

Know your risk. Take action. Get a lifeline...on Facebook.

It's natural disaster season around the country. Hurricane season kicks off on the East Coast, tornados continue in the Midwest, and fire season nears on the West Coast. Now there are two new, free, personal preparedness applications on Facebook to help people support each other during an emergency and become better prepared by identifying lifelines.

Lifelines are Facebook friends a user can count on and who agree to check on them in an emergency, supply them with shelter, food, or other necessities, or provide the user's social network with an update about their wellbeing.

After disasters, a tremendous number of people use Facebook to post and share information. The new Facebook apps leverage those social connections to enhance community and individual resilience.

The two apps, bReddi and Project: Lifeline, allow users to identify lifelines, create and share personal preparedness plans, and track the status of their Facebook friends in disaster-affected areas. Both apps achieve the same goals of helping families and friends to plan more easily, being better prepared when a disaster strikes, and more reliably and efficiently getting the word out about each others' health and safety.

This capability means people can more easily learn whether their loved ones are safe, helping people affected by the disaster and those searching for missing people. The apps also allow users to print cards with a snapshots of their preparedness plans to carry in their wallets as quick references about what to do when a disaster strikes.

Both apps can be accessed through the ASPR website www.phe.gov/lifeline/ or directly through Facebook.

People who have friends or relatives they can rely on for help are healthier and live longer than those who don't, and that every disaster has the potential to impact health, so having people you can depend on for help is especially important during a disaster. Identify your lifelines now!