



# Talking Points

## 2013 NATIONAL HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK

### Key message:

*Be a Force of Nature:* Pledge to Prepare, Know Your Risk for Hurricanes, Take Action, and Be an Example

- This year, the week of May 26 marks the beginning of the [National Hurricane Preparedness Week](#).
- Hurricane season begins June 1 and extends through November 30, so it is important to know about the hazards and risks associated which can be used to take action to prepare. These actions can be used to save lives anywhere - at home, in schools, and in the workplace.
- Being aware of your risk and taking the steps to prepare can reduce the impacts of hurricane disasters on families, individuals, businesses and communities around the area.

### **PLEDGE TO PREPARE**

- This season, we ask families, communities and businesses *to be force of nature* by taking the pledge to prepare at [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes).
- When you pledge to prepare, you will take the first step to making sure that you and your family are prepared for hurricanes. These include developing a family emergency plan, putting an emergency kit together or updating your existing kit, keeping important papers and valuables in a safe place, and getting involved. Visit [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) for more on family preparedness for hurricanes.
- On the [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) pledge page you will find valuable links to learn more about the risk in your area, how to prepare for emergencies and how to receive free materials, including family emergency plan templates and sample business continuity plans.

### **KNOW YOUR RISK FOR HURRICANES:**

Hurricane hazards come in many forms: storm surge, high winds, tornadoes, and flooding.

This means it is important for your family to have a plan that includes all of these hazards.

### *Storm Surge*

- Storm surge, a lesser-known but very dangerous by-product from the power of hurricanes is simply water that is pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm.
- What makes storm surge so dangerous is that it combines with the tides and creates a rise in the water level that can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tides. Visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's website at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/ssurge/index.shtml> for more information on storm surge.

### *High Winds and Tornadoes*

- While hurricane-force winds often make the news, there's no such thing as "just a tropical storm". Hurricane- and tropical storm-force winds can send debris through the air, causing damage to homes and businesses.
- Is important to know basic hurricane related terms such as:
  - **Tropical Depression:** A tropical cyclone in which the maximum sustained surface wind speed is 38 mph or less.
  - **Tropical Storm:** A tropical cyclone in which the maximum sustained surface wind speed ranges from 39 mph to 73 mph
  - **Hurricane:** A tropical cyclone in which the maximum sustained surface wind is 74 mph or more.
  - **Storm Surge:** An abnormal rise in sea level accompanying a hurricane or other intense storm, and whose height is the difference between the observed level of the sea surface and the level that would have occurred in the absence of the cyclone. Storm surge is usually estimated by subtracting the normal or astronomic high tide from the observed storm tide. Storm surge can reach heights well over 20 feet and can span hundreds of miles of coastline.
  - **Hurricane Warning:** An announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are expected somewhere within the specified 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.
  - **Hurricane Watch:** An announcement that hurricane conditions (sustained winds of 74 mph or higher) are possible within the specified 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.

- **Tropical Storm Warning:** An announcement that tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are expected somewhere within the specified area within 36 hours.
- **Tropical Storm Watch:** An announcement that tropical storm conditions (sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph) are possible within the specified area within 48 hours.
- Also, hurricanes can also produce tornadoes that add to the storm's destructive power, so it's important to get prepared for the high winds of severe tropical weather.

### ***Flooding***

- Flooding is one of these hazards and the most common and costly natural disaster to affect every state across the country. Flood risks associated with hurricane season extend far beyond the coast lines.
- The largest amounts of rainfall from hurricanes are often produced by slow moving storms that stall out miles from a shoreline as did Tropical Storm Lee in 2011. In addition, last year Hurricane Irene caused major flooding over much of the mid-Atlantic and Northeast when it moved inland, with high winds and torrential rains.
- While preparing for flooding, FEMA is urging residents to purchase flood insurance now. Flood insurance is available through more than 85 insurance companies in nearly 22,000 participating communities nationwide. Most everyone can purchase flood insurance – including renters, business owners, and homeowners.
- To learn more about your flooding risk and how to protect yourself and your business, visit the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (NFIP) Web site, [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) or call 1-800-427-2419.
- Don't put yourself at risk; follow the instructions of local officials – and if told to evacuate, evacuate. Everyone should get familiar with the terms that are used to identify a flooding hazard and discuss with your family what to do if a flood watch or warning is issued. Terms used to describe a flooding hazard include the following:
  - **Flood Watch:** Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information
  - **Flash Flood Watch:** Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.
  - **Flood Warning:** Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
  - **Flash Flood Warning:** A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.

- Remember, turn around, don't drown. The reason that so many people drown during flooding is because few of them realize the incredible power of water. A mere six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock over an adult. It takes only two feet of rushing water to carry away most vehicles. This includes pickups and SUVs.
- It's important to follow the instructions of state, tribal and local officials, and listen to local radio or TV stations for updated emergency information. We urge all individuals in the region to listen to NOAA Weather Radio and their local news to monitor for updates and directions provided by their local officials.

### **TAKE ACTION:**

- [Organization], FEMA, NOAA, and the Red Cross are just one part of the emergency management team that works to prepare and respond to hurricanes. A key member of the team is the public. That is why we are encouraging everyone to do their part and prepare now, so that you know what to do before, during and after a hurricane makes landfall.
- After pledging to prepare at [www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) and knowing your risk for hurricanes and other emergencies, develop or update your Ready Emergency Preparedness Plan and Emergency Kit.
- Emergency Preparedness Plan:
  - Families may not be together when an emergency happens and you may not have access to cell phones, gas stations, grocery stores or some of the other things that you are used to having every day.
  - A family emergency plan allows families to work together to develop a meeting place, establish an out-of-town contact and gather essential information that would help them to stay connected in the event of an emergency. Download a free template at [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan)
- Emergency Kit:
  - An emergency supply kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Visit [www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit](http://www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit) for a complete list of suggested items to include.
  - Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency. You may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you and once a disaster hits you will not have time to shop or search for supplies. Having an emergency supply kit or updating your existing kit in advance of an emergency will assist in preparing and protecting your family.

- And as a reminder, always heed to the instructions of your local government to prepare and evacuate during the immediate threat of a hurricane, severe storms, flooding and severe weather.

### **BE AN EXAMPLE:**

- Building a nation of preparedness requires the action of all of us. Each and every person across the country has the potential to ***be a force of nature*** when it comes to weather-readiness. Studies show that individuals need to receive messages a number of ways before taking appropriate action.
- Many are more likely to act when the messages are received from a trusted source- Family, Friends, or Community leader.
- And, history teaches that a lack of awareness and preparation are common threads among all major weather threats. Knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take can save your life and others.
- During this preparedness week we continue to ask you to ***be a force of nature*** – Pledge, Know your risk, take action and be an example, by sharing what you have done, with your friends, family, coworkers, and others.
- Once you have taken action, share your story with your family and friends by creating a video and posting it to YouTube or another video sharing site, or post your story on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or any other social media site you're on.

### **NEED IDEAS FOR WHAT YOU CAN DO?**

- Have an emergency plan, and know what to do before severe weather strikes. Post your plan in your home where family and friends who visit can see it.
- Identify an appropriate shelter in your home, neighborhood and community ahead of time. Share this with your neighbor.
- Find out from local government emergency management how you will be notified for each kind of disasters and sign up for additional alerts through social media and local news. Understand these local warning systems and signals and share your knowledge with your coworkers, friends. Email these resources to your friends, post to your social media account.
- Remember, once you have taken action share your story with your family and friends. Create a YouTube video and post your story on a social media site you're on.