

HELPING YOU PREPARE FOR A HURRICANE #3

Again, June 1st, marked the official beginning of hurricane season. This and subsequent bulletins will provide assistance to parishioners in their preparation for this year's hurricane season. The following websites can provide additional assistance;

www.bereadyescambia.com/

www.floridadisaster.org/family/

Our Gulf Coast is still recovering from the devastating effects from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and offer a grim reminder that the threat to lives and property due to winds, high tides, flooding, and the heavy rains that accompany these tropical storms is very real.

Therefore, it is extremely important that all parishioners make hurricane preparations now and review those preparations periodically throughout the season.

Waiting until a hurricane watch is posted could result in shortages in materials and supplies. Making preparations now, to include developing an evacuation plan and putting together a survival kit, is the best way to avoid problems and confusion associated with last minute storm preparation.

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Actions to be taken before the storm:

Prepare an evacuation plan. In many cases, voluntary evacuation may be prudent even if authorities don't order an evacuation. If possible, plan to go to a home of a family member or friend outside the reach of the hurricane. Otherwise, ensure you plan for multiple destinations as hotel/motels will likely become unavailable quickly. Plan multiple routes to get there as traffic congestion is likely.

If possible, travel with family, neighbors or friends. Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained and has a full tank of gas. Have emergency supplies on hand and a survival kit ready, regardless of your evacuation decision. Some recommended items to have in your survival kit includes...but are certainly not limited to:

Change of clothing, personal hygiene items, sleeping bags/blankets, first aid kit with essential prescription medications, battery operated radio, flashlights, extra batteries, eyeglasses, games or toys for children, important papers (put driver's license or other identification, cash, insurance papers, birth certificates, shot records, property inventory, emergency contact phone numbers, etc. in Ziploc bags), bottled drinking water, canned food, can opener, and any other items needed to survive without water or electricity for several days.

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Make arrangements for pets. Most shelters and hotels will not allow pets. Make arrangements with a local kennel if an evacuation order is issued. Ensure pets have identification tags and license and shots are current.

Check your house and yard. Inspect your roof for damaged shingles and loose sealants around vents. Install storm shutters or precut plywood panels to protect windows and glass doors. Trim back dead wood from trees.

Know the difference between a hurricane watch and hurricane warning, the Saffir-Simpson Measurement Scale, and obtain tracking charts and preparedness guidelines offered by numerous media outlets and hardware stores.

Review your insurance policy. Now is the time to get Hurricane Smart.

Actions to be taken during a Hurricane Watch (36 to 24 hours prior to the arrival of hurricane conditions):

Monitor radio and television reports regularly. The intensity and track of tropical storms and hurricanes can change quickly.

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Inspect your survival kits ensuring it has everything you might need. Ensure medications and food/water haven't reached their expiration dates. Have cash on hand. Know where you're going to go should an evacuation be necessary.

Ensure your vehicle has a full tank of gas, regardless whether you plan to leave the area, go to a local shelter, or ride out the storm at home.

Gas may be difficult to obtain during an evacuation and gas stations are typically out of service after a storm strikes.

Prepare your house. Move items indoors that can become airborne in strong winds and cause injury and damage as deadly missile hazards (garbage cans, lawn furniture, garden equipment, toys, etc.). Items too heavy to move should be tied down. Lower antennas, brace garage doors and board up or close shutters on glass doors and windows. Move valuables to upstairs, inner rooms. Ensure gas tanks for emergency generators and chain saws are full.

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If ordered to leave the area, do so immediately. Traveling during daylight hours is preferred, but don't delay if an evacuation order is issued. Remember to lock windows and doors, and turn off water, gas and electricity. Plug bathtubs and sink drains to prevent backup. If time permits, elevate furniture to protect from flooding or move upstairs. Again, a full tank of gas is essential for a proper evacuation. Roads will be very crowded and it may take hours to get out of the area.

As time allows, check on neighbors, especially the elderly and families with special needs (i.e. home bound, handicapped, etc.).

Actions to be taken during a Hurricane Warning (24 hours or less prior to the arrival of hurricane conditions).

Closely monitor radio or television for updates and official instructions.

If in a mobile home, check tie-downs and evacuate immediately. A mobile home is not a suitable place for riding out a hurricane. If you choose to remain at home, store drinking water in sanitized containers. Fill bathtubs and larger containers for cleaning and bathing. Unplug appliances with the exception of the refrigerator – set it on maximum cold and if power is lost only open when

necessary. Close all interior doors and brace external doors. Seek shelter in an interior room away from doors and windows on the lowest floor level. Avoid the temptation to go outside during the brief calm when the eye of the storm passes over.

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Actions to be taken after the storm passes:

The orderly return of personnel to an evacuated area shall be conducted only when directed by Federal, State, and Local Authorities. Don't try to come back to the area before authorized. Watch for closed roads – if you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, turn around. Be patient, remember everyone else is just as eager to return home. Proof of residency may be required (driver's license, recent utility bill, etc.). Call ahead to obtain road conditions and to determine the availability of services. It may be best to wait several days to allow emergency personnel and cleanup crews to start restore conditions to normal. Ensure you keep your gas tank full – gas may be difficult to get as you get closer to the area most affected by the storm.

Enter your home with caution. Although it may appear to be structurally sound, water and wind damage could be extensive. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Check the gas, electrical and water lines for damage. Don't use water from the tap or re-energize electrical or gas sources until declared safe by local authorities.

Be patient. Following a hurricane, it may take several weeks to restore services and clear roads, and months to remove all the debris from neighborhoods, especially in outlying, rural areas.

As able, assist neighbors in their return to the area and recovery efforts.