

Prepared

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grams to educate and inform the residents of the island about where to go and what to do when we become the target of one of these monster storms, we have greatly increased our chances of protecting people and their possessions," he noted.

"FEMA is nervous," he continued. "At some point they will set up points of distribution at the Lawn Avenue School and the transfer station. If a major storm strikes, water, ice, and fundamental necessities that were never available before will be accessible. We are also making the change from the Lawn Avenue School to the Melrose school for a shelter. Lawn Avenue is rated to withstand a Category 2 storm. Melrose is better, although it is yet to be rated."

"Now we are putting out the call for volunteers to help run the shelter," Pease said. "Anyone wishing to participate can call me at 423-0285, or Chief Tighe at 423-1212. Volunteers will receive training from the Red Cross, and will be well prepared to handle emergencies," he added.

Hurricane season begins on June 1 and lasts until November 30. So, the time to prepare is now. Every storm warning should be taken seriously, FEMA reports. Complacency and apathy are the causes of more deaths and serious injuries than necessary in areas that are frequented by these powerful storms. People think that since they've been through one storm, they can survive the next, and that authorities and the media blow things out of proportion to sensationalize the situation. This is simply not true, according to the FEMA Web site. Hurricane Katrina and the last four hurricanes that devastated the state of Florida in 2005 proved that kind of thinking to be erroneous.

Do you know what to do to prepare yourself and your family for the possibility of a hurricane? Here are some helpful tips from NOAA:

Have a Family Disaster Plan

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, and wind.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be in your home but within your community.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Check your insurance coverage — flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a Disaster Supply Kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every six months, as you do with your smoke detectors.
- Take first aid, CPR, and disaster preparedness classes.

Create a Disaster Supply Kit, including:

- Water — at least 1 gallon daily per person for three to seven days.
- Food — at least enough for three to seven days.
- Non-perishable packaged or canned foods and juices.
- Foods for infants or the elderly.
- Snack foods.
- A non-electric can opener.
- Cooking tools/fuel.
- Paper plates/plastic utensils.
- Blankets/pillows, etc.
- Clothing — seasonal/rain gear/sturdy shoes.
- First aid kit/medicines/prescription drugs.
- Special items — for babies and the elderly.
- Toiletries/hygiene items/mois-

- Flashlight/batteries.
- Radio — battery operated and NOAA weather radio
- Telephones — fully charged cell phone with extra battery and a traditional (not cordless) telephone set.
- Cash, with some small bills, and credit cards — banks and ATMs may not be available for extended periods.
- Keys.
- Toys, books and games.
- Important documents — in a waterproof container or watertight resealable plastic bag.
- Insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
- Tools — keep a set with you during the storm.
- Vehicle fuel tanks filled.
- Have a place to go.

Evacuation

Develop a family hurricane preparedness plan before an actual storm threatens your area. If your family hurricane preparedness plan includes evacuation to a safer location, it is important to consider the following points:

- If ordered to evacuate, do not wait or delay your departure.
- If possible, leave before local officials issue an evacuation order for your area. Even a slight delay in starting your evacuation will result in significantly longer travel times as traffic congestion worsens.
- Select an evacuation destination that is nearest to your home, preferably in the same county, or at least minimize the distance you must travel in order to reach your intended shelter location.
- In choosing your destination, keep in mind that the hotels and other shelter options in most inland metropolitan areas are likely to be filled very quickly in a large, multi-county hurricane evacuation event.
- If you decide to evacuate to another county or region, be prepared to wait in traffic.
- The large number of people in this state who must evacuate during a hurricane will probably cause massive delays and major congestion along most designated evacuation routes. The larger the storm, the greater the probability of traffic jams and extended travel times.
- If possible, make arrangements to stay with the friend or relative who resides closest to your home and who will not have to evacuate. Discuss

with your intended host the details of your family evacuation plan well before the beginning of the hurricane season.

- If a hotel or motel is your final intended destination during an evacuation, make reservations before you leave.
- Most hotel and motels will fill quickly once evacuations begin. The longer you wait to make reservations, even if an official evacuation order has not been issued for your area or county, the less likely you are to find hotel/motel room vacancies, especially along interstate highways and in major metropolitan areas.
- If you are unable to stay with friends or family and no hotels/motels rooms are available, then as a last resort go to a shelter.
- Remember, shelters are not designed for comfort and do not usually accept pets. Bring your disaster supply kit with you to the shelter. Find Pet-Friendly hotels and motels.
- Make sure that you fill up your car with gas, before you leave.

Secure Your Home

The most important precaution you can take to reduce damage to your home and property is to protect the areas where wind can enter. According to recent wind technology research, it is important to strengthen the exterior of your house so wind and debris do not tear large openings in it.

- A great time to start securing — or retrofitting — your house is when you are making other improvements or an addition.
- Remember: building codes reflect the lessons experts have learned from past catastrophes. Contact the local building code official to learn the necessary requirements for your home improvement projects.

Flood Insurance

- The National Flood Insurance Program, is a pre-disaster flood mitigation and insurance protection program designed to reduce the escalating cost of disasters. The National Flood Insurance Program makes federally backed flood insurance available to residents and business owners.
- Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policy.

Pet Plan

- Contact your veterinarian or local humane society for information on preparing your pets for an emergency.

Before the disaster

- Make sure that your pets are cur-

rent on their vaccinations. Pet shelters may require proof of vaccines.

- Have a current photograph
- Keep a collar with identification on your pet and have a leash on hand to control your pet.
- Have a properly-sized pet carrier for each animal — carriers should be large enough for the animal to stand and turn around.
- Plan your evacuation strategy and do not forget your pet. Specialized pet shelters, animal control shelters, veterinary clinics and friends and relatives out of harm's way are all potential refuges for your pet during a disaster.
- If you plan to shelter your pet — work it into your evacuation route planning.

During The Disaster

- Animals brought to a pet shelter are required to have: Proper identification collar and rabies tag, proper identification on all belongings, a carrier or cage, a leash, an ample supply of food, water and food bowls, any necessary medications, specific care instructions and news papers or trash bags for clean-up.
- Bring pets indoor well in advance of a storm - reassure them and remain calm.
- Pet shelters will be filled on first come, first served basis. Call ahead and determine availability.

After The Disaster

- Walk pets on a leash until they become re-oriented to their home - often familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and pets could easily be confused and become lost. Also, downed power lines, reptiles brought in with high water and debris can all pose a threat for animals after a disaster.
- If pets cannot be found after a disaster, contact the local animal control office to find out where lost animals can be recovered. Bring along a picture of your pet if possible.
- After a disaster animals can become aggressive or defensive - monitor their behavior.
- Don't forget your pet when preparing a family disaster plan.

Pet Disaster Supply Kit

- Proper identification including immunization records
- Ample supply of food and water
- A carrier or cage
- Medications
- Muzzle, collar and leash

For additional information, literature is available at the library, town hall, town offices, and the police station.

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