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**WILL YOU BE
READY
FOR THE STORM?**

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S L E M C O H U R R I C A N E P R E P A R E D N E S S G U I D E

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught us a terrifying lesson: prepare now to keep your family safe

The scars left by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on New Orleans and the coastal parishes of Louisiana are still fresh as we enter a new hurricane season. After experiencing these killer storms, it's hard to imagine Louisiana residents would ever again be complacent in the face of an impending hurricane.

But according to a recent article in *USA Today*, Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami, is worried by the results of a recent poll of coastal residents in 12 states. "More than half don't feel vulnerable to hurricanes," Mayfield said. Three out of five had no family disaster plan and over two-thirds had no hurricane survival kit. Thirteen percent said they wouldn't leave even in a mandatory evacuation.

Mayfield feels such people have missed last year's wakeup call. As he told *USA Today*, they're not just tempting fate, they're playing Russian roulette.

PLANNING, PREPARATION AND EVACUATION

Hurricanes are an indomitable force of nature. Since 1900, hurricanes have killed nearly 15,000 people in the U.S., nine out of 10 victims drowning in waters funneled inland by the storms.

But according to Paul Coreil, vice chancellor of the LSU AgCenter, "Much of the damage and loss of life associated with hurricanes may be prevented or reduced by planning, preparation and evacuation."

As 2005's disastrous hurricane season demonstrated, a devastating storm can temporarily overwhelm governmental resources. Katrina and Rita underscored how individuals and families must take a more active role in assuring their safety.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) says a well thought-out plan of action will help you and your family, and recommends keeping your plan simple so it's easy to remember.

Whenever a hurricane is forecast, you should immediately make plans to secure your property. Tape doesn't prevent windows from breaking; permanent storm shutters offer the best protection. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood,



To report a power outage, call our automated toll-free system: **1-888-2 SLEMCO (1-888-275-3626)**

Check www.slemco.com for updates during emergencies

During hurricanes, you can count on SLEMCO to keep you updated with the latest information on repairs in your service area. SLEMCO customers who have evacuated will be able to check the home page of www.slemco.com for a special **EMERGENCY NEWS** link.

A hurricane eye wall

Photos courtesy National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Department of Commerce

cut to fit and ready to install, with a few holes drilled in the center of each sheet to help relieve air pressure.

When building a new home, consider installing straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure and reduce roof damage from high winds. Although more difficult and costly to retrofit, this may prove a worthwhile addition to some existing homes (Lucky Account Number 2121408000).

Make sure trees and shrubs around your home are trimmed and all debris removed well prior to a potential storm. And now's the time to consider how and where to secure your boat, so it will be available in the event of flooding.

As a family, discuss escape routes from your home and neighborhood, as well as a safe meeting place outside your neighborhood in case you are separated. Every family member should carry essential phone numbers at all times. In case of separation, family members should know whom to contact in another town. Children, in particular, should be drilled on details of the emergency plan and know how to call for help.

And prepare a disaster kit that, at its most basic, contains at least the minimum recommended emergency supplies, some cash and a credit card.

DISASTER SUPPLIES FOR WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Louisiana Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness reminds us that during hurricanes and floods services may not be available, transportation may be cut off and roads may be blocked. And you may be forced to evacuate.

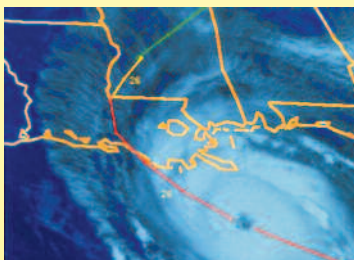
Under such circumstances, your family's safety and comfort may depend on emergency supplies you've gathered ahead of time. The agency recommends a Disaster Supplies Kit that includes the following supplies.

◆ **WATER.** Plan on one gallon of water per person per day, stored in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as mason jars or glass bottles. Drink at least two quarts per day, as long as supplies last, and then look for alternative sources. Remember that a steady supply of water is basic to human survival. Don't ration: drink what you need and try to replenish your supply when it runs out. You can minimize your body's need for water by reducing activity and staying cool (Lucky Account Number 1425455001).

