiting our website, [NYC.gov/emergencymanagement](https://nyc.gov/emergencymanagement). Right now, it's the first link you'll see when you first go onto the website. But it lives year round on our homepage under the Be Ready tab. If you click Messaging, Calendar & Toolkits, you can download the Resolve to Be Ready calendar from there as well.

Omar Bourne: [13:11](#) And you talked about going out into the communities. And I know you do a lot with schools, but you also go to fairs. Tell us about what that experience is like when you get out into the communities.

Katie James: [13:23](#) Sure, so we have a team of staff and also New York City Emergency Management personnel and also our volunteers go out into the communities all throughout New York City. And we go to community fairs where we engage with the public. Sometimes we attend health fairs or church fairs or there might be an organization that is having a winter safety fair for their staff. So we get invited to attend a ton of events throughout the city with our partners and we interact with people. They'll come by our table. We'll show them the different resources we have. We tell them about how to be prepared. We answer any questions that they might have about emergency preparedness as well. And it's a great way for us to interact with people. And if we have a children's fair, sometimes we'll have Ready Girl there, and she'll give out her comic books and talk to the kids. So it's a great way to make preparedness a family affair.

Omar Bourne: [14:10](#) And since you've mentioned Ready Girl and the comic books, how do the kids react to you when ... Well, first of all, for our listeners, share a little about the character, Ready Girl, how that came about, and then the reaction from kids when you go to schools.

Katie James: [14:26](#) So Ready Girl is New York City Emergency Management's own superhero. And Ready Girl teaches kids all throughout New York City about how to be prepared. So she uses her super powers, which includes teaching people about emergency preparedness at lightning speed, about how to be prepared and what to do in case of an emergency. And it really makes the preparedness fun and engaging for students. And it makes it something more of a fun activity where they can interact with a superhero and inspire to be prepared themselves.

Omar Bourne: [14:57](#) Wonderful.

Allison Pennisi: [14:58](#) Fantastic. Be your own superhero. Get the Resolve to Be Ready calendar, NYC.gov/emergencymanagement. Katie, thank you so much for providing our listeners with such great information.

Katie James: [15:11](#) Thank you for having me.

Allison Pennisi: [15:12](#) It's now time for Omar's favorite segment, and I have to say it's also mine, our Rapid Response Q&A.

Narration: [15:20](#) It's time for Prep Talk Rapid Response.

Omar Bourne: [15:26](#) It is Rapid Response time, and if you are a first time listener, it's simple. Allison and I will ask Katie a number of questions, and she'll give us the first answer that comes to mind. Let's get into it. Katie, what is one of your new year's resolutions?

Katie James: [15:43](#) One of my resolutions is to spend more time with my family this year.

Omar Bourne: [15:47](#) That's a good one.

Allison Pennisi: [15:48](#) Okay, so what do you think is the most important emergency preparedness tip?

Katie James: [15:52](#) I think the most important tip is to make a plan with your family.

Omar Bourne: [15:56](#) Winging it is not an option as we like to say, so I agree with that. Make a plan with your family.

Allison Pennisi: [16:01](#) So what's the one emergency item you cannot live without?

Katie James: [16:05](#) Probably my Go Bag. That's definitely one of the most important emergency preparedness items I have at home, and it's definitely something I don't think I could live without.

Omar Bourne: [16:13](#) You want to make sure that you it there, ready to go, if there's an emergency, right?

Katie James: [16:16](#) Yep.

Omar Bourne: [16:16](#) Yeah. Now what is your favorite movie or TV show?

Katie James: [16:22](#) My favorite movie is "Legally Blonde."

Omar Bourne: [16:24](#) Is that the one where she got into Harvard?

Katie James: [16:29](#) What? Like it's hard.

Omar Bourne: [16:31](#) Being true to yourself never goes out of style, "Legally Blonde." Allison, you got anything for us?

Allison Pennisi: [16:37](#) Well, I was going to say we can bend and snap into the next one. How about that? Alright, so what's currently on your playlist?

Katie James: [16:45](#) Currently on my playlist is this new artist Maggie Rogers. I really like her music. And she has a cool, new sound, which I think is a great way to start the new year.

Omar Bourne: [16:54](#) Nice. I like it. I never heard of Maggie, but I'm sure she's-

Katie James: [16:57](#) She's great.

Omar Bourne: [16:58](#) I'll take your word for it.

Katie James: [16:59](#) She went to NYU. She's a New Yorker.

Omar Bourne: [17:00](#) That I like. Sum up your work in one word.

Katie James: [17:08](#) Educate.

Allison Pennisi: [17:10](#) Yep. I'd say that's a good one. We were talking about going out into the communities, making sure people are prepared no matter their age or where they come from. I love it.

Omar Bourne: [17:20](#) It was great to have you on the show with us today, Katie. Next time you come back, we're going to have to talk a little bit more about Ready Girl, about your superhero, good work that you do in the communities and in the schools, so you definitely have to come back.

Katie James: [17:35](#) Thanks Omar and Allison for having me. And I hope everyone, all of our listeners, resolve to be ready this year in 2019. Make it count.

Allison Pennisi: [17:41](#) Yep. We're going to make it count. And if you want to check out that calendar, remember you can visit NYC.gov/emergencymanagement. And don't forget to follow us on social media as well, for Twitter, [@nycemergencymgt](#), and also follow [@notifynyc](#) for emergency alerts.

Speaker 1: [18:03](#) That's this episode of Prep Talk. If you like what you heard, you can listen anytime online or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepared.