Hurricane Preparedness and Action Plan 2016

Early numbers are starting to come in for the 2016 Atlantic Hurricane Season. With the early introduction of El Nino system and higher expectations of the Climate Pulse Hurricane Enhancement Cycle, the predictions are above normal. Detailed information from the Global Weather Oscillations (GWO) says the 2016 and 2017 Atlantic hurricane seasons will be the strongest in over 4 years, and have the most United States hurricane landfalls since 11 were experienced during the destructive seasons of 2004 and 2005.

GWO has issued the most accurate predictions of any organization over the past 7 years, and says - unlike the past three hurricane seasons that were dominated by hostile atmospheric conditions that subdued hurricane activity since 2013, and during the 2015 El Niño season, this season will produce more powerful storms with more frequency.

Preparedness

Planning

It is important to have an evacuation plan in place to ensure that workers can get to safety in case a hurricane may affect the area. A thorough evacuation plan should include:

- Conditions that will activate the plan
- Chain of command
- Emergency functions and who will perform them
- Specific evacuation procedures, including routes and exits
- Procedures for accounting for personnel, customers and visitors
- Equipment for personnel

Some businesses are required to have an Emergency Action Plan meeting the requirements under 29 CFR 1910.38, see Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTool for more information. Ready.gov - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has more information on evacuation plans as well as suggestions for precautions to take if you are unable to evacuate and do not have a safe room.
In addition to having evacuation plans in place, it is important to be familiar with the warning terms used for hurricanes, as well as your local community's emergency plans, warning signals, and shelters. **Hurricane/Tropical Storm watches** mean that a hurricane or tropical storm is possible in the specified area. **Hurricane/Tropical Storm warnings** mean that a hurricane or tropical storm is expected to reach the area, typically within 24 hours. Be prepared to follow instructions from the local authorities and to evacuate if instructed to do so.

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating based on a hurricane's sustained wind speed. This scale estimates potential property damage. Hurricanes reaching Category 3 and higher are considered major hurricanes because of their potential for significant loss of life and damage. Category 1 and 2 storms are still dangerous, however, and require preparatory measures.

Most of us have "Weathered" a few storms, but don't believe you have seen it all. Katrina surprised a lot of experts when it came to perpetration and response !

Category	Sustained Winds	Types of Damage Due to Hurricane Winds
1	74-95 mph 64-82 kt 119-153 km/h	**Very dangerous winds will produce some damage:** Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles, vinyl siding and gutters. Large branches of trees will snap and shallowly rooted trees may be toppled. Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days.
2	96-110 mph 83-95 kt 154-177 km/h	**Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage:** Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks.
3 (major)	111-129 mph 96-112 kt 178-208 km/h	**Devastating damage will occur:** Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will be snapped or uprooted, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
4 (major)	130-156 mph 113-136 kt 209-251 km/h	**Catastrophic damage will occur:** Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
5 (major)	157 mph or higher 137 kt or higher 252 km/h or higher	**Catastrophic damage will occur:** A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.

Recovery and understanding the individual effects of a disaster.

Everyone who sees or experiences a disaster is affected by it in some way. It is normal to feel anxious about your own safety and that of your family and close friends. Profound sadness, grief and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event. Acknowledging your feelings helps you recover. Focusing on your strengths and abilities helps you heal. Contact local faith-based organizations, voluntary agencies, or professional counselors for counseling. Additionally, FEMA and state and local governments of the affected area may provide crisis counseling assistance. As you recover, it is a good idea to make sure that you have updated your family disaster plan and replenished essential disaster supplies just in case a disaster happens again. You will always feel better knowing that you are prepared and ready for anything.