Hurricanes PREPAREDNESS

A hurricane is a type of tropical cyclone which forms over a tropical ocean. Although the official hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, they can occur at any time.

- ☐ The word "Hurricane" is derived from colonial Spanish and Caribbean words meaning evil spirits and big winds. Hurricanes are considered the most powerful force on earth.
- ☐ Coastal flooding caused by storm surge is the greatest threat to life and property. A storm surge is a large dome of water often 50 to 100 miles wide that sweeps across the coastline where the hurricane makes landfall. The surge of water topped by waves is devastating.
- ☐ Hurricane-force winds, 74 mph or more can destroy buildings and down power lines near the coast and well inland.
- ☐ Hurricanes bring heavy rains which can cause significant riverine and inland flooding.
- ☐ Hurricanes can also produce tornadoes, which can add to their destructive power.
- ☐ Hurricanes are classified on the Safir-Simpson Scale from categories 1-5:

Category	Wind speeds
1	74-95 mph
2	96-110 mph
3	111-130 mph
4	131-155 mph
5	>155 mph

When a hurricane is approaching . . .

- ☐ Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for the latest storm information.
- ☐ Secure outdoor objects such as lawn furniture that can blow away and cause damage or injury.
- ☐ Shutter or board all windows and secure double-door entrances
- ☐ Keep your vehicle's gas tank filled
- ☐ Prepare a hurricane evacuation kit to include:

  First Aid kit
  Bottled water
  Two (2) week supply of medicine
  Blankets or sleeping bags
  Extra clothing
  Pet ID, carrier, food & medication
  Personal items (toys, snacks)
  Important documents (valid ID, insurance info & money)

- ☐ If ordered to evacuate - **obey immediately.** Turn off gas, water, and electricity, and unplug small appliances.
- ☐ Inform family or friends outside of the warning area of your evacuation plans.
- ☐ Remember to help neighbors who may require special assistance (infants, senior citizens, and people with disabilities).

During a hurricane:

- ☐ If outside attempt to get into a building.
- ☐ Do not drive through flood waters.
- ☐ If staying in your home:

  - Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary

  - Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities

  - Fill bathtub and large containers with water for sanitary purposes

  - Stay away from windows and doors even if they are covered

  - Go to an interior first floor room

  - Avoid using candles and other open flames

- ☐ Be alert for the "**EYE**" of the storm. The eye is a period of calm during the storm. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds.

After a hurricane:

- ☐ Use 911 to report emergencies only. (Injuries, loose power lines, etc...).
- ☐ Keep listening to a radio or television.
- ☐ Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- ☐ Roads may be closed for your protection. Do not drive or walk into flooded areas. Find an alternate route.
- ☐ Check gas, water, and electrical lines and appliances for damage.
- ☐ Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until you are certain it is not contaminated.
- ☐ Be aware of insects, rodents and animals driven to higher ground by flood waters.
- ☐ Assess your home's damage. Take pictures if possible.
- ☐ Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home if necessary.

What is the difference between a hurricane watch and a warning?

- ☐ A hurricane watch is issued by the National Weather Service when hurricane conditions are possible in the specified watch area usually within 36 hours.
- ☐ A hurricane **warning** is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in the specified warning area usually within 24 hours.

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