

**NEW HANOVER COUNTY  
HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS  
GUIDELINES  
FOR  
COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

**Prepared by  
New Hanover County  
Department of Emergency Management**

## INTRODUCTION

The following information is intended to assist County employees in preparing for a possible hurricane strike in this region of North Carolina. Because we as county employees will be greatly affected by landfall of a hurricane in this community, we need to be prepared before a hurricane occurs.

The National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida constantly watches the North Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico for tropical disturbances during hurricane season June 1 to November 30. Tropical disturbances that grow into tropical storms, have wind speeds above 39 miles per hour and move in a circular pattern. Storms that continue to grow having winds above 74 miles per hour, and moving in a counter clockwise direction, are hurricanes. Heavy rains, thunder, lightening and sometimes tornadoes, accompany the hurricane.

**The National Hurricane Center gathers all Atlantic tropical weather disturbance data. Staff analyze the data and release to the public the following tropical storm and hurricane information.**

Advisories - Every six hours.

Bulletins/special advisories - Anytime there is a significant change in weather conditions.

Hurricane Watch - Hurricane may threaten within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning - Hurricane expected to strike within 24 hours.

**When a tropical storm or hurricane is within 125 miles of the coastline, the local National Weather Service Office issues:**

Local statements of information, instruction and warning.

Storm status (distance from the coast, size and wind speed)

Land areas recommended or ordered to be evacuated.

Safe routes out of the warning area.

Location of open shelters.

## PREPAREDNESS

Many county employees will be **required** to work before, during and after a hurricane; therefore, it is imperative that you begin your preparedness activities well in advance. **You should plan for the worst, but hope for the best.** Make a hurricane kit for your family that will include batteries, radios, flashlights, non-perishable foods, water, toiletry articles, medicines, first aid kit, tape, and rolls of plastic. Have the kit ready and available. Have enough items to be self sufficient for three days.

If you live in a flood plain, make family evacuation plans.

If you live in a mobile home, always evacuate. You can go to a shelter or stay with family.

Consider housing and family issues as part of your return to work plan.

Make sure you have your County ID.

Consider buying and pre-cutting plywood for each window that will be covered.

## FAMILY HURRICANE CHECK OFF LIST

- Create an emergency plan including plans for the sick & elderly for whom you may be responsible.
- Monitor all weather advisories.
- Secure loose items.
- Board windows.
- Store water in plastic containers or purchase bottled water.
- Turn refrigerator/freezers to coldest setting.
- Fuel vehicles.
- Stock up on non-perishable food items.
- Purchase a battery powered radio, flashlight & plenty of extra batteries.
- Locate insurance and other important papers. Place them in a safe place or prepare to take them with you.
- Make arrangements for pets.
- Notify relatives or friends of your shelter or evacuation location.
- Report your location to your supervisor.
- Plan for post storm day care.
- Review stock of medications.
- Conduct banking and acquire cash (ATM machines may not function after a storm).
- Remove boats from water.
- Monitor weather advisories constantly.

## **EVACUATION**

If an evacuation is recommended by emergency management officials, information will be released by radio and television stations. The media will announce the areas affected by the evacuation including shelter locations, evacuation routes and preparedness tips.

Evacuation orders are issued by New Hanover County in concert with the municipalities. The evacuation will include all areas that may be affected by the approaching hurricane, not just low lying areas. Law Enforcement and other agencies may use loud speakers and go door-to-door to announce the evacuation order in designated areas. Road blocks will prevent re-entry into these areas until authorized by public officials.

## **SHELTERS**

Shelters will be opened prior to the arrival of a hurricane. County employees must advise their supervisors of their shelter location. If you need to go to a public shelter, you should bring some of the following items.

- Non-perishable food supplies.
- Special dietary needs.
- Hand operated can opener.
- Sheets, blankets, pillows, sleeping bags, etc.
- Clothing - 2 or more changes.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Water.
- Paper plates, cups, utensils
- Roll of paper towels.
- Box of tissue.
- Medications.
- Toiletry articles.
- Sanitary needs.
- Baby food and formula.
- Diapers (if needed).
- Books or games.

## **THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN A SHELTER**

- Pets (except for guide dogs).
- Alcohol
- Firearms

## **SHELTER LOCATIONS**

Codington Elementary School	4321 Carolina Beach Road
Eaton Elementary School	6701 Gordon Road
Emma B. Trask Middle School	2900 N. College Road
Dorothy B. Johnson Elem. School	1100 McRae Street
Noble Middle School	6520 Market Street

**NOTE:** Shelters will not be opened simultaneously. Public announcements regarding shelter openings will be made by the Emergency Public Information Center in coordination with the Emergency Operations Center and the American Red Cross.

