



Santa Rosa County Public Information ▪ 4499 Pine Forest Road ▪ Milton, Florida ▪ 32583 ▪ (850) 983-5254

May 18, 2010
#100518-HURPREP

Contact: Joy Tsubooka
Public Information Officer
(850) 983-5254, (850) 393-8304 Cell
joyt@santarosa.fl.gov

Hurricane Season Starts Tuesday
-Updated Evacuation Zones and Hurricane Scale for 2010-

Santa Rosa County Emergency Management reminds the public that hurricane season begins Tuesday, June 1, and urges the public to make preparations now. Residents should take note that several changes have been made regarding the 2010 hurricane season. These changes include hurricane classifications, evacuation zones and hurricane forecast information.

When it comes to hurricanes, it is important to understand that wind speed is not the only factor. Now, a number of factors will be considered when looking at evacuations; including the size of the storm, speed the storm is moving, wind speed and the overall storm surge. Evacuation notification is not an exact science, and keeping your safety in mind, evacuation zones have been updated using storm surge information and the latest Light Detection and Ranging or LIDAR data collected during the 2009 hurricane evacuation study. The evacuation zones will **now be identified using the letters A-E**, instead of the storm category numbers of one through five that were previously used. To find out how the evacuation zones will affect you, read pages 25 and 26 of the 2010 Santa Rosa County disaster guide or enter your home or business address on the interactive map found at www.santarosa.fl.gov/gis.

The Saffir-Simpson scale has also been updated for the 2010 hurricane season. In the past the Saffir-Simpson scale was categorized by wind speed and storm surge, but beginning this year, the hurricane categories will only reflect wind speed. This change was made due to the unreliability of predicting surge in relation to wind speed. Familiarize yourself with the new Saffir-Simpson scale as the new classifications may alter your plans.

Additionally, the National Weather Service has implemented a few changes in the way it provides hurricane forecast information. Residents will now be notified of tropical storm and hurricane watches 12 hours earlier than in previous years, within 48 hours of possible hurricane or tropical storm conditions may affect our area. Hurricane or tropical storm warnings are also now issued within 36 hours of a possible storm impact. Other changes have been implemented as well, and can be viewed at the NWS Mobile/Pensacola Website located at www.srh.noaa.gov/mob.

In addition, keep in mind that by following these simple steps, citizens can save lives, money, damage and distress:

- Make a family plan.
- Include in your plan how to care for family or friends with special needs and your pets.
- Set up an out-of-town contact for your family members to call in case you are separated.
- Evaluate your home and surroundings. Trim hazardous tree limbs and have a plan to secure items that could become deadly missiles in a storm.
- Harden and prepare your home with proper bracing and shutters.
- Make a disaster kit that has at least three days of drinking water and non-perishable food for each person and pet, vital prescription drugs, and any needed baby supplies. Also, include a flashlight, radio, extra batteries and cash. Prepare this kit ahead of time, and be sure to check your disaster kits for expired items.
- Equip your home and office with a NOAA weather radio- it just may save your life.

Citizens can automatically receive breaking news alerts from Santa Rosa County Emergency Management via e-mail or text message. Residents can sign up for the alert service or make changes in their current subscription online at www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency/publicwarning.html. Make sure you keep this information updated in our system if you make changes in your providers, cell number or e-mail address.

For more information, pick up the new 2010 disaster guide, which includes a shopping checklist, updated hurricane evacuation zones and the new hurricane classifications. You can find this free guide at county offices, libraries, major retailers in the county, or online at www.santarosa.fl.gov, under the emergency management button.

###