

News Release

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Ready for a Hurricane? Part I

Tampa, Fla. (July, 2009). Hurricanes are severe tropical storms that form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists can now predict hurricanes, but people who live in coastal communities should plan what they will do if they are told to evacuate.

First, prepare an Emergency Supply Kit that includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries. You may want to prepare a portable kit and keep it in your car. This portable kit should include: copies of prescription medications and medical supplies; bedding and clothing (including sleeping bags and pillows); bottled water, a battery-operated radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, a flashlight; and copies of important documents: driver's license, Social Security card, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, etc. Also, make sure you have a "to-go bag" ready in case you need to evacuate. In this bag include: water and non-perishable food; battery operated radio and batteries so you can get important information from local officials; a first aid kit; flashlight; maps; important documents such as proof residence, pictures of your family including pets, insurance policies, and tax records; comfortable clothing and blankets; and unique family needs such as prescription medications, pet supplies, infant supplies or any other unique need your family may have.

Second, make a family emergency plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency. Plan places where your family will meet,

both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood. Remember that normal means of communication may be down so it is important to set this plan up with that in mind. Identify several places you could go in an emergency, a friend's home in another town, a motel or public shelter. If you do not have a car, plan alternate means of evacuating. If you have a car, keep the tank full at all times in case you need to evacuate. Roads will be crowded and gas availability may be limited.

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a benefit available to all employees and dependents of companies contracted with Wood & Associates for providing confidential free professional assistance 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Remember that you or a dependent may contact your EAP regarding any concern that you might have – you don't have to wait until a problem becomes big to seek help. Above all, keep in mind that concerns develop over time but the way you address them can be changed. If you are impacted by a hurricane or other disaster, all you need to do is call your EAP and you will be directed to our experienced team of counselors. It is that simple. We will help you cope, find assistance, and guide you down the path to effectively dealing with the major changes a hurricane can bring.

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