◆ **FOOD.** Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Check the LSU AgCenter Web site for an article with excellent recommendations: "What's a Three Day Food Supply". (http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/news/headline_news/Whats+A+3Day+Food+Supply.htm)

◆ **FIRST AID KITS.** You should have two: one in your home and one in your car. These kits should typically include:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4–6)
- 4-inch gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Scissors, tweezers & needles
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for upset stomach)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting, if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

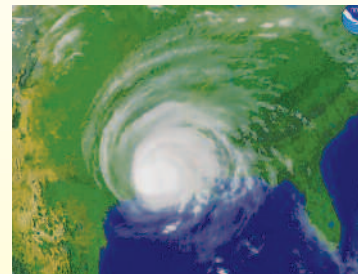


You can contact your local American Red Cross chapter to obtain a basic first aid textbook or order one at your local bookstore or from www.amazon.com.

◆ SUPPLIES & TOOLS

- Emergency preparedness manual

- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Non-electric can opener & utility knife
- Fire extinguisher (small canister, A-B-C type)
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Aluminum foil
- Signal flares
- Paper and pencils
- Needles and thread
- Medicine dropper
- Whistle
- Shut-off wrench (to turn off household gas and water)
- Plastic sheeting



◆ **CLOTHING & BEDDING.** At least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

◆ SANITATION

- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal items, i.e. shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, comb and brush, lip balm
- Small shovel, for digging and latrine use
- Plastic garbage bag and ties
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

◆ **SPECIALTY ITEMS.** Include items for household members with special needs, such as infants, elderly, or disabled individuals.

Babies: Formula • Diapers • Bottles • Powdered milk • Medications

Elderly: Heart and high blood pressure medications • Insulin • Prescription drugs • Denture needs

Remember to include favorite entertainment items, such as coloring books and crayons, games and books.

◆ **IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS.** Keep these records in a waterproof container:

- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Savings and checking account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Editor's note: One useful addition to the agency's recommendations would be copies of recent tax returns.

◆ **STORAGE SUGGESTIONS.** Store the kit in a safe, convenient place known to all family members. If possible, it should be a cool, dry, dark location. Keep items, or groups of items, in waterproof and airtight plastic bags. Keep a smaller version of your Disaster Supplies Kit in the trunk of your car.

Change the water supply every six months so it stays fresh; rotate the food every six months. If storing prescription medications, ask your doctor or pharmacist about the proper procedure. Remember to replace batteries often.

STOCK UP ON SUPPLIES EARLY

“Don’t wait until a storm is approaching to get batteries, flashlights, nonperishable food and other things you’ll need if the power goes out,” Dr. Coreil warns. “Start now. It will be a lot easier if you shop for supplies early rather than getting caught up in the last-minute rush at the stores.”

LSU AgCenter experts point out you will need some basic supplies just to survive during and after a storm. Depending on the severity of the storm, you may need supplies that will last for several days.

“After a hurricane, you could be housebound for as much as a week or longer, probably with no electricity,” LSU AgCenter disaster preparedness associate Pat Skinner says. “Water may be off or contaminated. Stores may be closed. Gas stations may not be in operation. Restaurants may not be open.”

The same types of rules apply if you have to evacuate. You’ll still need some basic supplies, since an evacuation more than likely will mean spending hours in the car and nights away from home.

“Either way, you’ll need some nonperishable food and enough water for everyone,” Skinner recommends. “You’ll also want to have some other basic supplies, and you can shop for most of those now and store them until they’re needed.”

You may need to include flashlights and extra batteries; hurricane lamps or lanterns (avoid candles); a portable radio and extra batteries; first-aid kit; insect repellent; matches; ice chest; disposable cups, plates and utensils; disposable towelettes, and prescription medications. LSU AgCenter experts also say to consider any special dietary needs and to be sure to have items such as baby food and diapers on hand, if you need them. “Keep your pets in mind, too, because they’ll also need to be fed and to have water,” Skinner says.