## **DURING THE HURRICANE**

If you are unable to evacuate before the hurricane hits, **STAY INDOORS**. Do not be fooled by the eye of the hurricane and its temporary period of peaceful weather conditions. The duration of time within the eye varies from several minutes to a couple of hours, depending on the severity of the storm. The larger and more intense the hurricane, the bigger its eye. When the eye of the hurricane has passed, the winds will return from the opposite direction. Remember to stay away from windows and glass doors.

## **AFTER THE HURRICANE**

After the storm has passed, the re-entry procedures will begin. Don't become agitated if you are not allowed back to your home as soon as the storm is over. Only after the entire area has been declared safe, will residents be allowed to return home. Re-entry instructions will be communicated to the public through radio, television and law enforcement officials. When you return to your residence or venture outside after the storm, beware of the following things:

1. Look for obvious structural damage to your home.
2. Watch out for loose or dangling electrical power lines and broken sewer or water pipes. If you see any, notify local officials immediately.
3. Make sure all electrical outlets and appliances are dry and free of water, before turning your electrical power back on.
4. Do not drink water from the faucet until local officials notify you that it is safe from contamination. Use your emergency supply or boil tap water before drinking.
5. Without electricity to keep refrigerators running, food will spoil in only a few hours. Do not refreeze food once it begins to thaw.
6. Snakes, animals and insects instinctively travel inland to escape approaching flood waters. Be on the lookout for them and be prepared to protect yourself.

## **CLEAN UP AND RECOVERY**

Emergency and damage assessment officials will make the first survey of land areas affected by the hurricane to identify priority areas for clean up. A financial loss evaluation will determine the need for a disaster declaration. When local government is unable to financially recover from the destruction caused by a hurricane, state and/or federal government officials will request an “official” declaration. In response to an “official” disaster declaration, additional state and federal agencies will come to the aid of local government. Hurricane damage documentation is essential to qualify for the maximum amount of assistance in clean up and recovery operations. Initial statements of financial loss may not indicate the need for an “official” disaster declaration. However, if subsequent reports warrant a declaration, detailed records will be invaluable. As county employees you may be required to keep records of the activities you performed prior to, during and after the storm. **Records to keep include:**

1. Taking photographs before the clean-up process begins.
2. Recording **ALL** hurricane response activities and expenditures.
3. Record mileage, gas, expenditures, type of work being conducted, etc.
4. Record time of use on each piece of equipment.
5. Record hours of work by date and time.

Clean-up and recovery operations will begin in the following priority.

1. Search and rescue for disaster victims.
2. Clear roadways used by emergency vehicles.
3. Restore communications.
4. Restore power.
5. Remove debris.

All clean-up and recovery activities will be coordinated with other assisting agencies and utility companies.

## **WHAT CAN I DO?**

As a county employee, you must be prepared to return to work even though your house may be damaged. To prevent problems with your insurance carrier, try to photograph or video tape your house and belongings before the storm strikes. This will assist the adjuster in determining the amount you will receive from the insurance company.

Become familiar with the Hurricane Operations Plan for your department and the tasking requirements that you will be asked to complete. By having an effective hurricane awareness education, well understood hurricane operations plan, common sense and quick response, lives and property can be saved.

## **FAMILY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS QUIZ**

1. Do you think your family is well prepared?
2. Have you discussed disaster preparedness with your family?
3. Do you have disaster supplies on hand for at least 72 hours?
4. Do you have a disaster supply kit for each family car?
5. Are you or any members of your family trained in First Aid or CPR?
6. Does your home have operational smoke detectors on each level?
7. Do you have a charged all purpose fire extinguisher, and do you know how to use it?
8. Do all responsible members of your family know how to turn off all utilities?
9. Have you safeguarded the most important family records?
10. Has your family discussed where to meet outside your home if there is a fire?
11. Has your family practiced a fire drill within the past year?
12. Do you have an out-of-the-area disaster telephone contact?
13. Do you have a local disaster buddy?
14. For those of you with school aged children, do you know if their school or day care center has a disaster plan and what it is?
15. Do you know your County Department's disaster plan, and what your work responsibilities will be?

