

Take Protective Measures

Before a Hurricane

- * Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- * Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
- * Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- * Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- * Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools and anchor them if they cannot be brought indoors.
- * Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- * Check emergency supplies.
- * Fuel your car.
- * Secure buildings by closing and boarding up windows.
- * Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed. Open only when necessary and close quickly.
- * Turn off propane tanks. Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- * Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, bottles and cooking utensils.
- * Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

During a Hurricane Warning

- * Listen constantly to a battery-operated radio or television for official instructions.
- * If in a mobile home, check tie downs and evacuate immediately.
- * Store valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container on the highest level of the home.
- * Avoid elevators if at work.
- * If at home, stay inside, away from windows, skylights and glass doors.
- * Keep a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid open flames, such as kerosene lamps as a source of light.
- * If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power "surge" when electricity is back on.

Evacuate under the following conditions:

- * If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions. Leave as soon as possible. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
- * If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure - such shelters are particularly hazardous during hurricanes no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- * If you live in a high-rise building - hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- * If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- * If you feel you are in danger.
- * Tell someone outside of the storm area where you are going.

If you are unable to evacuate, go to your wind-safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:

- * Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and

glass doors.

- * Close all interior doors - secure and brace external doors.
- * Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- * Take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway on the lowest level.
- * Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

After a Hurricane

Return home only after authorities advise that it is safe to do so.

- * Avoid loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately to the power company.
- * Enter your home with caution.
- * Beware of snakes, insects and animals driven to higher ground by flood waters.
- * Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- * Check refrigerator foods for spoilage.

Inspecting Utilities in a Damaged Home

Check for gas leaks - If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a window and leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor's home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned on by a professional.

Look for electrical system damage - If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step on wires to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician first for advice.

Check for sewage and water lines damage - If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water company and avoid using water from the tap. You can obtain safe water by melting ice cubes.

FEMA REGIONAL OFFICE PREPARES FOR 2011 STORM SEASON May 22-28 is National Hurricane Awareness Week

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region III office is making preparations for an above-normal hurricane season, which officially begins on June 1 and runs through November 30. Region III's jurisdiction includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Residents, particularly those in coastal areas, are urged to pay close attention to weather forecasts during hurricane season. While federal, state and local emergency officials are fully engaged in preparation for storms and flooding, FEMA strongly recommends individuals take ownership of their safety by preparing now during National Hurricane Awareness Week. Being prepared is everyone's responsibility.

"When hurricanes affect our area, they present regional challenges-evacuations, displaced populations, sustained winds, flooding, and power outages can affect all our states and jurisdictions," said MaryAnn Tierney, Regional Administrator for FEMA Region III. "Citizens and all levels of governments must prepare for this upcoming hurricane season."

If a storm is predicted to strike Region III, FEMA will do the following:

- * Work in conjunction with state and local partners to pre-position life-saving and life-sustaining supplies within the mid-Atlantic region. Food, water, cots, blankets, and tarps will be pre-positioned to reach impacted areas as quickly as possible.
- * Activate the 24-hour Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to oversee the response effort and to monitor the needs of the impacted state. Federal agencies assigned to Emergency Support Functions will be activated to work in the RRCC to help fulfill requests for assistance. Through mission assignments, support can range from helicopters, generators and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams.
- * Deploy personnel and teams, such as Liaison Officers and Incident Management Assistance Teams to facilitate operational planning between the regional office and state agencies.

* Place Preliminary Damage Assessment Teams on standby. These teams work jointly with state officials to conduct damage assessments that will determine eligibility for a presidential disaster declaration, which triggers the release of federal disaster funds.

* Place Mobile Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) on standby. DRCs are temporary facilities that provide on-site disaster assistance to victims, allowing them to register for temporary housing, grants and other aid.

The Commodities Distribution Process

If there is a need to distribute commodities during a disaster, FEMA, state, and local agencies play key roles to ensure supplies reach those in need.

While working towards similar goals, the role played by each level of government is different. As such, commodities are distributed in the following way:

State & Local Role

* When disaster survivors need supplies, local jurisdictions attempt to fill the need from existing resources. When unable, the requirements are forwarded to a county or state jurisdiction.

* Once a request is received, one option for the county or state is to work from existing or commercial resources to address the local need by signing an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). EMAC is a cooperative agreement between states to facilitate the sharing of critical resources during emergencies and disasters.

* Should the county or state be unable to meet local needs, the state requests federal assistance.

Federal Role

* Once a state request is received, FEMA works to fulfill it.

Supplies are delivered by FEMA to the state-designated staging area or Point of Distribution (POD) site.

* Supplies are distributed to disaster survivors at these sites by the state. The state identifies and operates these points of distribution.

Citizen Preparedness

Personal preparedness is critical. Individuals and families should be ready to take protective actions even before a storm is forecast.

FEMA wants the public to make sure it has provisions for at least 72 hours after a storm strikes. This includes food and water as well as other needed supplies, including a battery-powered radio to receive important response and recovery information should electricity service be interrupted.

In addition, if citizens are told by local officials to evacuate, they should do so without hesitating and should take copies of important papers with them including:

- * checkbooks
- * driver's license
- * credit card information
- * birth certificates
- * social security cards
- * other forms and documents proving ownership/identity

Everyone should know the local evacuation routes, and if available, the location of nearby safe shelters. Individuals and families need to have a communication plan in place in order to contact or find each other. As the storm approaches, residents should listen to and closely follow instructions from local and state authorities. For more information on preparing for disaster emergencies, please visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes

<http://globalmessaging1.prnewswire.com/clickthrough/servlet/clickthrough?h?msg_id=6892714&adr_order=4000&url=aHR0cDovL3d3dy5yZWFKeS5nb3YvaHVycmljYW5lcw%3D%3D> and www.floodsmart.gov.

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Business owners and managers can learn how to prepare their businesses by visiting www.ready.gov/business

<<http://globalmessaging1.prnewswire.com/clickthrough/servlet/clickthrough>

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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. Stay informed of FEMA's activities

online: videos and podcasts are available at <http://www.fema.gov/medialibrary>

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