Although they aren’t necessities, you also may want to consider buying an electric generator to meet your emergency power needs. “This is particularly important if you must operate medical equipment continuously,” Skinner says, adding, “It also is a way you can protect your investment in frozen foods.” (See SLEMCO’s Web site, www.slemco.com, for advice on using emergency generators safely.) Camp stoves or barbecue grills also can help with cooking, according to the experts. Just be sure you have enough fuel on hand—and only use them outdoors.

“Most of the items you’ll need have a long shelf life, but they disappear from stores quickly when hurricane warnings are issued,” Skinner cautioned. “That’s why it’s important to gather these supplies now—before a storm is approaching.”

“Doing so also allows you to concentrate on the other preparations you’ll need to be making as the storm approaches.”

EVACUATION GUIDELINES

For your family’s safety and comfort, be prepared with an evacuation plan. And familiarize yourself ahead of time with the official evacuation routes out of Acadiana (*Web links to evacuation routes are available at the end of this story*).

Evacuation Guidelines from FEMA	
ALWAYS:	IF TIME PERMITS:
Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.	Gather your disaster supplies kit.
Make transportation arrangements with friends or your local government if you do not own a car.	Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides protection, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and a cap.
Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.	Secure your home: close and lock doors and windows. Unplug electrical equipment, such as radios and televisions, and small appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.
Gather your family and go if you are instructed to evacuate immediately.	Let others know where you are going.
Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.	
Follow recommended evacuation routes. Don’t take shortcuts: they may be blocked.	
Be alert for washed-out roads and bridges. Do not drive into flooded areas.	
Stay away from downed power lines.	

CHECK INSURANCE COVERAGE BEFORE THE STORM

The beginning of hurricane season is the time to review your insurance policies to make sure you’re adequately covered. Your auto should be covered from flooding if you purchased comprehensive coverage, but typical homeowners policies do not cover most flooding. Detailed information on the National Flood Insurance Program can be found online at FloodSmart.gov or call 888-379-9531.

If you’re a renter, cover your belongings with renters insurance and consider flood insurance if you live on a ground floor or rent a home in an area at risk for flooding.

Check that all your premium payments are up to date. If you need insurance, be aware that due to the high losses over the past two years, new coverage may be more difficult to obtain and offer more restrictive terms. Some companies are even refusing to write new policies in the most hurricane-prone areas of Louisiana.

An often-overlooked part of your hurricane preparations is a comprehensive house inventory. A complete record of your posses-

Parish Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness Contact Numbers

PARISH	DIRECTOR	OFFICE	FAX
Acadia	Lee Hebert	(337) 783-4357	(337) 788-8852
Avoyelles	Weber "Chip" Johnson	(318) 253-7291	(318) 253-9218
Evangeline	Liz Hill	(337) 363-3345	(337) 363-3308
Iberia	James Anderson	(337) 369-4427	(337) 369-9956
Lafayette	William Vincent	(337) 291-5075	(337) 291-5080
St. Landry	Lisa Vidrine	(337) 948-7177	(337) 948-9139
St. Martin	Sheriff Ronnie Theriot	(337) 394-3071	(337) 394-5705
Vermilion	Robert LeBlanc	(337) 898-4308	(337) 898-4309

sions will make it easier to file an insurance claim. Include model and serial numbers for appliances and electronics wherever possible. If you have a digital camera or DV camcorder, you can quickly document every room in your house. Save the photos or video on a CD or DVD that can be easily stored with your insurance papers (Lucky Account Number 4501494100).

REMEMBER THE LESSONS OF KATRINA AND RITA

The forces of nature may be beyond our control, but careful advance planning and preparation will help you and your family weather upcoming storms more safely and recover as quickly as possible from its aftermath.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

◆ The **Hurricane Index of Louisiana Homeland Security & Emergency**:

<http://www.ohsep.louisiana.gov/hurricanerelated/hurricaneindex.htm>. This site offers dozens of potentially live-saving information fact sheets, including a hurricane tracking chart, state evacuation routes, preparing your home for a hurricane, safety precautions when returning home, coping with a flood, storm surges, avoiding wind damage, what to do before and during a hurricane, your evacuation plan, obtaining food and water, and flood safety.

