



Individuals, Families, Small Businesses Can Visit www.ready.gov to Get Ready for Hurricanes and other Disasters

WASHINGTON -- Today, June 1, marks the official start of the 2011 North Atlantic hurricane season, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency has been working closely with its federal, state, local and tribal partners, the private sector, voluntary organizations and the entire emergency management team to ensure we are ready for the upcoming season. As part of those efforts, today, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, along with other partners, will brief President Obama on the federal government's preparations for the upcoming season.

"Recent events including the deadly tornadoes in the central U.S. and southeast, flooding along the Mississippi and other emergencies serve as a reminder that we should be prepared to address all hazards, including hurricanes," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "Everyone needs to be prepared, not just those in hurricane prone states, but also areas well inland. This means having an emergency plan, storing an emergency kit and staying informed of alerts or messages from local emergency officials."

In the past few months, FEMA has been coordinating with all of the coastal states as they prepare for the season. All of this planning and coordination has been built around the agency's approach that we are just one part of the nation's emergency management team, and we have to work with the entire team to plan for the needs of the entire community when disasters strike. This larger team includes our federal partners, state, local and tribal leaders, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, faith based and community organizations, and most importantly the general public. It will take every member of the team working together for us to be fully prepared for this hurricane season.

To help demonstrate how the team can work together to prepare for and respond to hurricanes, President Obama invited other members of the team to join Napolitano and Fugate for today's briefing, including North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue and members of her emergency management team, American Red Cross President Gail McGovern, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) Chair Mickey Caison, and Verizon Wireless CEO Dan Mead.

To see a video message from Administrator Fugate about this hurricane season, visit [TBP](#).

Background on Preparing for Hurricanes

When preparing for hurricane season and potential emergencies, the needs of all members of a household should be considered. If a household includes a young child, senior citizen or a person with a disability or severe illness, special steps to assist them may be necessary and should be incorporated into all emergency planning. Pets require special handling. Pet owners should research pet boarding facilities now within a certain radius of where they may evacuate, since animals may not be welcome in all shelters or hotels.

Equally important, businesses should be prepared with emergency plans in place to stay afloat. Putting a disaster plan in motion will improve the likelihood that your company may recovery from a disaster. Ready Business (www.ready.gov/business) outlines measures business owners and managers can take now to start getting *ready*.



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The start of hurricane season is also the time to consider flood insurance coverage - most homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage. Not only are homes and businesses in hurricane-prone states at risk for flooding, but inland flooding is common in nearby states. To assess flood risk for a home or find a local agent selling national flood insurance, visit www.floodsmart.gov or call toll-free at 1-888-379-9531.

As the season kicks off, knowing the four terms that meteorologists use when forecasting tropical weather may also help you navigate to safety.

- A **hurricane watch** is an announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are possible within the specified coastal area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane watch is issued 48 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.
- A **hurricane warning** is an announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are expected somewhere within the specified coastal area. Because hurricane preparedness activities become difficult once winds reach tropical storm force, the hurricane warning is issued 36 hours in advance of the anticipated onset of tropical-storm-force winds.
- A **tropical storm watch** is an announcement that tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are possible within the specified coastal area within 48 hours.
- A **tropical storm warning** is an announcement that tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are expected somewhere within the specified coastal area within 36 hours.

With the ongoing recovery efforts from the tornadoes and response to areas with flooding, we are reminded that everyone should be prepared to address all hazards, including hurricanes, tornadoes and inland flooding.

For more preparedness information, please visit www.fema.gov and www.Ready.gov.

For the latest information on weather, <http://www.noaawatch.gov/themes/tropical.php>

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