◆ **Louisiana Emergency Evacuation Map & Citizen Awareness and Disaster Information** from the Louisiana State Police, including PDFs for *Statewide Evacuation Routes* and *Evacuation and Shelter Information*: <http://www.lsp.org/lcadeg.html>

◆ **National Weather Service's National Hurricane Center/Tropical Prediction Center**: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

◆ **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

- How-to guides from FEMA on protecting your business, home or property: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/howto/index.shtm#4>
- Links to a wide range of information from FEMA on preparing your family, home and business for the 2006 hurricane season: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/hu_season.shtm
- For more information from FEMA, visit FEMA's disaster preparedness Web site at www.ready.gov or call 800-BE-READY (800-237-3239).

◆ **Preparing Your Pets for Emergencies**: *Ready Pets* brochure in PDF format from ReadyAmerica, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.ready.gov/america/pets.html>

◆ **LSU Hurricane Center**: <http://hurricane.lsu.edu/>

◆ The **LSU AgCenter** Web site is a superb resource with extensive links to useful information for nearly every aspect of hurricane preparedness and recovery. Among the PDF brochures offered for download are *A South Louisiana Guide to Living with Hurricanes*, *Storm Recovery Guide for Homeowners*, *Cleaning Flood Damaged Homes*, *Handling Food and Water After a Flood*, *Disaster Preparedness for Horse or Beef Producers*, and many others. http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/en/family_home/hazards_and_threats/recovery_assistance/

Take Hurricane Quiz to determine if you're prepared

Courtesy LSU AgCenter. Used with permission.

Having the right answers before a storm comes your way can help you be prepared if a hurricane strikes.

"Even if you've been through a hurricane before, it's easy to forget some of the preparations that can protect your property and family," says LSU AgCenter housing specialist Dr. Claudette Reichel (Lucky Account Number 2034154500). "In addition, many of the precautions you can take can save time, money and hassles after the storm."

Reichel and LSU AgCenter disaster education coordinator Pat Skinner say taking the following hurricane quiz can help you gauge whether you're prepared. If you answer "No" or "I don't know" to any of these 20 questions, the experts say it's time to take action:

- ◆ Do you have a disaster survival plan?
- ◆ Have you planned an evacuation route and destination?
- ◆ Do you have an emergency communication plan for staying in touch or getting messages to friends and family?
- ◆ Is your homeowner's and flood insurance coverage up to date and sufficient to replace your home and belongings if they are damaged or destroyed?
- ◆ Do you have an inventory of your property and belongings?
- ◆ Do you have copies of your policies, inventory, other important papers and valuables in a safe place—one that's waterproof and fireproof?
- ◆ Do you know how to turn off your utilities (electricity, gas and water)?
- ◆ Do you have a plan and supplies on hand to protect and secure your home, outdoor items, boat, pool, etc.?
- ◆ Has your roof been inspected within the past six months?
- ◆ Have you trimmed the trees and shrubs around your house?
- ◆ Has your car been maintained, and are the tires, including the spare, in good condition?
- ◆ Do you have a plan of what to do with food in your refrigerator and freezer in the event of a possible power outage?
- ◆ Is your emergency phone list up to date and handy?
- ◆ Do you have emergency survival supplies such as batteries, a battery-operated radio, flashlights, lanterns, fuel, nonperishable food for three days, water jugs, manual can opener, medicines, traveler's checks or cash on hand?
- ◆ Do you have an emergency supply kit for your car?
- ◆ Do you have a plan of how to take care of family members with special needs (those with disabilities, infants or the elderly) in the event of a disaster?
- ◆ Have you decided what you will do with your animals if you must evacuate because of various types of hazards?
- ◆ Have you budgeted for the added expenses to protect your home, buy supplies, evacuate, clean up and recover?
- ◆ Have you discussed your emergency plans, duties and rules with your family?

